

# FOR LOVE OR MONEY

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### "O'ER LAND AND SEA."

When the marquis looked at his watch he found they had accomplished the task in less time than had been promised.

It was the fastest run that had ever been made between London and Dover, and as they passed the motor he did not forget the grimy, faithful driver who had done his duty so fearlessly and so well.

Again the man from Scotland Yard was put in charge, and bent his energies to discovering what had become of those they sought.

One thing soon became evident—they had arrived in Dover too late for the last Channel boat and must still be in the city unless some special means of traversing the sea had been placed at their disposal.

It was really wonderful how this man took up the trail—the others were reminded of a bird dog following a strong scent.

Step by step he advanced, and hope began to rise again in their breasts as they realised how quickly he rectified mistakes.

The trail led them to the water, and then they knew the crisis was near.

It was a period of most intense anxiety on the part of the two men, for a dreadful fear haunted them that perhaps Juanita had some myriads of little wavelets, and sea would forever clear her path to the heart of the marquis.

In all his life Jack Overton never suffered such wretched pangs of remorse and despair as came upon him while they looked out upon the dark waters where the stars were reflected upon myriads of little wavelets and considered what a trackless waste the sea might be.

Livermore was alternately swearing and muttering threats to himself; if this strain were kept up it would be unsafe to insure his mind.

His very presence was a keen reproach to the marquis, while his agony stabbed Jack as might a two-edged sword.

Still, they were to a degree helpless in the hands of the man upon whose sagacity they depended, and when his report made action possible it might be seen how quickly Overton would spring to the front, determined to win at any cost.

He came at length, and brought positive news.

Those they sought had gone to sea in a small steamer that had evidently been awaiting their arrival.

From one point and another he had reached the conclusion that their goal was a Spanish port, since the men who manned the black little steamer always talked of Santander, and they declared themselves native fishermen of that picturesque spot on Biscay Bay.

That was all they had to work upon, and yet the detective seemed so confident that he put much of hope into the minds of his companions.

There was only one thing to do—follow.

They must shake the dust of old England from their feet and give chase.

Few people anticipate a trip upon the Channel with pleasure, but none of the trio flinched.

"Let us find the boat," was what the marquis said, as cheerily as possible.

And they began the search. It

piqued the man from Scotland Yard to think that all this trouble had been caused by a woman—evidently he was inclined to have a poor opinion of the sex as a whole—but, then, his operations had been confined to a certain class of criminals, usually stupefied by drink, and as his experience took in a wider field he would learn that it was the height of folly to despise the schemes of a bright woman's mind.

Given a feverish anxiety to be afloat, and unlimited capital, in a seaport one need not search very long for the craft.

Even at this uncanny hour of the night business was being transacted along the water-front, while boats arrived and departed—for wind and tide and weather are factors more important to seafaring men than daylight or darkness.

Following a clue he had picked up, the detective soon had them aboard a little craft that was used in the coasting trade, a staunch and speedy boat, such as would answer their purpose admirably.

Alas! the owner was a thrifty Scot, who had a will as firm as the mountains of his native country—even a magnificent price did not appear to stir him; but when the marquis finally offered to purchase the boat at double her cost, he was conquered, overwhelmed.

To his credit be it said that, later on, when he heard the story, he swore that he would have let them charter the boat on their own terms had the known ladies were in danger—nevertheless he did not refuse to accept when the marquis gave a staggering cheque for the craft's value, according to contract.

Out of the harbour and away. Their course was south-east by south.

An exhilaration took possession of them as the lights of Dover twinkled behind, but the Channel chop sea speedily reduced them to a chaotic condition.

Never, so long as they lived, would those gentlemen forget that voyage—added to the miserable qualms of maidenly mer, which even a yachtsman like the marquis was not proof against, they had to contend with all the anxieties natural to such a blind chase, for there was no positive certainty that those they pursued meant to head for Santander, even though the detective had reached that conclusion.

Nor was that all.

About daybreak of the second day the wind blew great guns, and they found themselves in a storm.

It is bad enough to meet with such a gale of wind upon the open sea, but the danger becomes doubly great when there hangs over one the chance of being in collision with some other tempest-driven craft.

The English Channel and Biscay Bay have swallowed up many a devoted vessel as a consequence of such meetings in the storm rack; and dancing, blue waves conceal sad sights and murmur the requiem of many a gallant tar as they lap the shore or glisten in the sunlight.

But such is a sailor's life—here today, and to-morrow Heaven alone may know.

The marquis had gained the mastery over his sickness, and had forced his way to the deck so that he might gaze upon the fury of the blast.

Somehow, the tumbling billows that tossed the little Clyde-built steamer upon their crests as if she were a straw or a cork seemed to be in sympathy with the storm that raged within—he even exulted in the furious

gusts of wind that made the vessel quiver from stem to stern and tore the white caps from the summit of each giant wave, to send it wildly flying to leeward in a cloud of spume.

At the same time the presence of this little tempest in a teapot gave him uneasiness, more on account of the other boat than their own—perhaps the vessel Juanita had engaged for the purpose of abduction might not be so staunch a craft. In common with all Anglo-Saxons, the marquis had a species of contempt for anything that floated the crimson and gold banner of Spain, although the Caledonian captain assured him that four-fifths of such vessels had undoubtedly been built in the dockyards of France, Italy, or Great Britain.

