

Ship Reported Burning at Sea Off California

Steamer Humboldt Steams Back and Forth in Thick Fog Hunting Unidentified Blazing Ship.

Los Angeles, Cal., June 28.—Search for an unidentified ship which last night was reported burning off Ventura, Cal., was being prosecuted early today by the steamer Humboldt.

A radio message picked up at the submarine station at Los Angeles harbor, purporting to come from the distressed vessel gave its location as eight miles off Ventura, but failed to state its name.

The steamer Humboldt went out of its course to render assistance and later reported it was steaming back and forth through a thick fog, hunting for the burning ship.

Residents of Ventura and of Santa Barbara reported having seen a light at sea such as might have come from a burning vessel. It was estimated by Santa Barbarans, the light was 25 or 30 miles from that port.

In the radio message picked up at the submarine base, it was stated the vessel had tried to attract help from other vessels by sending up a rocket.

Officials at the submarine base said they were unable to send help and if naval assistance was given, it would be from San Diego or San Francisco. Later, the Humboldt reported it had undertaken the mission.

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Nowhere ::

By RUBY M. AYRES.
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(Continued from Yesterday.)

"Wake up, mummy-girl—wake up!"

Violet opened drowsy eyes. She put her arms round him and drew him down to her.

"Kiss me, Ronnie; kiss me, darling."

Ronnie was always generous with his kisses. He gave them lavishly now. He twisted Violet's long hair round his neck and pretended to play peek-a-boo. He covered her over with the pillow and pretended he had forgotten where she was.

It was late when Violet dressed. She was recklessly happy. She was going to marry Hastings. But it was not that knowledge which had lifted the load from her heart, but the thought of the security she had given for Ronnie. He was her boy now—nobody could take him away.

She sang while she dressed. Every moment she stopped to kiss Ronnie. No apprehension touched her even when Mrs. Higgs brought up a letter addressed in Martin's writing.

She was no longer afraid of him. She knew that Hastings was hers, house and soul.

Martin had written off in hot anger. He said that unless she would meet him that morning he should go to see Hastings, and tell of the child's whereabouts.

Violet laughed, and tore the letter into shreds. Let him go, and Hastings would send him away.

She blew kisses to Ronnie all the way down the ugly road, where all the houses looked alike. The last corner she heard was his sweet, shrill voice calling to her.

"Dood-bye, mummy-girl."

She was late at Violette's. Lena bad her good morning coldly. Florrie Jones elbowed her rudely as she passed.

Madame alone greeted her smilingly.

"Did you have a good time?" she asked affably. Her black eyes rested quickly on the girl's face. Violet felt the color rising to her cheeks.

She wondered what Madame would say when she heard that—that she left afraid to voice the wonderful thing that had happened. It all seemed like a dream—a dream that Hastings had ever kissed her a dream that she had ever cried in his arms, a dream that she was going to be his wife.

His arms held her so strongly and gently it was a haven of rest to the girl who had battled against an unkind world for so long. She thought of Ronnie, and for the moment she forgot that this man was Ronnie's father.

Hastings bent his head till his cheek touched hers. "Violet," he whispered her name, "Violet, will you be my wife?"

He felt her tremble in his arms, and he did not wait for his answer. The word that trembled on his lips was stilled by his kisses.

Violet slept long and heavily that night. The morning sun was streaming into the room when she was wakened by Ronnie tugging at her hair.

longer wondered when his hard pain closed over Hastings's generous savor.

Violet had a slack morning in the showroom. It was raining heavily and few purchasers ventured out. It was nearly 12 when a motor brougham drove up to the smart door and two women got out. Violet recognized them as Mrs. Clancy and her daughter. For the first time she remembered that they had been with Hastings on the previous night and wondered what excuse he had made to leave them. She imagined that the girl eyed her coldly when, under Madame's direction, she paraded to show off various Paris models.

Mrs. Clancy was hard to please. She was evidently a spoilt darling. Finally she left the shop without making a purchase.

Madame looked after her clients with a philosophical shrug of her shoulders.

"They will buy another time," she said, meeting Violet's gaze. "They have not much money, but they have taste, and if she marry Monsieur Hastings—"

"She is to marry Mr. Hastings?"

Madame raised her thin brows.

"I do not know. I only say if."

Mademoiselle such men have to marry in their own—what you call it—station?"

Violet flushed scarlet. It trembled on her lips to tell Madame that she was Hastings's betrothed wife. She almost wished she had not asked him to keep it secret for the present. She turned away biting her lips, conscious that Madame was looking after her curiously.

