

Patricia

The Great Romance of Preparedness

NOVELIZATION OF THE MOTION PICTURE PLAY OF THE SAME NAME. PRODUCED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FILM SERVICE, INC., UNDER THE DIRECTION OF WHARTON, INC. COPYRIGHT, STAR COMPANY

THE CAST.

MRS. VERNON CASTLE as Patricia Channing.
MILTON SILLS as Donald Parr.
WARNER OLAND as Baron Huroki.
DOROTHY GREEN as Fanny Adair.

SYNOPSIS.

Patricia, last of "The Fighting Channing" line, is thrown to adrift from a South Sea steamer by agents of Baron Huroki, chief of the Japanese secret service, who conspires to subvert the United States and Mexico, desires control of the extensive Channing plantation owned by Patricia. Her physical counterpart Elaine, a notorious dancer in Huroki's pay, substitutes for Patricia.

FIFTH EPISODE

The Island God Forgot.

In the breathless hush of that bright midsummer dawn the island rested and still waters like a great yellow topaz on a field of glowing sapphire. No land was visible in any quarter. Yet the mainland was not remote. Barely an island, little more than an overgrown sandbar, a desolate patch of salt-bitten earth producing no vegetation more valuable than coarse beach grass, it was charted and known to longshore seafarers as Limbo Island. But few if any of these had ever taken occasion to visit it; they knew it by tradition for what it was, so passed it by. Only of late years had it grown accustomed to shelter mankind, a little colony of Japanese fishermen having chosen it for their base.

As the sun rose, so did these simple folk; by twos and threes they emerged from their rude dwellings and went about their business. Some embarked in battered craft to draw the nets and cast the seines with which they wrested from the sea an apparently precarious livelihood. Others swarmed upon a little sloop that had come in overnight to a crude dock that jutted out into the least exposed harbor of the island, and began industriously to empty its hold of a cargo of many heavy packing cases. These worked under the supervision of the one who wore the habit of authority together with the wreck of what had once been a khaki uniform. A solitary inhabitant of the island seemed to have no set task; and this one was not a Japanese.

The sun was high before he discovered himself to its rays, lounging sullenly out of a dwelling slightly more pretentious than his neighbors; a youngish man, well-made, with a dark, keen countenance of Latin cast; his clothing of the simplest, a tattered shirt, trousers worn and patched, an old belt with a rusty buckle—nothing more, not even shoes.

The gaze with which he reviewed the too familiar set of sea and sky was eloquent of embittered enmity. His mouth twitched; his eyes flared wildly; he damned the day with a gesture of passionate discontent; shrugged, jerked a coarse cotton bag of tobacco, and a packet of brown papers from a hip-pocket, deftly with one hand fashioned a cigarette, lighted it, inhaled exhaustively, and slouched off, his bare feet following indifferently a beaten pathway out of the dunes.

Near the dock he paused with a little, lackluster gaze regarding the activities of his Japanese associates aboard



Patricia About to Escape From the Island.

the sloop. Then turning his back to these he drifted from their ken along the wave-packed sands. A few hundred yards farther on, and he checked sharply, with a low-pitched cry of

amazement. A curve of the island had brought him within view of the body of a woman that lay huddled on the beach, half in, half out of the water. The woman's face was hidden, but before he turned it to the light he knew by the gentle movement of her shoulders that she lived. A canvas-covered floating lay nearby, stenciled with the name of a Fall River line steamship.

Staring down into that exquisite face, a look of mingled astonishment and craft kindled in the eyes of the man. Rising abruptly, he relined his surroundings with furtive and suspicious glances. At length satisfied that none watched him, he stooped, gathered that frail young form in his arms and darted swiftly away, not as he had come, but inland through the dunes. Two short minutes sufficed for the journey; he came into the bow of the hulk stealthily, pausing to make sure it was unoccupied before hurrying into his dwelling. But the luck was not with him; without his knowledge, he was observed; the door had not closed upon him and his salvage when a little Japanese slipped quietly from an adjoining hut and trotted briskly toward the harbor.

