

The ESCAPE

A POST MARITAL ROMANCE
BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
RAY WALTERS
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ed ner. She never made a quicker toilet in all her life, and she presented herself at the door of the hall just as Carrington took his departure.

"Bernard," she cried, catching him by the arm, "what a relief! What a release!"

My lord stood very straight and tall. His eyes snapped viciously. Lady Cecil must have been blind not to have seen how thin the fee upon which she trod.

"She has gone, the little country girl," cooed Lady Cecil. "When you have taken vengeance upon Stratgate you will come back to me, and remember that whatever happens to you, I care very much. I can't forget your lips last night."

She looked up at him and came closer, careless of who might see or hear.

"Madam," said my lord, very stiff and stern. "I, too, cannot forget last night. I was a fool then, but I shall be no longer. Will your ladyship kindly release me?"

He drew himself unmistakably away.

"What, Carrington!" she cried in dismay.

"I mean it both now and forever. And hark, ye, madam, when I return with my wife, I think she will not be best pleased to find you here."

"Are you going back to that—?" and Lady Cecil used a rough word better fitted for the camp than the court.

"You Jezebel!" cried my lord, raising his hand as if to strike her.

He was white with passion and indignation. Lady Cecil shrank back against the door terrified. My lord's hand fell by his side, and without another glance at her he strode down the gravel path where the lightest and best of the grooms held two horses.

My lord sprang to the back of Sallor, put a spur into the horse and raced madly down the driveway, past the lodge gate, out upon the main road and turned his head toward Portsmouth. Had he not been so impetuous with the lodgekeeper, he would have found out as Sir Charles Seton did a few moments later when he came out mounted upon his first-rate horse for hard riding, that the carriage and turned westward.

It was in that direction, therefore, that the young soldier rode, his mind in a turmoil as to whether Stratgate had run away with Mistress Deborah or Lady Ellen, and his soul filled with hot indignation against his host on a number of counts.

Neither of them knew that two hours before a muddy, blood-stained man had come back upon a coach horse from which the traces and other parts of harness had been cut, had passed the gate on the way to Portsmouth at a gallop that bade fair to kill the horse. Stratgate had recovered consciousness after awhile, and thinking that the two women would go back to Portsmouth by some means or other, had mounted the less tired of the two horses, somewhat refreshed by the half hour's rest, and had galloped in that direction.

Thus the three men rode with lust in the heart of one, vengeance in the minds of the other two, and murder in the souls of all, while the two women rocked merrily on in their stanch little boat through the green seas, unknowing and unheeding all that had occurred.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sir Charles Picks Up the Course.
It is necessary that we take up the course of the different actors in the drama serial until they converge at some point which shall be the focus of all their directions.

It was about eight o'clock when Carrington and Seton left the hall, turning their backs upon one another, in beginning this famous man and woman hunt. Seton, mounted on his best horse, covered the ground at a great pace. Naturally he made much better time than Stratgate had, for all his furious driving of the bays.



"What Do You Mean?"

It was half past nine when at a bend in the road he came upon the over-

turned carriage. Here was tangible evidence that he was on the right track. He brought his horse to a full stop and dismounted to examine into the situation.

The cause of the accident was obvious to the simplest mind. He was not content with determining that, however. So he inspected the carriage with the minutest care. He was not long in discovering the hole made by Ellen's pistol ball through the seat, and he instantly divined that one in the carriage had tried to kill the driver. The track of the bullet indicated that if the driver had occupied the usual seat he would infallibly have been hit. In that case there should be evidence of the wound in the shape of blood on the seat or footboard. Although he searched carefully, he could find no blood stains. There had been no rain. To all intents and purposes the carriage had been undisturbed and he could only conclude that the driver had in some way escaped a wound. He thought hard for awhile and finally decided that the driver must have had previous warning and must have crouched down on the footboard, driving from there.

