

Intra-an

By Randall Parrish

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The Best Sea Story of the War That Has Been Written

THE INDIAN CHIEF HAS BEEN STRUCK BY LIGHTNING AND IS ALMOST A WRECK—HOLLIS MEETS THE OWNER AND LEARNS SHIP'S DESTINATION

Synopsis—Robert Hollis, who tells the story, is a guest on Girard Carrington's yacht, *Esmeralda*. It is supposed to be a "strag" party, and Hollis is surprised on discovering a woman, who evidently wishes to remain unknown aboard. She merely tells him her name is Vera. Carrington tells his guests of the coming war, and that he is engineering a copper pool. The yacht is sunk in a collision and Hollis saves McCann, Millionaire, and one of the party. Hollis and McCann rescue Vera and leave the ship in a small boat. McCann refuses to submit to the authority of Hollis, and the latter orders obedience. The eastways are sighted by a ship, the *Indian Chief*, which takes them aboard.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

"The lady was sent into the cabin, sir, and gives a statement where she could fix herself up a bit," he answered soberly. "The other fellow had a heap of things to say, and I don't know of some other grudge against you. I hadn't any time to listen to his yarn, so I naturally turned him over to the woman, for he has the right to hear. He must have got a peach of a swine, sir."

"I had to hit him—yes, but we can talk of that later. Where is he now?" "In the galley, sir, where he is being heated, same water. After they got him fixed up, is he to go aft, or forward?"

"Aft, if you have nothing to spare; he is no sailorman, but a millionaire from New York; he has money to burn."

"The fellow looked at me with his mouth wide open, his glistening eyes almost laughable."

"The devil you say, sir; he don't look the part to my notion. You was all part of a yacht party?"

"Yes, the *Esmeralda*, a steam yacht owned by Gerald Carrington of New York. We were run down about a hundred miles east of Montauk by a liner, which was not a sailor, but her course. She cut us square in two, but, excepting us three, all living on board got away in the boats. By accident we were left, and escaped later in the dinghy."

"What became of the liner?" "She picked up the boats, and, thinking they had all the survivors, went on. She was a mail boat, like the yacht went down five minutes after we left her; we're being floated overboard. Now, Mr. Masters, that's our story in brief. What's the trouble here?"

"I'll tell yer enough to make it clear, sir, he said slowly, 'although there is one thing which you have not heard in detail. You're a seaman—or was once—so you'll see easily the sort of a ship we're in. In the only officer left on the lookout, and I can't get a ship if you give it to me. It's only the chief engineer, and my assistant is in the fore-cabin with a broken leg. You see that rifle for me, for it was lightning did that. Two bolts, so the crew says, for I was down below, and never knew what happened till the electricity all went out. They cut the steam, and clumb out on deck. Lord, but it was a black night, raining cats and dogs, but no wind to speak of. It was the rain which saved us, for the startled yonder—yer can see where it burned—but it did out of itself. When morning came we saw what we was up against; it looked a lot sighted, more than then it does now. Them bolts of lightning he knocked the foremast into smithereens, killed the wheelsman, and put the steering gear part out of commission. Then the topmast an' spars just naturally wrecked the bridge, and charrhouse, and a never knew what hit him, an' both the captain an' the first officer was a standin' together on the bridge, and the topmast crashed the life out of 'em. There was six salarion men but the same way, an' four of 'em died. It was the standest mess I ever saw in my life."

"Bed enough, surely; when did this happen?" "Night afore last; we've cleaned up six since, but we've not work much under me, an' we're worried. I rigged up this wheel aft, so as to keep an engine going, and hung a coil waiting for something to turn up. There wasn't nothing else, I can't say."

"No, I presume not; and my eyes rested thoughtfully on the scene before me. 'How is the hull—sound?' 'You see sunk deeply.'"

"That's cargo, sir; full to the hatches. The ship's dry as a bone; and the hull would swell every three hours."

"And what about the crew?" "Just so, no; a crisp brought them down, and we were not at sea long enough for the mater to whip them into shape when this thing happened. I'm no deck officer, Mr. Hollis, and I don't take orders from you, sir, very well. I call 'em a d—n hard lot."

I made no comment, endeavoring to let all these facts over in my mind, and reach some decision. It was evident enough what was wanted, and how I could best serve; but would they be satisfied with the offer which I felt willing to make? It was far from my desire to assume command of the *Indian Chief*, and guide her destined on a long outward voyage, to whatever port her cargo had been consigned. What that port was made slight difference, for my whole desire was to return as quickly as possible to New York. I would, however, assume temporary command, and consent to navigate the vessel to the nearest American port, where a competent skipper could be procured, and a new crew obtained. The *Indian Chief* possessed no

wireless outfit, and whatever I did must be on my own judgment. This consideration flashed swiftly through my mind, and I attained desire before Masters again spoke. "I would navigate the boat to the nearest port, and then leave them to do as they pleased with vessel and crew. I cared nothing for the salvage; the presence of the sound of Masters' voice, which rewarded my desire. All I cared for was to get myself and the young lady away from the wreck, and the young lady was interested by the sound of Masters' voice. It sorter seemed to me, Mr. Hollis, he was saying, 'that maybe it would be best for me to explain these things before you get into the water. You'll naturally want to know just the condition before you decide what to do.'"

"I have decided, Masters," I answered briefly. "There is only one thing I can do legally, and that is navigate the *Indian Chief* to the nearest American port, and surrender her to her owners. As a licensed captain of steam I have authority to assume command to this extent, but no more."

"I reckon you would do that, that way, sir. I'm no sea lawyer, but I sorter figured it out about as you do. But that ain't the situation exactly, is it?"

