SERIAL STORY

No Man's Land

A ROMANCE

By Louis Joseph Vance

Illustrations by Ray Walters

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SYNOPSIS.

Garrett Coast, a young man of New York City, meets Douglas Blackstock, who invites him to a card party. He accepts, although he dislikes Blackstock, the reason being that both are in love with Katherine Thaxter. Coast fails to convince her that Blackstock is unworthy of her friendship. At the party Coast meets two named Dundas and Van Tuyl. There is a quarrel, and Blackstock shoots Van Tuyl dead. Coast struggles to wrest the weapon from him, thus the police discover them. Coast is arrested for murder. He is convicted, but as he begins his sentence, Dundas names Blackstock as the murderer and kills himself. Coast becomes free, but Blackstock has married Katherine Thaxter and fled. Coast purchases a yacht and while sailing sees a man thrown from a distant boat. He rescues the fellow who is named Appleyard. They arrive at a lonely island, known as No Man's Land. Coast starts out to explore the place and comes upon some deserted buildings. He discovers a man dead. Upon going further and approaching a house he sees Katherine Thaxter, who explains that her husband, under the name of Black, has bought the island. He is blind, a wireless operator and has a station there. Coast informs her that her husband murdered Van Tuyl. Coast sees Blackstock and some Chinamen burying a man. They fire at him, but he is rescued by Appleyard, who gets him to the Echo in safety, and there he reveals that he is a secret service man and has been watching the crowd on the island, suspecting they are criminals.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"You can bet I shut off and skinned out of there in a jiffy; I'd been in a cold sweat all the while. The racket my sending raised had sounded as loud as the Trump of Doom; I couldn't to save my neck understand how Black failed to hear it, even if he were at the other end of the island, and come back and exterminate me. So I beat it on the dead jump.

"The farm-house was in my way, however, and I pulled up there to reconnoitre. There was no sound of life on out front, and I went in the back way—the premises being empty—and snooped to the front windows and eavesdropped. To that instant I'd had never a thought that you might be mixed up in the mess; but I recognized your voice, and overheard just enough to open my eyes to the complexity of the situation.

"I didn't linger long enough to hear much; my position being somewhat delicate—from more than one point of view. So I sneaked out by the rear again, and laid for you on the path to the beach. Then that shower came up and I lost touch with the path. By the time I'd re-found it and traced my way back to the farm-house, you were gone. I set sail in pursuit, but by the time I sighted the deserted village, you were invisible, and Blackstock (by this time I knew his right name) was superintending the planting of Power. Seeing nothing of you I concluded—and hoped—you'd sloped for the boat, and dodged round after you. Those shots stopped me right by the boat on the beach; I saw you coming and . . .

"I've talked myself hoarse—for once in my life. Never dreamed I'd have such a taste of Heaven . . ."

Coast was about to speak when Appleyard stopped him with a lifted hand. "Look," he said, with a wide gesture, "and if you're superstitious at all—that is to say, human—hug comfort to your heart. For my part I'm going to take this for an omen. You may please yourself."

Overborne by the freshing easterly wind, which blew down the Sound as through a funnel, the fog was rolling back like a scroll. The little man laughed gently. "Haven't we won out to light and freedom, while back there"—he indicated the looming headland astern that shut off No Man's Land from their vision—"still they walk in darkness, bound upon the wheel of their own naughtiness?"

"Well," conceded Coast a little dubiously. "But on the other hand . . . here's this wind brewing. Doesn't it smell like an easter to you?"

Appleyard sniffed contemptuously. "It do, it sure do," he admitted. "We'll have a bit of a blow by nightfall, certainly."

"And that means trouble, doesn't it?"

"Why?"

"Because I, for one, am going back to No Man's Land tonight. And the more wind, the tougher the job of working back . . ."

Appleyard grimaced his disgust. "Who's afraid?" he demanded, truculent. "A pessimist," he misquoted with a large if inconclusive air of philosophical contemplation, "is a fellow who has to live with optimists. Not only that, but you make me tired."

