

Desperate Desmond

Even the Birds of the Air Refuse to Carry a Message for the Villain.

By Hershfield



I—IN THE RIVER.
Claude and Desmond, aided by the men of the Chinese river patrol, are now fast catching up with Desmond, the scoundrel having taken to the river in an effort to escape. Claude, tender-hearted as usual, will not order a volley without giving Desmond a chance to surrender, and more than once such a delay has enabled the villain to escape his deserved punishment.



II—THE SWOOPING GULL.
Smiling his villainous smile, Desmond takes a small piece of bread from his pocket and crumbles it upon the surface of the water. Claude, watching from the boat, cannot see any object in the act of Desmond, but that astute villain is for some reason or other desirous of attracting the seagulls to him. Undoubtedly he has some plan to foil the lovers.



III—HIS PLAN.
Desmond, as we anticipated, did have a plan which he expects will help him to baffle Claude. When the seagull comes close beside Desmond to pick up the pieces of bread, Desmond pulls out a crayon and quickly writes a message of warning on the bird's wing. He hopes that the river patrol will see it and hurry to his aid against Claude and the patrol.



IV—THE WINGED MESSENGER.
With the message clearly showing on its white feathers, the seagull rises from the water and speeds its way past the boat on which Claude stands, gun in hand. As the Chinese do not allow seagulls to be killed, they dare not fire at the bird, which is speeding in the direction of Desmond's friends, and the villain sees his troubles at an end.



V—THE FALLING FEATHERS.
Too hasty in his exultation, Desmond's joy is turned to grief as he notices the feathers dropping around the water. They come from the seagull bearing his message, and already so many of the big feathers have fallen out that the writing is completely lost. No good now if the bird passes the pirates—they could not know of his great danger.



VI—CAPTURED.
It is a simple matter now for Claude and the Chinese to capture the villain, for no swimmer could get away from the junk. Desmond, knowing that he has no immediate chance of escape, surrenders to Claude, but even in surrendering serves notice that he will have his turn some day. Claude resolves to end the villain's career. What happens next tomorrow.

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