The girl opened dazed, uncomprehending eyes upon a scene so strange to them that, for a moment, she was half-inclined to believe that she had died of drowning and passed in spirit to some weird half-world. A reek of brimstone burned in her nostrils and throat. She coughed a little.

As if that sound had been a signal a door was thrown roughly open, letting in a flood of sunlight. Through it entered a Japanese in ragged uniform. The voice of the Japanese broke the tension edged with renunciation.

"Senor Juarez! I am informed—" The other interrupted brusquely: "That I have found a half-drowned woman—Americano—on the beach and brought her here, it's true."

"You should not have done this!" "It seems I did!"

With a sudden movement the Japanese produced a pistol. "I regret the necessity," he said, "but Baron Huroki's orders are to kill immediately any stranger who sets foot upon the island."

"What?" The fingers of Senor Juarez closed quickly on the wrist of the Japanese and turned his pistol to the ceiling. Simultaneously the Mexican lifted, with his other hand, a small can of bright tin that had stood upon a nearby table. "One moment, Captain Hakuseki! This can contains nitroglycerin. In the storeroom back there—a jerk of Juarez's head indicated a door in the back of the building—over one hundred tons of high explosives are stored. The woman is mine!"

"Baron Huroki!" "I deal with you—not him—and I warn you, I shall keep the woman or blow this island off the map!"

The Japanese hesitated an instant, then conceded defeat with a shrug. "Have your way," he said mildly, and turned to go.

But the grasp on his wrist was unrelaxed. "Wait another moment, Captain Hakuseki. I want that pistol."

It was surrendered without a suspicion of contest.

"Now—go—and don't bother us again."

Captain Hakuseki executed a right about face and marched out of the hut. Senor Juarez secured the door behind him, then turned to see the girl struggling to a sitting position on the cot. He hastened to assist her.

"You are weak, senorita—you must not exert yourself. Permit me . . ."

He wound his arm around her waist, tenderly assisting her to a chair by the table. As she sank into this, he bent over and brought his lips close to hers. She shrank away with a little cry.

"Ah, no! Be not afraid of me, senorita! Remember, I saved your life. . . . What is a kiss in payment for that?"

The pistol he had taken from the Japanese rested on the table. Chance guided the fingers of the girl to its grip, inspiration of despair prompted her to lift its muzzle to the tin of nitroglycerin.

"Keep away from me," she ordered in accents whose feebleness could not disguise a spirit of inflexible determination. "Keep away—or I pull the trigger!"

With a terrified ejaculation the Mexican sprang back to a profoundly respectful distance.

"Senorita—I beg of you—" "Leave this house—or I pull the trigger!"

Juarez threw himself madly at the door, wrenched it open, started out and—shrank back from a knife-bayonet on a rifle presented by a stocky, deadly-looking little Japanese.

"Captain Hakuseki's orders: you remain a prisoner till you give up the woman!" Between the devil and the deep sea,

the Mexican threw himself on the mercy of the girl.

"Senorita—in the name of pity—" She nodded curtly. "Come in—shut that door—lock it. . . . Now tell me where I am!"

"Senorita, you have been washed ashore on Limbo Island."

"Where is that?" "Southeast of Newport—about thirty miles."

"And why are such great quantities of high explosive stored on Limbo Island?"

"Senorita—I conceal nothing from you—I am your slave."

"Answer my question!" The muzzle of the pistol remained in close juxtaposition to the tin of nitroglycerin. The Mexican shivered with terror.

"Because—" he stammered "because Japan uses this island as a secret depot for munitions."

"To be used in the event of war with the United States?"

"Si, senorita—yes."

"I understand. . . . Now fetch me food."

CHANGELING.

About mid-morning, a young man becomingly attired in riding clothes surrendered his horse to the care of a groom and ascended the steps to the veranda of the Channing cottage on the cliff walk.

In the doorway a footman waited to greet him with the manner of welcoming an intimate of the household.

"Good morning, Captain Parr. It's a pleasure to see you again, sir."

"Thank you, Gregory. Is Mrs. Wrenn at home?"

"I believe so, sir."

"And . . . Miss Channing?"

"Miss Patricia arrived by boat early this morning, sir."

"Please say to her, I am waiting for the ride she promised me . . ."

"Very good, sir."