CHAPTER XII.

Within another hour (and the morning was still young) the Echo rode at anchor in Quick's Hole, on the edge of the navigable channel, near the Nashawena shore, about midway of the passage between Vineyard Sound and Buzzard's Bay; and within ten minutes of the time her anchor splashed over her bows, Mr. Appleyard, his plans formulated and communicated to Mr. Coast, was noisily asleep in the cabin—enjoying a rest which Coast, for all his own weariness of body and mind, could not begrudge him.

For six hours the younger man stood a lonely watch, companioned only by the melancholy voice of the bell buoy off the southern entrance, a sound, the most forlorn and dreary known to man, which came fitfully to his ears in the occasional lulling of the wind.

As six bells sounded Appleyard hopped on deck, yawning and rubbing his eyes, but with a light in the latter, as soon as he permitted them to be seen, and a springiness in his movements which testified to the refreshing soundness of his slumbers.

"Howdy?" he chirruped. "Nothing alarming turned up, eh?"

"Not a thing," said Coast.

"Good enough. Don't look for 'em till evening. When'd this lull set in?" Coast informed him. "That's all right; fit in with their plans; they'd rather make a landing in the dark, anyway."

"What difference would that make—?"

"Not much; only the fewer boats touching at No Man's Land, the less attention attracted. I s'pose you know there's a life saving station on Gay Head? Sure; and part of its job is to keep a list of everything that passes by, from a rowboat to a coastwise liner."

"Of course; but—look here, Appleyard." Coast paused, doubt tinting his tone.

"Sir, to you?"

"There's one thing been troubling me. It seems to me we're taking a lot for granted. Of course, to begin with, I was only too keen to believe the worst of Blackstock. But, seriously, what warrant have you for believing he's mixed up with this smuggling game?"

Appleyard rubbed his nose reflectively. "Well," he drawled, grinning, "I haven't got any sure-enough good excuse, I admit. I just know it's so. That's all."

"But—"

"What's Blackstock sticking out there for? Not because he likes it, you can bet; not solely because he's afraid of getting caught—for he settled on No Man's Land before Dundas came through with his confession; not because he would be safer in some corner of the world across the water—".

"I told you his wife said—"

"She said precisely what he told her. Naturally. Probably believes it. Rot!! . . . The real reason is the reason why he dropped his remittances to Dundas; because he's broke and down and desperate—ready to turn his hand to anything to earn a dishonest dollar. And this job's ideal for his purposes," Appleyard wound up triumphantly.

"But," Coast argued, "he has money."

"How do you know?"

"At least, her aunt had, and it was to go to her."

"But, did it? I'll lay you a handsome wager that either she never got it or it wasn't much anyway and Blackstock managed to run through it with the customary facility of scoundrels of his class. . . . Don't talk to me: I tell you, I know a lot of things for certain that I don't know for sure; and this is one of 'em. . . . And now if you'll just kindly quit finding fault with my unimpeachable management of this affair, and duck below and pound your ear for a couple of hours, or until I call you, you'll be in much better shape for what's before you this night."

Coast, soothed by the swash of waves and the softly modulated tolling of the distant buoy, presently dozed off; nor did he wake until Appleyard shook his shoulder several hours later.

He started up in some perturbation—with that singular flutter of the heart that men sometimes waken to face a crucial hour.

"Well—?" he asked, half dazed.

"Time," returned Appleyard coolly. "They're just about to stand in round Lone Rock. Come on deck."

His small head and narrow shoulders were momentarily silhouetted against a violet-shaded square of sky that filled the companion opening, then disappeared. Coast, realizing from the twilight within and without that the hour was late, followed with expedition.

"What's o'clock?" he asked as he stepped on deck.

"About seven. Take the wheel."

Appleyard dropped lightly into the engine-pit as Coast obediently moved to the stern and grasped the spokes. His first glance was comprehensive, summing up the situation in a single cast; he was now fully awake and very alert.

With a muffled cough the motor began to throb and drum. The Echo gathered way. Coast swung her gently to starboard as Appleyard, throttling the speed to half, climbed out and dropped the hatch.