Then he examined the harness. The traces had been cut and of course both horses had disappeared. There was a broken spot in the earth at the base of the nearest tree as if some object had been hurled violently to the ground. The bark of the tree was slightly scalded. He knelt down and examined it closely. Yes, there were blood stains on the white edges. What had happened was evident. The breaking wheel had so abruptly checked the carriage that the driver had been thrown violently to the ground and had been knocked senseless by striking the tree. The driver was Stratgate.

The ground was somewhat soft in the shadow and footprints were discernible in the low spot where the carriage had fallen. There were marks of a woman's shoe and a man's, albeit a man of small feet, by the side of the carriage door and other marks around the horses. From the trampling and hoof marks Seton concluded that the horses must have stood quiet for some time. He surmised that the inmates of the carriage had taken advantage of the stop to get out and go ahead while Stratgate lay stunned. He was puzzled to account for the prints of the man's shoes by the side of the carriage door. They were too small for Stratgate's foot. He divined that the prints of the woman's shoes in the soft ground were made by Debbie's feet. The other must have been made by Lady Ellen's, although what she was doing with a man's shoe on he could by no means understand. He did not know in what guise she had escaped from the hall. He tried to follow the trail of the separate footprints but lost it in the hard ground. After a few moments he went back to the carriage and studied the matter deeply, but could come to no conclusion. There were only two thoughts that gave him any comfort. One was that he was evidently on the right track; the second was that some one was in a state of enmity toward Stratgate, else how account for the pistol bullet through the seat. This thought mightily encouraged him. He was puzzled to know why the traces had been cut, but at last decided that Stratgate must have mounted the two women on one of the horses and himself on the other and have gone on in the direction of the first flight. If he had turned back toward the hall Seton would have met him, or would have heard from it in some way, for the horses under such conditions could make but slow time.

After a final search of the interior of the carriage in which he was rewarded by finding a tiny bowknot of scarlet ribbon which he thought he recognized as one that had trimmed Mistress Debbie's gown, for it was a color she affected, and which he tucked carefully away in his pocket, he mounted his horse and started westward once more. This time he went more slowly. It should be no trick to overtake two tired coach horses heavily burdened, and lest they might have turned aside or stopped at different places, he resolved to pass no farmhouse or no cross road without examining it. Wherever he could he made inquiries, but learned nothing. His mind began to misgive him. He must have overlooked some possible hiding place, but he pressed on.

An hour from the carriage he came upon a bay coach horse straggling by the wayside, with certain portions of harness dragging from him. Here was another mystery. If there had been two horses, where was the other? Why was he abandoned in the high road not a soul being near? The horse permitted him to get close enough to enable him to see that the traces which dangled from his sides had been severed by a knife. There could be no doubt that this was one of Carrington's coach horses. There was no evidence that it had been ridden and Seton was puzzled. He rode to the top of a little hillock and surveyed the country. There was no place of possible shelter for a mile around.

He was completely at a loss to understand the situation, but concluded to ride forward. He rode on for an hour, seeing nothing, obtaining no satisfactory answer to his questions. It was hardly possible that three people could have ridden on one horse. There was no reason on earth, if they had started out on two, for abandoning one.

It was now nearly 11 o'clock in the morning. He concluded that he must have passed the fugitives on the way and so he turned and retraced his steps, pondering deeply. After half an hour's hard galloping he came to a little cross road. He had noticed it before and had been told that it led to the sea. Something checked him in the road. He stopped to breathe his horse a moment and consider his course when it flashed into his mind that perhaps the party in default of horses would endeavor to escape by boat. He knew that Ellen was an accomplished sailor, and he cursed his stupidity that he had not thought of it before.

He galloped down the road and in a few minutes came to a little fishing village. Some of the fishermen had gone off for the day's work in their boats, but one grizzled sailor was moodily pacing up and down the little wharf. Reining his horse in on the shore, Seton halted him.

"My man," he said, "have you seen anything of two or three people, two women and a man inquiring for a boat this morning?"

