

was as if chained to the spot. Cries came from it—cries which seemed to rend her very heart, for the voice was the voice of her brother.

But the sounds which had first reached her were not these. They came from other lips which were more heavily burdened, if that were possible, with a weight of despair. Fully-dressed and not twenty yards from the land, caught as it were in the jaws of some unseen gin, her father was fighting fiercely to release himself, but as unavailingly as his son. There was something hideous and incredible in the mystery of this helplessness; it was as if the powers of nightmare had suddenly become incarnate upon this peaceful stretch of strand.

The next moment Violet was racing towards the shore; she made as if she too would plunge into the ripples. Startlingly, insistently, her father waved her back.

"Not you—not you too!" he cried. "The sands have got me—and Jack—and Jack! Run for help! Run to the School—the School!"

She hesitated, bewildered by his vehemence and her own fear.

"But you—you?" she cried. "Let me come a few yards nearer! Let me try!"

"No!" he thundered. "No! It won't reach me for hours—hours! But it is rising every minute on Jack! Run—for Heaven's sake, run! Every second may make a difference! Run! Run!"

He waved his hand frantically towards the great wireless mast which topped the circle of the dunes. Pantingly she set her face towards it. She tried to concentrate all her powers into speed, but as she fled across the acres of clinging sand they seemed to widen rather than to narrow between her and her goal.

The bent grass tripped her; she fell. Doggedly she rose to her feet and tottered on. Her shoes were filled with the sand; as her feet churned it, it seemed to beat up into her very eyes and blind her. Its dry and parching dust filled her mouth. The world had become a mist of sun particles through which the group of buildings loomed unreal and shrouded with haze. She tried to call out; sight seemed to leave her; she could not hear.

And then, breaking through the veil of her despair like a sudden sunray through a cloud her lover's voice was in her ears, his hand under her arm. She reeled, almost speechless, into the support of his embrace.

"I saw you from the hangar roof!" he cried. "What is it—what has happened?"

Ordered speech was beyond her! she could only gasp in syllables.

"The sands—the sands!" she panted. "A boat—get a boat!"

He started. His voice became tense with a new anxiety.

"The sands?" he repeated, fiercely. "Your father is caught—or Jack?"

She made a vehement gesture of assent. "Yes!" she whispered. "Yes! A boat—a boat!"

He wheeled away from her; he raced back towards the fence.

"Go back to them—go back!" he shouted over his shoulder. "I'll come—I'll come!" He disappeared behind the wooden wall, his voice ringing out in loud commands to his men.

Suddenly out of the earth, as it seemed to her falling senses, a dozen officers and men were about her, carrying ropes, questioning her vehemently. Her voice was gone; she could only point feebly towards the shore, urging them with trembling gestures which told their own tale of the need for haste. They did not hesitate. Two of them lifted her bodily and ran; the rest sped on ahead, vaguely following the direction of her finger, bent to discover what she had no strength to tell. The sense of nightmare still gripped her. It was as if in a dream that she was borne down the path up which she had stumbled, saw her escort halt upon the edge of safety, and fling out the rope which they carried to the expectant hands which twitched for its coming. With the strength of a dozen arms her father was dragged to her feet.

He rose; he gesticulated violently; his voice shrilled into fierce vehemence as the passion of his despair tore him.

"Half my fortune to the man who saves him!" he shouted, pointing to the dark figure which still wrestled in the grip of the sands and the advancing tide. He seized one of his rescuers by the shoulder. He shook him wrathfully.

"It's him you should have saved, not me!" he cried. "You fools—you fools! Why are you waiting? Where is the boat—the boat!"

With a restraining gesture the officer laid his fingers upon the gesticulating arm.

"There is no boat, Mr Winslow," he said, quietly. "If there were it could not reach your son. No force we could employ would cut a passage for it through—that!" He pointed to the quaking mass which trembled and shifted beneath the suck of the rising tide. He held up his hand.

"Listen!" he cried, suddenly. "That means rescue if rescue is humanely possible. Be sure of that!"

Winslow looked at him with haggard, uncomprehending eyes. Then suddenly he drew himself up tensely. He and all who stood beside him turned their faces eagerly to the sky.

Superb against the blur, circling in a vast curve towards the river-mouth, came the aeroplane, the propeller drumming out its message of hope to those below. It swept gracefully over the headland, its shadow falling upon the dark figure which still fought valiantly against the advancing hosts of white. The hiss and thunder of the breakers had deafened Jack Winslow—the sound of the aeroplane's passing did not reach him till its shadow touched his face. A

dozen voices called to him warningly—a dozen hands were thrust towards him, but too late. The man had eyes for nothing but his recovered treasure, no ears for any voice but the one that had been threatened by the eternal silence of death. He flung his arms about his son.

From above there was a rending crash.

Torn by the suddenly arresting shock, a score of stays parted. The great wings shivered, lost control upon the air, and then were flung upwards by the drag of the descending weight. The stern tilted.

With a sullen thud the wounded machine sank upon the crest of a sea-smoothed rock.

And the pilot? They found him in the core of the wreckage. He lay still—very, very still.

To Laurence Rayner it seemed a long night from which he was waking—one filled, too, with wonderful dreams. He was not quite sure, indeed, that it was reality or a vision which confronted



"Lie still!—hard a soft voice. 'Please—please lie still!'"

sudden light of hope leaped into his desperate eyes. And Laurence Rayner's voice was reassuring—it thrilled the boy's heart with confidence. The machine swept round him. From the central stays a rope was trailed.

"Be smart, Jack!" The soldier's tone was brisk and matter-of-fact. "I daren't go very slow—I must keep moving. But when I come round again—snatch it!"

The drone of the engine faded and then rose in sudden volume. The cord came splashing straight at the boy's head.

His hands shot up, got a hold, slipped, caught again, and then settled upon a knot tenaciously. The shock sent a wall of spray flying right and left.

A gasp went up from the watchers' lips, for the great white bird rocked and swayed perilously.

Then it steadied—caught upon the air grudgingly—gained speed—flew, at last, towards them with wide, unflinching wings. And, dragging like some unseated anchor through the churn of tide and sand came Jack Winslow, white-faced, set of teeth, holding on grimly against the grip of the defeated sea, swept back to life again out of the menacing shackles of death.

A queer, gasping cry went up from Mr Winslow's lips. As the rope and its burden tumbled up the spray through the last few yards of shallow, he sprang forward with arms outstretched.

him, so remarkable a sight met his incredulous gaze. It was Winslow who was staring intently into his face—Winslow, down whose cheek tears were pouring and whose eyes expressed limitless concern.

The soldier blinked and stirred uneasily. He tried to rise. He put out his hand to find support, and noted with dull surprise that his fingers were bruised and bleeding.

"Lie still!" said a soft voice. "Please—please lie still!"

He looked up. Violet's face bent down to his—Violet's hand was on his shoulder.

Amazement thrilled him. In spite of the restraining hand he struggled to his knees and looked round. Immediately opposite him lay a tangle of canvas, stays, and steel. Remembrance came with a rush.

"By Jove!" he deplored sadly. "Our best machine!"

Winslow made a reassuring gesture. Anxiety was fading from his eyes, to be replaced by intense relief.

"That can be paid for—easily," he said. "Some things—the risk of a life, usefulness, valour—can never be repaid; one can only try to offer one's best." He took Violet's hand in his and gently closed the bruised fingers upon it. "For a beginning," he said, humbly, "will you accept—this?"



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