

# In Valhalla and Out

On George Ethelbert Walsh

WNU Service

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## CHAPTER XII

It was not a complicated plant. Dick's knowledge of sending and receiving wireless messages had been picked up at an early age when, as an amateur, he had experimented with various instruments. Later he had added to this on his father's yacht, taking the operator's place at times to send messages ashore to friends. His satisfaction was complete. He smiled at Blake, and said: "I don't mind if you listen in, Blake. So I won't stuff your ears with cotton. The message I'm going to send isn't secret."

He turned on the current, pressed the sender, and then opening the switch, sent broadcast across the seas.

"Send help to Valhalla Island! Murder! Help needed at once. Don't delay. Relay to shore if necessary."

Signing the name of Steve Cutler to his S. O. S. message, he waited for a response. None coming, he repeated the message. Again and again he agitated the air with his wave vibrations. There was no response, and Dick frowned at the failure of his experiment. For half of an hour he kept it up, and then closed the circuit and rose to his feet.

"That will have to do for the present," he observed. "I'll try again later. Meanwhile, I'm due up at the house to interview Doctor Alister."

Everything was quiet about the big house when he approached, boldly and without any attempt at concealment. It was still very early, and it was a question whether the rest of the household were out of bed yet.

He was a little gratified when the front door opened for him, and Alice Cutler let him in. Her face was white, with dark circles under her eyes. "Has anything happened?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, everything—two of our worst enemies are prisoners in a cave."

"You mean Mr. Blake?"

"Yes, and his particular friend from the sea—Mr. McGee."

The smile that irradiated her face was sufficient reward for Dick. As he looked into the blue depths of her eyes he had a queer sensation of gladness. It passed an instant later, and his smile of confidence returned.

"I want to see Doctor Alister," he added. "Will you take me to him?"

"Yes, it's up."

"I can interview him in his bed if he's not up yet. It's quite important, Miss Cutler."

"Follow me," she replied, leading the way.

There was no necessity of rousing the man from his slumbers, for on the upper landing they almost ran into him. He came from the study, and he gave Dick a scowl and started to retreat to his own room.

"How's the patient this morning, doctor?" Dick greeted him casually.

"No better, sir," was the short retort.

"Have you given him his morning medicine yet?"

"That's none of your business, sir," the other said angrily. "I won't be interrogated by you. I ask you, Miss Cutler, to protect me in my professional—"

"Professional fiddlesticks!" interrupted Dick. "Get it out of your head that there's any professional etiquette down here, doctor. I'm going to see Mr. Cutler."

"Not with my permission, sir."

Planting his bulky figure against the door, Doctor Alister faced them defiantly. Dick smiled at his words and attitude.

"I won't heed about the bash any longer, doctor. I'll be brutally frank with you. The game is up, and a confession from you may ease matters a trifle for you when you face a court. Your two friends, Mr. Blake and that sailorman, McGee, have withdrawn. They have no further interest in the plot. In fact, they're detained against their will and can't come to your assistance. The last I saw of them they were trussed up and gagged in a cave. I think they'll stay there until help comes."

The information that his two confederates had been captured had a visible effect upon the physician, his face changing from anxiety to fear, flushing and paling alternately; but the last sentence of Dick's seemed to give him a ray of hope. He braced up and smiled.

"I'm afraid you'll wait a long time for help," he said. Perhaps the thought that Captain Brent would return suddenly to change matters stiffened his resolution. "We're far from any shore, and out of the route of passing ships."

"But how far do you suppose that wireless in the cave will carry? Dick

asked, enjoying the other's confusion. "I broadcast an S O S message a short time ago. Some ship ought to pick it up and hurry to my assistance. I said there was murder, murther and riot on the island."

Alister suddenly lost all his bravado, and began wiping his brow with a trembling hand. "What wireless?" he murmured, weakly. "What're you talking about?"

Dick laughed in his face. "I told you the game was up, doctor," he went on cheerfully. "But the worst is still to come. You had a confession this implicates you. That's what I'm getting at."

He took a chair and straddled it, facing the doctor, who remained motionless against the opposite wall, a picture of despair and terror.

"I don't know," Dick continued. "Whether you really intended to murder Mr. Cutler, or simply to keep him unconscious until—"

"No," interrupted Alister, "I didn't intend to kill him. I meant a dangerous drug. The effect will pass away in time."

"That may save you from the electric chair, then, doctor," coolly remarked Dick. "But the other two men, under the effect of it I don't think anything in the world can keep you from the court. Now, if I were you, and there was any antidote for the poison, I'd get busy administering it. What do you think?"

The man nodded and gulped. "I—I will try it," he stammered.

"Don't waste time, then, for I expect a ship will be here any hour to take us off."