"No," growled the man, "but I had a boat at this wharf, the best boat in the haven, and when I come down this morning at five o'clock she was gone."

"Gone!" cried Seton, dismounting from his horse in his excitement. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, your honor," returned the man. "She was tied right there—he pointed to one of the spiles—and when I got up I was the first man down here at the wharf, she was gone."

"Was there any message—any clew—any sign?"

"Naught but this," returned the sailor, pulling out of his pocket a handful of shining guineas.

Here was proof positive to Seton. It flashed into his mind that Ellen had mentioned that a ship belonging to her was loaded at Portsmouth. He saw it all now. In some way Ellen and Deborah had escaped from Stratgate. Ellen had instinctively turned to the seashore. She had taken this man's ship and was bound for Portsmouth.

"Well, my friend, I don't see that you have anything to complain of."

"How's that, sir?" queried the sailor.

"Certainly the boat was hardly worth more than five guineas."

"I've naught to say about the price," returned the man, "but I'd like to 've been spoken to before my property was took that way."

"I have no doubt that you will get your property back in the end," returned Seton, confidently.

"And the five guineas?" queried the man, anxiously, his countenance changing.

"And the five guineas, too."

"Good!" exclaimed the boatman, greatly relieved.

"Now, I want to know how far it is from here to Portsmouth?"

"A matter of between 30 and 40 leagues, dependin' on the wind," said the man.

"Would your boat be big enough to make that distance?"

"Lord love yer honor, she's big enough to go to France."

"But could a woman handle her?"

"If she knowed the sea and a boat—a child could do it."

"Was there any provision aboard?"

"A breaker of fresh water and mayhap some hard bread."

"Good!" said Seton, reassured that the fugitives were not starving at any rate. "Now, I want to go to Portsmouth, and I want to get by sea."

He judged that since Carrington was probably headed in that direction, by land, it would be best for him to follow directly upon the course of the fugitives which he had so luckily run down.

"That'll be easy enough, your honor," said the sailor, "there's other boats in the harbor."

"Is your boat a fast one?"

"The fastest for her size along the shore," said the man, proudly.

"But are there any which are larger or better?"

"There's Will Hawke's boat yonder. Will ain't abroad to-day, bein' down with a spell of fever."

"Could we rent or charter that boat?"

"We could if you've the money," returned the sailor.

"Very good," said Seton. "Go and see him, tell him that Sir Charles Seton wants to charter his boat for a run to Portsmouth. Are you free to take charge of her?"

"That I am, master."

"A guinea a day, then, for your services and whatever he wants for the rent of the boat, you to be paid for bringing her back same as going. Is it a bargain?"

"Ay, ay, sir, if we can get Will to rent his boat and his boy to help manage her."

"Set about it at once," said Seton, "while I arrange to leave my horse at the tavern. By the way, what's your name?"

"Whibley, sir. John Whibley, at yer honor's service."

"Very well, Whibley, here's a sovereign for the first day," said Sir Charles, flinging him a coin. "Now, bestir yourself."

Whibley was as good as his promise. A half an hour found Sir Charles afloat in a small lugger with Whibley for captain and two boys, the owner's son and another that he had picked up, for a crew.

"You said this was a fast boat!" Sir Charles remarked to his sailing-master.

"Ay, ay, sir. With a wind like this—and indeed there was a ripping breeze blowing off the channel—we ought to reel off between 10 and 11 knots an hour."

"And what's the best your boat can do?" continued Sir Charles.

"Seven or eight."

"Well, then, we shall nearly twice as fast as they?"

"About one and a third times as fast 'll be nearer," returned Whibley.

"And they had six hours' start of us," said Sir Charles, musingly. "We can scarcely hope to overhaul them. I am afraid."

"I guess not," returned Whibley. "But you never can tell what's goin' to happen at sea. The thing to do is to clap on and hold on, an' trust to luck. It'll be midnight before we sight Portsmouth harbor, and they had ought to get in two hours before. We've got to make a deal of southing to clear Portland Bill. However, we'll hold on for it and do the best we can."