"Right," the little man approved. "Now hold her steady for Pasque, not too far up channel, and stand ready to put her about when I give the word."

"Aye, aye," said Coast intelligently. He pondered a while as the boat forged sturdily up against the seas. "Suppose," he said abruptly, "this isn't the right boat?"

Appleyard grunted unpleasantly. "It's got to be," he affirmed with conviction. "What else could it be? . . . You'd make a shine gambler, if you want to know," he added, bustling about busily.

Coast subsided, although he continued to eye the oncoming boat with unmitigated mistrust.

Appleyard, having cast off all but one of the stops securing the gaff to the boom, first lighted and set out the starboard lamp, which was of course invisible to the approaching boat, then lighted and placed the other beneath the seat.

"I got an eye-full of her with the glasses as she came across the bay," he said, pausing beside Coast and balancing himself lightly against the motion of the boat: "She's a stepper all right; a cabin cruiser about thirty-four over all with a good, stiff engine in her—twenty-five H.P., I'd guess. She moves when she moves!"

"That argues a crew of two?" Coast surmised.

"Just about—aside from our friend the passenger, Mr. Handyside—who's in such a sweat to get on his job that he has to risk the passage in the teeth of an easter," said the little man. "You can bet your boots no one else would run the chance—nor he, unless it was on urgent business. . . . Now go about and stand across again, a bit further up the channel," he advised as the Echo drew under the shadow of Pasque. "So: that's it."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Doesn't It Smell Like an Easter to You?"

Varied Instruction.

Wise men are instructed by reason men of less understanding by experience, the most ignorant by necessity.—Unknown.

GREAT MAJORITY OF BIRDS OF PREY ARE FRIENDS OF FARMER

Deserving of Protection as They Feed Largely on Noxious Rodents and Larger Insects, Such as Grasshoppers, Crickets and May Beetles and Keep Such Pests Under Control.

Cooper Hawk (Chicken Hawk).
(Upper Figure, Adult Male; Lower Figure, Immature Female. One-fourth Natural Size.)

The sooner farmers, ranchmen, horticulturists, and nurserymen learn that the great majority of birds of prey are their friends and deserve protection and that four or five species only are injurious, the sooner will depredations by noxious rodents and insects diminish. In the more thickly settled sections of the country, except at rare intervals, the goshawk, duck hawk, and great horned owl are so infrequent that years may pass without an individual being seen. Two species that need to be kept in check are the sharp-shinned and Cooper hawks, small and medium sized species which feed almost entirely on wild birds and poultry. The illustration will materially assist those interested in identifying these birds.

The important fact to bear in mind is that all hawks and owls feed largely on noxious rodents and the larger insects, such as grasshoppers, crickets, and May beetles, and, from their size and voracious appetites, are important factors in reducing the numbers of such pests and keeping them under control.

Ravens, crows, and jays also do effective work in destroying pests. Occasionally, however, in localities where they have increased out of proportion to the available food supply, they become troublesome by killing small chickens and destroying eggs and nestlings of wild birds.

It is demonstrable that so long as a useful species is kept within bounds and is not allowed to increase beyond its normal food supply, just so long will it fulfill its natural mission and be of true economic value. If, however, the staple of food supply temporarily fails, then in the effort to maintain life the animal is likely to become obnoxious and may have to be controlled.

The annual loss of crops by insect and mammal pests in the United States amounts to many millions of dollars. Moreover, not only is this loss diminishing, but on the contrary it is steadily increasing, partly as a result of the encroachments of new insect enemies, partly from the increase of both insect and rodent pests—for the number of these naturally grows with the extension of tillage—and partly, perhaps mainly, because of the destruction of their natural enemies. These, instead of being permitted to keep pace with the multiplication of the pests upon which they feed, have been destroyed until their numbers are entirely inadequate to preserve the balance. It is therefore of first importance that the farmer and stockman should everywhere seek to protect and encourage the natural foes of injurious mammals and insects.

