

I know you have it. I tracked you and your friend here just to get it. You will hand it now to me."

"I will do nothing of the kind," said Annette. She drew a long breath and screamed aloud.

"Useless," he said. "There is no one within range of your beautiful soft voice." He took out his watch. "Let me remind you, senorita," he remarked, "that my ancestors were of the inquisition. I will give you five minutes to make up your mind. I shall leave you alone, you may make up your mind by yourself. If at the end of five minutes you have failed, you must take the consequence."

Inez Castro's handbag was lying on a dressing table; to her it was the hand bag of Irene Courtier. She opened it and drew forth a card engraved with the latter name, together with a little silver pencil. She wrote hastily upon the card:

"I am Annette Ilington. I am confined in a second-story room in the rear of this building—the barred room where you see the handkerchief. Look up."

She thrust the card between the bars and dropped it. It fluttered down beyond her sight. Then she tied her handkerchief to the lower end of one of the bars. As she finished she heard a rattle at the lock of the door and Hernandez entered the room.

CHAPTER XX. Cornered.

The ensign in the bow of the naval launch scanned the coast line with care.

"This Crooked-Crag hotel is an uncanny place," he said. "They've probably got lookouts posted everywhere. We'd better land half a mile away and take them from the rear."

His brother ensign granted. "Dollars to doughnuts we're on a wild goose chase," he said. "If there's any place that covers up its tracks it's Crooked Crag. You're right though, we'll take them from the rear."

They landed half a mile up shore and as quietly as possible tramped for a mile through underbrush in the general direction of the granite rock which stood out clear above the tree tops. They halted on the edge of the clearing, from the center of which rose the hotel itself.

"Form a circle," said the ensign, "surround the place, and all close in at once. No matter what happens, don't let anybody get away."

One of the ensigns beckoned to Neal. "Come with me," he said, "you know the man we're after and can describe him. I'll need you and about three more besides."

With rhythmic, ringing steps, the little squad crossed the clearing, darted up the rustic staircase and tramped across the veranda of the hotel. Solinger met them at the door.

"Yes, gentlemen," he said, bowing, "what can I serve you?"

"Serve us nothing," said the ensign sternly. "We are looking for a smuggler that you have got. He is here. We know he is here and we are going to get him."

Meantime Hernandez had entered the room where he had confined Annette. Once more he locked the door behind him and without a word crossed the floor toward her. Annette had made up her mind just what to do. She must fight with a woman's weapons and she had a woman's weapon—a hat pin.

She waited until Hernandez was within three feet of her, then she raised the weapon and sunk it deep into his outstretched arm.

His face white with anger, Hernandez caught her roughly by the throat. But he had forgotten something—forgotten that she had inherited tremendous strength. Young and graceful as she was, her every muscle was well trained. With one strong sweep of her arm, she threw him off and then plunged into a fight, the fight of a wildcat against a wolf. She tore at his face and head, clutching for his eyes, trying for a hold upon his ears. Time and again she repulsed him, then with one wild clutch she caught him by the hair and held him with a strong grip of her right hand while she pummeled his face with a small but energetic left.

Hernandez retreated to the door, unlocked it and gave vent to a low whistle. His whistle was immediately answered. Ponto entered the room, dragging with him the huge brute. "Seize her," he demanded of the brute.

The girl stared at this huge figure with terror in her eyes.

The brute started across the floor, and then whimpering, with hands hanging at his sides, turned away from her. Hernandez nodded to his assistant, Ponto. Ponto drew his ever-ready whip and lashed the brute into obedience. The huge man, still whimpering, caught the girl in his arms and held her.

Hernandez, without the slightest compunction, tore open Annette's waist.

"You vixen," said Hernandez between his teeth, "I will get that map if I have to flay you."

Meantime, one by one, on the lower floor, the ensign's cohorts had struggled in. Each saluted as he came.

"It's no use," they whispered to the ensign. "Solinger's got us beat. We can't find anything."

Neal was the last to come. He had made a thorough search.

A seaman ran lightly up the steps into the office and saluted.

"Beg your pardon, sir," he said. "I found this in a crevice in a rock behind the house. It looks bad, sir."

He handed over the message which Annette had scrawled upon the card of Irene Courtier—the message that she was confined in an upper room,

the room with the barred windows in the rear.

"The handkerchief is tied there, sir," exclaimed the seaman, "and I feel sure that we can locate the room."

The ensign read the card and handed it to Neal. Neal touched his hat.

"May I—do I have to wait for orders, sir?" he cried.

"No," roared the ensign.

They reached the third floor corridor and darted into an open room and thrust heads out of an unbarred window. The sailor plucked Neal by the sleeve.

"There," he whispered. "It's next door to this. The two windows, the bars and the handkerchief tied on. Come on."

They darted out once more into the corridor. There was no door, no opening; but this mattered not to Neal. He stepped to the far end of the hall and seized a fire ax, which hung



"You Shall Visit Me at My Villa at Newport."

there in a rack. Then he darted back and with ringing strokes began his assault upon the wall. Suddenly from within he heard a woman's shriek.