Captain Livermore also appeared, looking peaked and gray.

The poor man suffered intense agony of mind, nor could anyone blame him under such distressing conditions.

He had in a measure gained control over himself, and was very quiet; but the firmly-closed lips and the glitter of his eyes declared how eagerly he awaited an opportunity to strike a blow, even though it cost him his life, for the woman he loved—Fedora.

The storm was at its height about noon, and, as they had been blown far out of their course, no one might say when the port of Santander would be reached, although the captain made some sort of a prophecy that under certain conditions they would bring up there by the second night.

At sundown the storm still raged, and the gallant little steamer struggled desperately to hold her own.

That is the time when honest workmanship counts, when an imperfect casting may bring about sudden and irrevocable disaster; but they make sterling engines at Belfast, and every rod and joint performed its duty in the hour of need.

So these men again sought their staterooms to pray, not so much for themselves, since they had lost all personal fear, but for the one whose absence from home had taken them upon this wild chase across the stormy waters.

During the night, between the cat naps he secured, the marquis was impressed with the belief that the vessel did not pitch and toss so violently and upon making an observation found that the clouds had parted, leaving a clear sky overhead.

This was at least reassuring, and going back to his berth he fell into a refreshing sleep, from which he was not aroused until the sun, peeping through the bull's-eye window, fell upon his eyes.

Upon reaching deck he found everything lovely.

The sea had subsided almost entirely and a fresh morning breeze was commencing to stir its surface into myriads of laughing wavelets.

As soon as the captain could decide upon his course he laid her head almost due east, expecting at noon to take an observation, when he might discover their location to a fraction.

It was a pleasant day's journey.

About noon the captain called their attention by means of the glass to far distant land to the south, which he declared to be the northern coast of Spain, showing that they were now traversing the romantic Bay of Biscay, known to the natives as the Gulf of Gasconne.

Thus there was now a fair chance, the captain promised, that before midnight they would be at anchor in the harbour of Santander.

This gave the two haggard, desperate men some relief—at least, it was a satisfaction to know they would arrive at a point where the worst could be discovered.

Night came on. Far away were lights, and these came from the Spanish seaport whither they were bound.

How like lead dragged the hours as they steamed directly toward the beacon! The marquis walked the deck incessantly, while Livermore leaned over the bow, his anxious gaze glued on those lights which seemed to dance just beyond their reach like jack-o'-lanterns in a marsh.

Put all things must end, and finally they entered the harbour, where other vessels lay at anchor, and the captain soon had their mudhook fastened in Spanish soil.

It was perhaps ten minutes later when the marquis appeared at Livermore's elbow as the latter stood at the rail surveying the lights of the town, and said in a hoarse whisper:

"Make no outcry, my friend; control yourself and listen. Our captain is ready to take his oath that the steamer dimly seen on our quarter yonder is the boat that left Dover, and which we have chased over the sea!"

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE SEARCH FOR A WIFE.

The words of the marquis electrified Livermore. All his lassitude seemed to suddenly vanish.

In the presence of actual danger, when face to face with a genuine emergency that called for manly qualities, he was again the cool, heroic explorer who had traversed the African wilderness and won fame and fortune beneath the tropic sky.

"That is cheering news, marquis. If true, it relieves our minds of one dreadful fear—the boat survived the storm, at least. Please Heaven, she is safe on board, and that we may succeed in rescuing her! When shall we go?"

Evidently the captain believed in promptness. He would have shown a similar celerity of action had it been some other man's wife who was in danger; at the same time his eagerness was easily understood.

Nothing suited the marquis better, for he was a man of action himself.

Besides, the strain upon his own mind was very severe, seeing he had fears that innocent trusting Mazette had been lured from her apartments in the same way as Fedora—Mazette, who would have flown anywhere and braved all dangers if under the belief that she could be of assistance to him.

"Let us have a council of war," he said with energy, "and take the opinions of our detective and the captain as to the advisability of making an immediate advance on the enemy's works."

"Good! That is spoken as I would have put it," declared Maurice, eagerly.

So the four of them came together, and the pros and cons were discussed earnestly.

A plan of action was decided upon. Steam should be kept up by the commander, so that an immediate departure from the harbour could be made in case it was deemed necessary.

The three others entered a boat, which was manned by several of the stoutest and most expert sailors on board—men whose muscles were capable of enormous work should there be need of haste.

Unknown dangers lay before them, but such a thing as fear never entered into their calculations; having determined to accomplish the sacred object they had in view, all the perils that might be accumulated together would not daunt them.

Under the magic touch of expert rowers the dusky boat glided toward the quarter where the outlines of the other steamer could be dimly seen.

If an indifferent watch were kept aboard the craft there would be little or no difficulty in accomplishing the first part of their scheme, at least.

This was to temporarily disable the screw of the steamer, so that such a thing as pursuit would be out of the question.

To this end the canny Scot had not only advised them out of his abundant knowledge, but he had at the same time supplied them with the material of war from which they were to accomplish a given purpose.