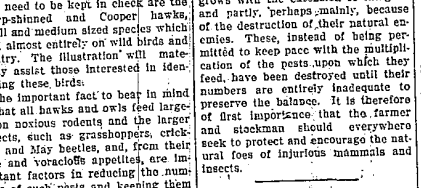
Milk and Butter.

Shipping milk seemed to pay better than making butter, so father and sons sold the cows which were not big milkers and bought Holsteins, getting a registered bull. They now have mostly full-bred Holstein cows and heifers of which they are justly proud.

Run-Down Farm.

Many a young farmer with small capital would probably do better to go east and buy a run down farm with substantial building and fencing on it rather than pay two or three times as much for raw land in the bitter climate of Canada.

STRONG STUMP-PULLING DEVICE



Realizing the importance of a cheap and effective method of removing stumps with so many farmers who are not able to buy or obtain a modern expensive outfit, I thought I would send you an illustration of a plan (while old) which I have seen used with great success, writes O. F. Holmes, Luray, Va., in Progressive Farmer, and which has the treble merit of being effective, cheap and not patented.

The outfit consists of two screw jacks—those I saw used had 1½-foot lift working in cast iron pedestals—a stout log chain, a stout beam 8 feet long and about as heavy as two men would want to carry, and two pieces of plank for the jacks to stand on. Place the beam across the largest and stoutest root of the stump on each side and as near the stump as the roots will allow, and resting on a piece of plank. The chain is passed around the beam and the root. One man at each jack will raise almost any stump to the full lift of the screw which, in most cases, is sufficient; if not, place a stud under each end of the beam; let down the jacks and place blocks under them; give the stump another lift.

Two men can pull from twenty to fifty stumps a day, and the outfit will not cost over $15 to $20, while the jacks are useful for many other purposes, and can frequently be hired from some party who possesses them. Or, if you cannot borrow them, have a neighbor or two join in the purchase of the outfit, which will make it cheap to each in case you have to buy.

Always Makes Good

You'll be delighted with the results of Calumet Baking Powder. No disappoints—no flat, heavy, soggy biscuits, cake, or pastry.

Just the lightest, daintiest, most uniformly raised and most delicious food you ever ate.

Received Highest reward World's Pure Food Exposition, Chicago, 1907.

If a woman is a clever actress the chances are that her husband will find the chorus more interesting.

No Offense.

"I suppose you are afraid my vigorous style would offend your readers," said the discontented author.

"No, I'm not," replied the editor. "The trouble is that nobody would read enough of it to get offended."

OF COURSE.

Mr. Stockson Bonds—Noah was a wonderful financier.

Mr. Dustin Stax—How so?

Mr. Stockson Bonds—He floated a stock company when everybody else was forced into involuntary liquidation.

GRAND TO LIVE

And the Last Laugh Is Always the Best

"Six months ago I would have laughed at the idea that there could be anything better for a table beverage than coffee," writes an Ohio woman, "now I laugh to know there is.

"Since childhood I drank coffee freely as did the other members of the family. The result was a puny, sickly girl; and as I grew into womanhood I did not gain in health, but was afflicted with heart trouble, a weak and disordered stomach, wrecked nerves and a general breaking down till last winter, at the age of 38, I seemed to be on the verge of consumption.

"My friends greeted me with 'How bad you look! What a terrible color!' and this was not very comforting.

"The doctors and patent medicines did me absolutely no good. I was thoroughly discouraged.

"Then I gave up coffee and commenced Postum. At first I didn't like it, but after a few trials and following the directions exactly, it was grand. It was refreshing and satisfying. In a couple of weeks I noticed a great change.

"I became stronger, my brain grew clearer, I was not troubled with forgetfulness as in coffee times, my power of endurance was more than doubled.

"The heart trouble and indigestion disappeared and my nerves became steady and strong.

"I began to take an interest in things about me. Housework and home-making became a pleasure. My friends have marveled at the change and when they enquire what brought it about I answer 'Postum, and nothing else in the world.'" Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little Book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.