"Neal," cried Annette's voice within, and it was the voice of a girl beside herself with agony and fear. "Neal, it is I—Annette. Come, for God's sake, come."

Neal delivered one more crushing blow, then he motioned to his fellows. "Come, boys," he said, "there's not a second to lose. This thing has got to go."

The corridor was fairly broad. The little squad of sailors withdrew and huddled against the opposite wall. Then as one man this human battering ram lunged and lurched across the hall and propelled itself against the already splintered partition.

With a crash the secret door went down, and with a bound Neal was in the room. Annette, her dress torn, her hair disheveled, struggled with the brute in one corner of the room.

Ponto had released her. With a bound he crossed the room and jerked aside the fireplace, disclosing a secret exit. He crawled through the aperture and disappeared.

Hernandez, stupefied with astonishment, yet had an expression of triumph and glee upon his face. He was thrusting a yellow parchment into his pocket. Annette with a final struggle slipped from the brute's grasp and darted toward Hernandez, calling to Neal.

"Neal, Neal," she cried, "he's got my father's map."

With one spring Neal was upon Hernandez. He snatched back the hand with which Hernandez was pushing the map into his pocket. The map came out, torn and crumpled. Annette, beside herself, snatched at it with both hands. Neal grabbed at it and also got a hold. Hernandez still held it in his iron clutch.

All this took place in an instant. In another instant the three had fallen back, each in a separate direction. The map had parted and each clutched a piece of it.

Hernandez, with an oath, turned and dived into the secret passageway.

Five minutes later the fastest boat along the shore—the boat which Inez Castro called her own—was chugging out to sea with three figures huddled in her bottom—the brute and Ponto and their chief, Hernandez. They had wriggled somehow through the surrounding circle, had zig-zagged in and out of shots—had made good their escape.

When the chase was over Neal returned and half apologized to Inez.

"Sorry, Miss Courtier," he said, "but they've made away with your fast motorboat. We couldn't get to ours in time. We landed half a mile or so just up the shore. How do you feel?"

"Better," exclaimed Inez. "It's the excitement, the noise, the pistol shots—they have made me well again."

Neal thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled forth a crumpled piece of parchment.

"What did you get, Annette?" he inquired.

Annette thrust her hand into her dress and pulled forth her own tattered portion. Inez, watching, bent her head to listen. Neal and Annette spread their two pieces of the map out upon the little stand. Between them they had the bulk of the lower portion of the map. It was a blank surface, save for three things—a little tail of the island sticking down and the words "longitude" and "latitude," and nothing else. Annette laughed in glee.

"We've got everything we want," she said to Neal. "What is here is important. What the man with the saber cut upon his face has got is of no use to him or us. We beat him to it, Neal, we beat him to it."

Over on the boat Inez, in her crouching attitude, still listened, wondering (TO BE CONTINUED.)

BIG CROP OF PEANUTS.

Three Hundred Acres Planted by F. M. Rogers, Sr., Near Florence.

A Florence special to the News and Courier, dated Sept. 30, says: "One of the most interesting sights to be seen on a farm hereabouts is that of the farms of Mr. Frank M. Rogers, Sr., in Back Swamp Township, where at this time he has begun the harvesting of his large peanut crop, mention of which was made in these news columns some weeks ago. Mr. Rogers planted this year 300 acres of Spanish and Virginia peanuts, which was nothing more than an experiment, for nothing like this great acreage has ever before been planted in South Carolina. It is said that the next largest acreage planted by any one farmer in this state is near Bishopville, where some 75 or 100 acres are planted."

Mr. Rogers began about ten days ago gathering this new crop, that is in this section, and one who has never seen the peanut crop grown or harvested would be amazed were they to pass along the highway and view the result. Hundreds of hands, negro men, women and children, are employed in ploughing, lifting the vines with their tubers, stacking and curing them, making ready for picking and separating.

The vines with their tubers are stacked in the field on poles which have been erected with an arrangement at the bottom about a foot from the ground for ventilation. These poles are placed about fifty yards apart and in rows the length of the field. There are several thousand poles or stacks, which resemble hay stacks, only they are not so high or so bulky, and it certainly is interesting to pass along and take a view of these farms.

Mr. Rogers will net anywhere from 90 to 120 bushels of peanuts to the acre, and it is stated that he will be able to dispose of his entire crop at 90 cents to \$1 the bushel.

It will be remembered that Mr. Rogers was the pioneer tobacco planter in this state, which crop is the outcome of the News and Courier's efforts some twenty-odd years ago and which has proven to be a great big crop in South Carolina.

Mr. Rogers planted no cotton on his plantations this year at all, and by his not doing so he will no doubt be much benefitted."

L. L. Bolick, chief of police of Georgetown, died suddenly in Columbia Sunday last.

R. C. Frey, mail carrier on the burg R. F. D. No. 3, was seriously injured when his motorcycle fell from under him in a sand bed, ten miles from that city.



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