

# Lord Stranleigh on the High Seas

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"Give me your ticket," he said. Hazel took it from his pocket and handed it over.

"Have you any luggage?" "Only a portmanteau, which I placed in my bunk."

"Wait here, and I will find out what cabins are available."

Stranleigh went down to the purser; this official threw him a friendly glance, which nevertheless indicated that his time was valuable.

"My name is Trevelyan," said the young man.

"Oh, yes; Mr. Trevelyan. You have our premier suite? Do you like your accommodation?"

"I have n't seen it yet. I have just discovered a friend, an eccentric sort of man who had made up his mind to cross in the steerage. One of those foolish bets, you know, which foolish young men make in London clubs, and I have persuaded him out of it."

"Our steerage is thought to be quite luxurious," laughed the purser.

"So my friend says, but I want his company. Have you anything along my avenue?"

The purser consulted his list. "Nobody with him?"

"He's quite alone."

"The larger cabins are all taken, but I can give him a small one."

"Like your steerage, I suppose it is comfortable?" said Stranleigh.

"Well, it's not a private hotel, like your quarters."

"Oh, he'll not grumble. Can you send a steward to remove his luggage from the number indicated on this steerage ticket, to his new quarters?"

The purser rapidly wrote out a new ticket, and took the difference in five-pound notes.

Later, Stranleigh said to Ponderby: "The Honourable John Hazel is aboard. He had to leave London in a great hurry, and without the necessary luggage."

Ponderby's eyes lit up with an expression which said:

"I knew that would happen, sooner or later," but he uttered no word, and cast down his eyes when he saw his master had noticed the glance. Stranleigh spoke coldly and clearly.

"How many new suits have you provided for me?"

"Thirty-seven, my lord."

"Very well. Costume the Honourable John Hazel just as you would costume me. Call a steward, and order the box taken to his room."

"I really cannot accept it," he said, his lower lip trembling perceptibly.

"Tut-tut, man! It's settled and done with. You will find your bag in your new cabin, also a box from my habitation. Come! I'll be your valet. Luncheon will be on directly, and I want your company."

Stranleigh turned away; Hazel followed him. Ponderby was on hand, and saved his master the fag of valetting, and when finally the Honourable John emerged, he looked a well-dressed man who would not have done discredit even to the Camperdown Club.

"I flatter myself on having made this transfer with more tact than I usually display," said Stranleigh, "for I am somewhat stupid in the main, trusting others to carry out my ideas, rather than endeavouring to shine as a diplomatist myself. The purser, the only official aware of the change, thinks you made a bet to travel steerage, and will probably forget all about

the matter. The question is, under what name shall I introduce you to the Doctor, at whose table we shall sit?"

"What would you advise?" asked Hazel. "The name on my steerage ticket is William Jones."

"Oh, no good at all as a *nom de guerre*; too palpably chosen by an unimaginative man. I should sail under my own colours if I were you."

"Good! Then John Hazel I am, and so will remain. And as a guarantee of good faith, I promise not to touch a card all the way over."

"An excellent resolution; see that you keep it!" rejoined Stranleigh, and thus they enjoyed lunch together, and were regaled with the Doctor's best stories.

They got away from Cherbourg before the dinner hour, and after that meal Stranleigh and Hazel walked together on the main deck, until the latter, admitting he was somewhat fagged after the exciting events of the day, went off to his cabin, and Stranleigh was left alone to smoke a final cigar. He leaned on the rail, and gazed meditatively at the smooth sea.

IT was an ideal evening, and Stranleigh felt at peace with all the world. There exists a popular belief that the rich are overburdened with care. This may be true while they are in the money-making struggle, but is not a usual state when the cash is in the bank, or safely invested. Stranleigh occasionally lost money, but an immense amount had been bequeathed him, and he had made many millions more than he had parted with, although he claimed this was merely because of a series of flukes, maintaining that whenever he set to work that part of him known as his brain, he invariably came a cropper.

"You are Mr. Trevelyan, are you not?" said a very musical feminine voice at his elbow. Stranleigh turned in surprise, and saw before him a most charming young woman. He dung his partially consumed cigar into the sea.

"Yes," he replied, easily, "my name is Trevelyan. How did you know?"

That rare smile came to his lips; a smile, people said, which made you feel instinctively you could trust him; and many ladies who were quite willing to bestow their trust, called it fascinating.

"I am afraid," said the girl, whose beautiful face was very serious, and whose large, dark eyes seemed troubled, "I am afraid that I enacted the part of unintentional eavesdropper. I had some business with the purser; business that I rather shrank from executing. You came to him just before I did, for I was hesitating."

"I'm very sorry," said Stranleigh, "if I obtruded myself between you and the purser. Being rather limited in intelligence, my mind can attend to one thing only at a time, and I must confess I did not see you."

"I know you did not," returned the girl. "There was no obtrusion. You were first comer, and therefore should have been first served, as was the case."

"I would willingly have given up whatever rights I possessed in the matter, had I known a lady was waiting."

"I am sure of it. However, your conversation with the purser gave me a welcome respite, and thinking over the crisis, I determined to consult you before I spoke to him."

"In what way can I assist you, Madam?" asked Stranleigh, a return of his usual caution showing itself in the instant stiffening of manner and coldness of words.

"I learned you were exchanging, on behalf of a friend, a third-class ticket for a place in the cabin. I judged from this that you are very good-hearted, and my attention was attracted when you introduced yourself



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