The footman stepped back into the house and disappeared. Captain Parr remained on the veranda, seeming idly to admire the view, in reality oblivious of it, preoccupied with private considerations of not unpleasant complexion.

Sounds of stifled lamentation disturbed his mood.

He discovered a pleasant-faced lady's maid of mature years, forehead bowed against the newel-post at the foot of the staircase, weeping loudly and copiously.

"Why, Anne! What's the matter?" The woman showed a blowsy, tear-stained, written countenance.

"Oh, Captain Parr, my heart's broken! I don't know what to do at all. It's discharged I am, sir!"

"What?" Parr could hardly believe his ears.

"Miss Patricia is after discharging me without notice, sir—and all these years I've served her and never a cross word—"

"But why? What did you do?" "It's my clumsiness, sir. I happened to drop her hand mirror, and it broke it did. And then it was like herself went mad. She flew into a rage, sir and stamped her foot at me, and called me a clumsy fool, and said it meant seven years' bad luck, and wouldn't listen to me at all at all, and told me to pack my trunk and go, that myself was fired, and—"

"Did she say 'fired,' Anne?" "She did that, Captain Parr—"

"It doesn't sound like Patricia!" "It doesn't, sir. For the matter of that she ain't seemed like herself since that dreadful affair on the boat last night."

"What dreadful affair?" "You haven't heard about it, sir? A poor invalid lady in the stateroom next Miss Patricia's went out of her head and jumped overboard and was drowned, sir."

Anne hastily disappeared as Mrs. Gilbert Wrenn, Patricia's chaperon, entered from the breakfast room with her son Rodney. At sight of Parr they broke into those wondering exclamations he had anticipated.

"Why, Donald?" "Don't! For the love of Mike! How did you get here? Patricia said—"

"I flew," Captain Parr explained modestly.

"I should say you did fly! What did you do? Hire a special train?" "I flew," Parr iterated. "I planned

from Governor's island this morning."

Donald looked round to find the footman waiting for his attention.

"Yes, Gregory?" The man hesitated, with what seemed singular reluctance to deliver his message.

"Beg pardon, sir . . . I'm sorry . . . Miss Channing directs me to say she is not at home to Captain Parr!"

Lad the servant deliberately slapped his face, Donald could have been no more thunderstruck.

Mrs. Wrenn betrayed no less perplexity.

"Gregory! what did you say?" "Miss Patricia instructed me to say, Mrs. Wrenn, she is not at home to Captain Parr."

The footman withdrew, murmuring sympathetically.

"But, Donald," Mrs. Wrenn insisted, "I'm sure he must have misunderstood. I'll run up at once and see Patricia myself."

"Please, no, Mrs. Wrenn. Gregory's an intelligent fellow. Patricia is doubtless out of temper with me for failing to catch the boat yesterday."

In point of fact, Parr hardly knew what he was saying or what he heard. Overruling the objections of Rodney and his mother, he strode from the house, threw himself on the back of his horse, and rode away in a state of daze.

It needed a long, hard ride to weary Parr's emotions to semiconsciousness. He brought back a horse sally fagged and lathered.

Now Donald Parr was never one to wear his heart on his sleeve. Toward mid-afternoon he changed to white flannels, stiffened his upper lip and sought the Casino, outwardly a man with mind serene and carefree temper.

Finding nobody of his circle of acquaintances at the Casino—the hour was late for lunch, early for afternoon tea—he fortified himself with a cocktail and sought surcease of brooding in that morning's Boston newspaper.

It seemed at first a needlessly cruel freak of chance that the very first news item to meet his eye should be so strong a reminder of his unhappiness.

Fall River, June 27.—While the Fall River line steamship Commonwealth was off Point Judith last night, Mrs. John Ferdinand of Chicago, an invalid suffering from melancholia, eluded her nurse and committed suicide by jumping overboard.

Chicago, June 27.—The City Directory does not contain the name of Mrs. John Ferdinand.

Slowly Donald lowered the newspaper, a thoughtful frown creasing his brows. Anne's words of that morning came back to him like an echo pregnant with significance.

"Miss Patricia ain't seemed like herself since that dreadful affair on the boat last night!"