"I'll let me, I'll give him treatment now—right away!" replied the doctor eagerly.

"All right, I'm not hindering you," Dick said, and imperiously, "remember this: I have two witnesses to your confession, and if Mr. Cutler dies you'll be held responsible. Under the circumstances, I wouldn't put it off for the sake of other men. If you attempted it I should you like a dog and with less compunction. Now get busy with your medicines."

Alister glanced furtively at him. "I'll give him," he began anxiously, "you won't mind—"

"I'm making no promises," replied Dick, sharply. "I'm giving you the chance to save yourself from the electric chair."

At the morning Dick watched with the others by the bedside of the patient. The strain of the situation began to tell on Alice, and toward noon Dick led her into an alcove beyond the hearing of the other two. "If you must go out and get fresh air, Miss Cutler," he said gently, "you're losing the roses in your cheeks. I'll watch."

"Do you mind I'd call when you—"

"Oh," she exclaimed impulsively, "how can I ever thank you! You've saved uncle's life, and protected me from something worse."

Dick took the two hands extended to him and held them an instant. "I'm already rewarded," he replied, bowing his head. "Your gratefulness is enough."

"And to think," she added, smiling through tears, "I took you at first for the cause of all our trouble."

"What did you think I was?" he asked, his eyes twinkling.

Her face flushed under his gaze. "Why, I thought you were in some sort of a plot to rob us. You see, Mr. Blake had sent the servants down ahead of us, and when we found them gone we were puzzled and alarmed. Then your appearance on the island looked suspicious."

"You never suspected Blake?"

"No, why should I? He had been uncle's secretary for years. Uncle trusted him, and turned over most of his private papers into his keeping. I used to think at times that Mr. Blake had more influence over uncle than I, and it piqued me. But I never dreamed of his doing anything. She stopped, and asked quickly, "What was the plot? What did he intend to do? I'm all mystified yet. I simply know that—that—"

"—he made love to you, and when you refused him he threatened you, Dick finished, for her.

"How did you know that?" she asked, flushing a rich, rosy red.

"I've been a detective and a drop-seller since we sailed," he laughed. "I seem to have lost all sense of decency in the respect."

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"Then that will explain many matters," was the quiet remark.

She watched him curiously, waiting for him to explain, but he had grown suddenly dumb. Waiting to the window in the alcove he glanced through it. A wonderful panorama of the sea was spread before him. She followed, and together they watched the heaving bosom of the ocean, fascinated by the shimmering path of gold that the sun made on the waves.

Suddenly her eyes opened wide, and with finger pointing, she exclaimed excitedly, "A ship! Rescue's coming!"

Dick gave one hasty glance, and then caught her hand and jerked it down. "Be quiet!" he whispered. "It's the Pelican!"

CHAPTER XIII

The yacht was in plain sight from the alcove window, but from the bedside of their patient it was still invisible. Both mechanically turned their heads in that direction, and sighed with relief when they saw the doctor and Marie busy, with their backs to them. Dick reached up and pulled down the shade.

"You'll stay here," he whispered. "You must leave Captain Brent to me."

He thrust into her hands Blake's amethyst and kept the one he had taken from McGee.

With as little display of emotion or excitement as he could assume, he crossed the room to the bedside. "Doctor," he said quietly, "I'll be gone a few minutes. Miss Cutler's in charge now. Take orders from her. Remember, if there's any attempt at trickery, you'll pay."

He waved the gun eloquently before the man's face and then turned and quietly slipped from the room.

He stopped on the front piazza and watched the approaching vessel. Within half an hour she would land. Meanwhile, he hugged to something. The yacht was steaming under forced draft, which convinced Dick that Brent had picked up his wireless and was hurrying to arrive before any other ship received the news. The

In approaching the landing place the Pelican had to run behind a rocky bluff that stood between her and the dock, which completely concealed her from view. During this temporary eclipse no one on her deck could see the shore between the house and the dock. Alice saw in a flash the reason for Dick's sudden queer actions.

They crept cautiously to the small window that gave them a view of the breakwater and dock. Through a dusty, cobwebby pane of glass they watched the Pelican swing in to the dock. They could see Captain Brent forward, eagerly sweeping the island with a pair of binoculars.

"Seems anxious and curious," murmured Dick.

The lines were scarcely ashore before Brent leaped to the dock, and after a few hasty orders to his mate he hurried away. Their hearts stood still for fear that he might look into the boat-house; but when he passed it almost on a run they breathed easier. When he was half way up to the house Dick caught the girl's arm, and whispered:

"You must back me up, Miss Alice—second everything I say. It's our only chance."

She nodded silently, and followed him out of the boat-house. Jauntily, with a smile on his lips, he walked to the end of the dock where the crew was still busy making the yacht fast. He turned to the men, Dick walked up to him.