"Spare nothing," said Seton, "an extra guinea apiece to the three of you if you overhaul the other boat."

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Whibley after a moment's thought, "but bein's as they've took my boat, I should like to know how, if 'tain't too bold, who or what them parties is you're chasin'?"

"Two women," returned Seton, bravely.

"Hum," said Whibley under his breath. "I've knowed of a man chasin' one woman half 'round the world, but I've never heard of a lover chasin' two."

CHAPTER IX.

The Hard Riding of Lord Carrington.

Lord Carrington's best horse was named Sallor. He was a magnificent black, built for speed, but not without great powers of endurance. Like all Englishmen, my lord was a famous horseman, although he followed the sea for a livelihood. He was a case in contradiction to the ancient adage that a sailor is never so much out of his element as when he is astride of a horse. Generations of fox-hunting fathers had given him a heritage of horsemanship which the years he had spent upon the sea could not eradicate. Not only was he an expert rider, but he was thoroughly familiar with what could be got out of a horse. He knew how to ride him to the best advantage, when to spare him and when to press him.

It seemed to the groom who followed him on this occasion, hardly less well mounted on one of my lord's best hunters, that Carrington had forgotten all he knew, for he had scarcely entered upon the main road when he put Sallor to his best paces on the jump. In fact, he rode him like one possessed. He spared neither whip nor spur, but drove the horse forward as if the devil were after him and heaven before him. Once the groom ventured to remonstrate, Carrington shut him up with a single word.

The furies of jealousy, of hate, of revenge, were raging in his heart. He had but one desire, to ride down Stratgate and wrest Ellen from his hands. He had no doubt that the three were headed for Portsmouth. He, too, remembered that there was a ship belonging to Ellen about ready to sail from that harbor, and he divined more quickly than Seton did that it was thither she was bound. He expected, since the party had gone in a carriage and could by no means make the speed he was making, that he would overhaul them before nightfall, and in his black mood he was willing to kill his faithful horse, or any number of horses, to bring about the capture and stoppage of the fugitives one moment earlier than could otherwise have been attained.

As if to punish him for his misuse of a noble steed who responded gallantly to every incentive of whip, spur, voice and appeal his master brought to bear, Sallor had the bad luck to cast a shoe. A few leaps and he went instantly lame. With a bitter curse Carrington dismounted and examined the horse. The poor beast stood panting and exhausted, his flanks heaving, his heart-beating, his head drooping. The groom had been distanced and left behind. Carrington was alone with a lame horse miles, apparently, from a posting station or a blacksmith's shop. There was nothing to do but wait. He sat down by the roadside, his eyes strained backward in the direction whither he had come, looking for the groom. After half an hour or so of delay, which fretted him beyond measure, he discovered the fellow leisurely trotting over a hill. Aroused by the halloos of his master, the boy suddenly quickened his pace and soon drew rein beside him.

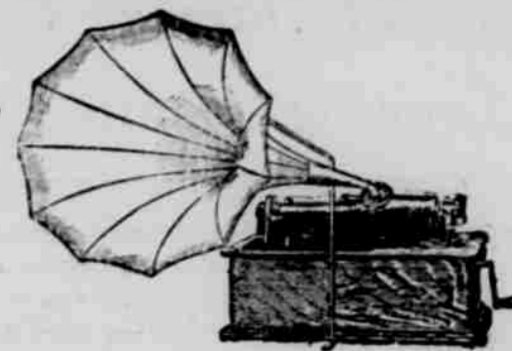
"What do you mean," cried Carrington, furiously, "by loafing along in that way? I told you to keep up with me."

"My lud," said the boy, touching his hat and dismounting, "no man on earth could keep up with you without killing his horse, and there are few horses, even if killed, that'd be equal to Sallor, sir. 'Tisn't in this mare, I know. She was in distress several miles back, and I pulled her up, if I hadn't, she wouldn't be here."