At lunch Violet sat next to Lena Adams. The elder girl looked pale and unhappy. She hardly touched the food placed before her. She asked Violet, indifferently, if she had enjoyed herself yesterday.

"We all know where you went," she said. "So you need not pretend."

"I have no wish to pretend," said Violet. She felt hurt at Lena's persistent unfriendliness. She genuinely liked her and would have gladly made up their small difference.

Florrie Jones, at the further end of the table, talked and laughed loudly. Lena frowned as she listened to her shrill voice and frivolous conversation.

"She is like you," Lena said, cynically. "She is in fine feather because she has been out for a day with some man. Oh, I am sick of it all!"

She left the room abruptly.

Florrie saw her go. She called after her shilly. When no answer was forthcoming she informed the table generally that Lena was crossed in love. Violet felt that she hated her. She wondered that any man could find her attractive.

Business was very slack during the afternoon. Madame dismissed half the girls early. Violet was among them.

As she was leaving the building the smart commissionaire came up to her with a letter. His face was full of meaning as he handed it to her. A smile twitched his usually grave face.

The letter was from Hastings.

"Dearest and Best," he wrote.

"I am sorry that unavoidable business will keep me from meeting you

this evening. I have told my mother all about you, and she is very anxious to see you. Write and tell me when and where I may see you, and believe me, as always yours, my darling."

"RONALD HASTINGS."

Violet slipped the letter into her pocket with a sense of mingled triumph and shame.

He was giving so much, this man, and she? What was the giving him?

Nothing.

Lena had seen the delivery of the little note. She watched her with somber eyes.

"So he writes to you," she said.

"He used to write to me when I first came here, but it won't last," she laughed, cynically. "Make the most of your turn, my dear."

Violet made no answer. She looked at Lena's passionate eyes and her heart smote her.

Would Hastings have ever cared for this girl had not she, Violet, stepped between them? She could not bear to think that she might have extranged him.

She felt glad to have an evening free, for whenever she thought of him, an odd sense of shyness seized her; she found herself blushing when she remembered his kisses and the strong clasp of his arms.

She hurried home to Mrs. Higgs.

She was all eagerness to see Ronnie. She went quickly up the three flights of stairs. The house seemed very quiet.

Olive was not home yet. Gattwick's did not close till half-past 7.

Ronnie was not in Violet's room when she entered, but a little pair of his shoes lay on the worn hearth rug.

The engine she had bought him stood on the mantelshelf with a piece of string still tied to the funnel by which he had drawn it about.

Violet took off her hat. She supposed Ronnie was downstairs with Mrs. Higgs. She busied herself in preparing tea. She thought she

would get it ready before she went down to fetch him. It warmed her heart to think how glad he would be when he saw her. She was home fully an hour earlier than usual.

As she waited for the kettle to boil her eyes fell on the portrait of the man that stood alone on the mantelshelf and a slight frown puckered her brows. The lines of her sensitive mouth hardened.

The took the portrait up and looked at it. The pictured eyes seemed to smile mockingly at her. She turned the frame over and stood irresolutely for an instant with it in her hand. Then she deliberately unfastened the back and took out the photograph. It was faded and some writing in one corner was indistinct.

Violet's lip curled as she read the words written there, "Yours ever devotedly, Alfred."

With a sudden gesture she tore the portrait across and across, and dropped the pieces into the grate; then she put the empty frame away in a drawer.

The mantelshelf looked oddly bare without it. She kept her eyes averted as she busied herself making tea and cutting the bread and butter.

When everything was ready she went down the stairs and knocked at the door of Mrs. Higgs' kitchen.

"Come in," said a voice tartly.

Mrs. Higgs sat in a rocking chair by the table. She had been crying.

She still applied the corner of her apron to her one eye. When she saw Violet she stood up.

"I think as you might have given me warning as he was to be took," she began with dignity. "Never a word did you breathe to me, who'd grown to love him like me own with his pretty ways and that!"

Her tart voice broke suddenly. Tears coursed down her unlovely face.

Violet stared.

(Continued in The Bee Tomorrow)

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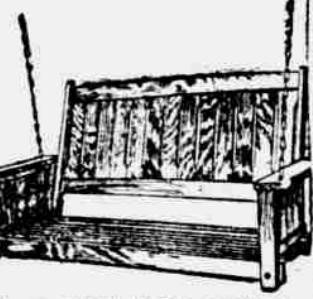
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