"Hello, Barnett, you sail sailing on the old Beacon?" he greeted.

The mate, a young man, swung around in astonishment, stared stupidly at the speaker a moment, and then with a gleam of recognition in his gray eyes, smiled and touched his cap.

"How do you do, Mr. Van Ness! How'd you get down here?"

"Came down with you in the yacht."

Young Barnett stared incredulously. Dick turned his head, and began greeting the other members of the crew familiarly.

"Well, if there isn't old Brent! Haven't you retired yet, you old salt-water horse? Hello, Jurgins! How's that rheumatic knee? Suffering cats, you're spryer than ever! Hello, Billy, and Ben!"

The whole crew began nodding or waving to him, some crowding around and shaking hands with him.

"This is like old times," Dick added, a little affected by the greetings.

"Dad's whole crew, except Captain Johnston. Where's he?"

"I dunno, Mr. Van Ness," replied Jurgins. "He was relieved of duty a month ago. It was a sad day for the rest of us when he left. Taln't like it used to be."

"No, Brent isn't Captain Johnston."

Dick took the information Dick had given her concerning the secret compartment on the yacht brought final complete enlightenment. She smiled.

"You seem to know uncle's crew better than I do," she broke in. "You might introduce us to Van Ness."

Dick smiled and looked foolish. There was no further need of concealing his identity, but there was necessity of acting quickly before Brent returned.

"They all know you, Miss Alice," he replied hastily, "and respect you."

"Aye! Aye, sir!" responded the men, touching their caps.

Dick watched them a moment in silence. Then his face became suddenly grave and severe. "Barnett, I want you and the others to listen attentively to me," he began. "You're up against a hard proposition. You've got to choose between your captain and your employer. Mr. Cutler is up at the house unconscious, suffering from a poisonous drug that Doctor Alister gave him. Mr. Blake, who plotted the whole thing against his employer, is cooling himself in a cave on the island where I put him—along with McGee, who left the yacht a few days ago. He swam to this island and reported the yacht wrecked on the shoals, with her wireless dismantled. I leave it to you whether it was."

The men frowned and stared in amazement.

"Miss Cutler here will back up all my statements," Dick continued. "We're both working in the interests of Mr. Cutler, who is temporarily unable to speak for himself. Captain Johnston is in a cage with Blake and Doctor Alister to keep your employer here unconscious until they can play their game. So far as I know they intended to let him die finally."

He turned to the girl at his side.

"Miss Cutler, in the name of her uncle, who owns this yacht and island, gives me the right to speak for her. Do you not, Miss Alice?"

"Yes, yes," she replied hastily. "Everything he says is true."

"Then," resumed Dick, smiling at the crew, "I want volunteers to help us. Wait a minute," he added, frowning. "Let's do the thing lawfully. We don't want any of you to be charged with mutiny. We're on land, and not on the high seas. Therefore, the owner, or his representative, can discharge any member of the crew or the officers."

Alice Cutler smiled, and catching her cue spoke quietly. "Brent is no longer captain of this yacht," she said. "I discharge him, and appoint in his place—"

She looked at Dick, who shook his head and whispered, "Barnett, I'll go as his mate."

Alice nodded. "Mr. Barnett, I appoint you captain. Will you take the ship?"

"Certainly, Miss Cutler," was the prompt answer. "Mr. Van Ness was a long time getting it put, and I made up my mind long before he got through where I stood. You can count on me in any little mixup with Captain Brent."

(To be Continued)

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### Fossilized Tree

Coal, according to the modern theory of science, was formed from great forests which grew on the earth millions of years ago. New evidence that this theory is sound has been discovered in a coal mine near West Frankfort, Ill., where Carl Noe, a professor at Chicago university, found the fossilized trunk of a tree, says an exchange.

Professor Noe says the trunk is ten feet in circumference and may have been 100 feet in length as it originally grew. Over the surface of the fossil are close-set pits, the scars left where the leaves grew! These ancient trees, the scientist says, had very few branches and the leaves grew all over the trunk like the scales on a fish.

### Where Do Cent-Pieces Go?

United States mints have turned out more than 4,000,000,000 of one-cent pieces in the last 131 years, but only about 2 1/2 per cent of these coppers have ever returned. Probably you have never seen a bronze 2-cent piece. Yet 20,000,000 of them are in circulation or have disappeared. They were coined more than 50 years ago—Copper's Weekly.



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For instance, the wealth of our nation—investment on our plant—in 1912 was 186 billions of dollars while our national income—the annual turn-over—was 30 billions of dollars.

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The railroads do ask for reciprocal regulation.

Michigan is in the vanguard as an industrial state. Let us retain that position.

The Michigan Railroad Association approves the state's proposed program for more good roads because it will yield a large return on the investment.

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