There was sense in what the boy said, and Carrington could not but acknowledge it.

"Give me your horse," he said, "and do you take Sallor. He's cast a shoe. Lead him on the road to the nearest shop and come after me as fast as is safe, but don't kill the horse. I'm bound for Portsmouth. You'll find me at the Blue Boar inn. Here's money for the journey. If anything happens, you can leave your

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Thirty Days and Plain Diet.

Chas. I. Webb was arraigned last night before Mr. Archer, justice of the peace, charged with the larceny of two pairs of shoes of John Gebhart, the cobbler, as recited in this paper yesterday. When brought before the court he readily admitted he was guilty of the offense, and on the recommendation of the county attorney, his honor gave Webb a jail sentence of thirty days—the last ten days of which he shall spend eating bread and drinking nothing but water.

Another Bryan Boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Chris Gauer, May 28, a boy. Chris declared that the first word the youngster said was B-r-y-a-n, which he believes is a sure sign that Bryan will be elected president.—Louisville Courier.

Frank Benfer lost his parrot, and was unable to locate the bird, and after making a fruitless search went to the house and brought down his famous bloodhounds, giving them the scent, and they had the bird located in a very short time. He had wandered down the stairway and was in the cellar.

Rev. A. A. Randall brought his daughter, Miss Ina, home last evening from the hospital in Omaha, where she has been receiving treatment for some time past. Miss Randall is getting along in fine shape, but is far from being well.

Notice to Creditors.

State of Nebraska, ss. In County Court, County of Cass. In the matter of the estate of Margaret A. Patterson, deceased. Notice is hereby given that the creditors of said deceased will meet the administratrix, Mae Patterson, of said estate before me, county judge of Cass county, Nebraska, at the county court room in Plattsmouth, in said county, on the 20th day of June, 1908, and on the 19th day of December, 1908, at ten o'clock, a. m. of each day, for the purpose of presenting their claims for examination, adjustment and allowance. Six months are allowed for the creditors of said deceased to present their claims, and one year for the administratrix to settle said estate, from the 20th day of May, 1908. Witness my hand and seal of said County Court at Plattsmouth, Nebraska, this 20th day of May, 1908. ALLEN J. BEESON, County Judge. Ramsey & Ramsey, Attorney for Estate.

SHERIFF'S SALE.

By virtue of an order of sale, issued by James Robertson, clerk of the district court, within and for Cass county, Nebraska, and to me directed, I will on the

24th Day of June, A. D., 1908,

at 11 o'clock a. m. of said day at the south door of the court house, in said county, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash the following real estate, to-wit: The north half of the northeast (½ of the NE¼) quarter of section thirty-three (33) in township twelve (12), range nine (9), east of the 6th P. M., in Cass county, Nebraska.

The same being levied upon and taken as the property of Walter A. Laughlin, administrator of the estate of Reuben A. Chapin, deceased. Ira Chapin, Edward Chapin, Jesse O. Chapin, Tacie Laughlin, nee Chapin; Kate Beeler, nee Chapin; May E. Chapin, Florence B. Chapin, Roy M. Chapin, and Walter A. Laughlin, guardian of May E. Chapin, Florence B. Chapin, Roy M. Chapin and Albert D. Weston, are defendants to satisfy a judgment of said court recovered by Oscar W. Laughlin, plaintiff, against said defendants. C. D. QUINCY, Sheriff Cass county, Nebraska. Plattsmouth, Neb., May 12th.



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'PHONE—Plattsmouth No. 22.
PLATTSMOUTH, NEBRASKA.

While in Avoca Thursday a Journal representative noticed that Mrs. Philippine Nuttmann was building a magnificent new residence in that village. This new addition to the village will add greatly to its beauty. Also that the Farmers' Telephone company of Avoca are erecting a fine new building in that village, to be used as an office for the company.

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