"What isn't?" "Why, this owner business, sir. You see, the owner of the *Indian Chief*, an' the owner of the cargo below hatches, is on board here."

"The owner is on board?" "That's the gospel truth; that's why I took the trouble to keep you here, and tell you what I have before you went down and met him, sir. It gives you a chance to think out your best course."

"But if the man is aboard, why did he not appear on deck to give us welcome? Surely our arrival must have been of interest?"

"Likely as not by hasn't even heard yet that you are aboard. You see, his cabin is on the starboard side, and he would see nothing from the fore-cabin. Besides, Mr. Hollis, he is lame, and it is a bit hard for him to get around on a ship without help. What do you say, sir? Shall we go down now, an' let it over below?"

"The sooner the better," I said, with a glance over the port rail. "The fog is thickening out yonder, and we may have a heavy sea better with some more of that rifle overboard."

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own, yet certainly not over thirty years of age. He was not at all like what had been expected to see, and I faced him in surprise, for he was a step toward us, leaning slightly, but at sight of a stranger paused. "Whose eyes are those, Masters?" he asked, his eyes on my face. "Is there another vessel near us?"

"No, sir; and the engineer stood behind me, awkwardly shifting his weight. "We have picked up some eastways. This man here is Captain Hollis, mate of the *Atlas* line."

"Indeed?" he held out his hand to me, his eyes looking directly into mine. "I regret your misfortune, sir, but your coming is a godsend to us. Your ship was wrecked?"

"Stunk in collision," I answered. "But it was not my ship; I have not been to sea for several years in any position of command. On this occasion I was a guest on board a steam yacht belonging to Gerald Carrington of New York. The name of the vessel was the *Esmeralda*. I need not say more, for I was just at present, but three of us have been picked up by this ship."

"Three—all passengers?" "I was one, and the woman is the only one left. The other two were actually contracted for by the German government agent in this open market."

"Not exactly in the open market, Mr. Hollis. It was all accomplished in my life. I alone am known in the transaction. My intimate personal relations was me, the contract, my mother being a relative of a high official. The negotiations were conducted secretly."

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man troops had invaded Belgium in an effort to reach Paris. The night before our accident a great British battleship, the *Queen Mary*, was sighted. She was under orders to bottle up the German liners. May I see your manifest?"

"He took the list from an inner drawer, and handed it over to me without a word, evidently stunned by the unexpected news, and unable to speak. I turned the list over, and was slowly glancing quietly over the various items. They were astounding."

"I owned, I can hardly credit my own eyes," I exclaimed. "I have sold these goods were actually contracted for by the German government agent in this open market."

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reputation for business ability, and a few thousand dollars. This contract came to me as a godsend; it was so arranged that I was able to carry it with a little help. If successful, it will put me on my feet again."

"You are not German?" "Not a drop of Teuton blood is in my veins, so far as I know. I never dreamed of the possibility of war, or even asked the nature of the shipments."

"I understand. Of course it makes little difference where one's sympathies chance to be in a case like this," he said, looking into my eyes. "You have been perfectly frank with me; now I am going to be just as frank with you. I believe your story, and my whole inclination is to stand by and help you through."

"You will be interrupted eagerly, his eyes glazing. 'You mean you are going to make the attempt?'"

"No, I didn't say that, my friend; only that such is my natural inclination. If there was only my own power, my own time, to be considered, I would shake hands with you instantly, and accept the adventure. But there is another man on board, and he is a soldier—a woman, whose comfort and wishes I cannot ignore."

"But she could be transhipped?" "I am not sure, but I can send our heralds and probable course. Any other man on board, and I would have been picked up by this ship."

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ESTIMATED DAMAGE \$3,000,000

Explosions Indicate That Disaster Is Result of Plot—Several Suspects Arrested.

Norfolk, Va.—Smouldering ruins mark the heart of Norfolk's business section as the result of disastrous fire, new year's day, believed to have been started by German agents.

The extensive fire started by German agents, with soldiers, sailors and marines guarding the streets, and no one permitted abroad without passes.

Two entire blocks are in ruins. Some of the city's finest buildings, including the famous Monticello hotel, have been destroyed. The damage is estimated at \$3,000,000.

One fireman was killed and half a score injured by falling walls.

The fire was of incendiary origin, as appears certain officials declare. Successive explosions occurred during the day in the fire-wreck area and each time the flames, partly under control, would gain fresh headway in consequence.

Several arrests were made by the police and the suspects turned over to the federal authorities, charged with plotting against the United States.

The fire swept district is but three blocks from the Elizabeth river waterfront on the north and five on the west. It is more than a mile from the Norfolk navy yard, which is located on the waterfront in the western section of Portsmouth.

The fire was started by a German agent, who used by hand and river steamers and trucking vessels.

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REDS JAIL U. S. RAIL MISSION

Report Says Americans Sent to Help Russia Are Arrested.

London.—It is reported that the bolsheviks have arrested members of the American railway mission at Irkutsk, Siberia, says a dispatch to the *Exchange Telegraph* from Petrograd.

On account of irregular telegraph service the report could not be confirmed officially.

The United States railroad commission to the Russian government arrived in Petrograd last June, and until the recent bolshevik disturbances had been actively engaged in assisting Russian railroads out of their operating difficulties.

Although several railway units, each comprising several hundred men, are in Siberia to assist in improving conditions on the trans-Siberian railway, it was thought that only a few could be scattered in small detachments along the entire route.

One day a traveling salesman went into the track, threw himself into the boiler chair and asked that he be shaved so he could catch a