What if . . . Horror gripped Donald's heart like an icy hand. . . . What if the Patricia of last night were not the Patricia of today?

That a woman existed so like Patricia in face and form that none could distinguish one from the other, was a fact too well known to Captain Parr.

Pondering deeply, Donald rose to leave the Casino and on the way out came unexpectedly upon a group of four, seated over cocktails round a little table. He tried to ignore them, but this was not permitted. A voice that, if not the voice of Patricia Channing, was at least a very creditable imitation of it, hailed him.

"Don—Donald Parr! Do come here!"

With the speaker at her table were Fanny Adair, Baron Huroki and Juan de Lima.

Suspicion rife in his mind, Parr bowed over the hand offered him by the woman who might or might not be Patricia Channing. To each of the others in turn he nodded gravely.

"Awful jolly to meet you here, Don. I do so want you to be the first to know: I have promised to marry Senor de Lima."

To the Mexican, alert to rise with a brilliant snirk of self-satisfaction and a proffered hand, Donald bowed profoundly. His own hands remained clasped behind his back.

"I am happy to be able to congratulate Senor De Lima," he said quietly; and turning, left the Casino.

One more move that would be only

natural in an impostor!

He was firmly persuaded that the girl to whom he had just been talking was not the true Patricia Channing.

But how to prove that? How to avenge that crime which had made possible the substitution of this impostor?

Parr set his wits to cope with that problem. Pending their solution, he applied himself to the task of keeping Baron Huroki under close but unostentatious surveillance.

Late in the afternoon Huroki was surreptitiously waylaid by a low-caste Japanese, from whom he received a message which seemed to cause the baron considerable perturbation. The messenger was duly identified as one of the colony of fishermen on Limbo; he returned to a little sloop, which had just come in from the island and made fast to a dock on the business waterfront of the community. Baron Huroki himself returned to his hotel and remained there closeted with Juan de Lima, till high fall. Under cover of darkness he sallied forth, closely dogged by Donald Parr, made a circuitous way to the waterfront and boarded the sloop, which immediately cast off and set sail for the harbor mouth.

Now what pressing business dragged Huroki away to Limbo Island by night?

Parr made it his own business to find out. If there were something on Limbo that interested Baron Huroki so profoundly, it was sure to prove no whit less interesting to the United States secret service.

Within fifteen minutes of the time when the sloop had sailed, Donald launched his seaplane and rose to an altitude whence he could spy the island, a formless blur of darkness on the face of waters silvered by moonlight.

THE HUMAN BOMB.

Half-buried in the side of the largest dune on Limbo Island, the dwelling which Senor Juarez had shared with his Japanese associate Captain Hakuseki, was a shack of a single room, with one window and two doors. Of these last one, like the window, opened upon the hollow in which the other huts of the station were gathered together; the remaining door led, by way of a short, timbered tunnel, to a huge vault hollowed out in the heart of the dune, wherein a very considerable store of arms, ammunition, mines and high explosives was sheltered. On the farther side of the dune—here a concave bluff, wave-eaten—the vault had two great doors behind which a biplane stood lightly poised, ready for instant use in emergency.

By this means alone Patricia Channing hoped, with the aid of the Mexican, to contrive an escape from the refuge which had proved so quickly the cell of two condemned prisoners.

For the shack was in a state of siege. Since the dispute between Juarez and Hakuseki the hollow had been picketed with armed Japanese. As yet these had made no offensive move; but the understanding was implicit, that neither prisoner might set foot outside the shack save at penalty of death. Patricia, condemned by Baron Huroki's ukase that no stranger might visit the island and live to tell of it, Juarez' death sentence signed by his own act of mutiny. Thus the interests of the two were one, in bonds of common peril.

Juarez had schemed a scheme to hoodwink the enemy which Patricia had endorsed. She waited now, alone in the shack, for the Mexican's return from making all things ready at the far side of the vault.

There was no light other than a feeble glimmer of moonshine filtering in through cracks around window and door. The girl sat in a corner, the tin of nitroglycerin on the table before her, automatic pistol in hand, her pose one of tense vigilance.

Noiselessly in his bare feet, Juarez returned, preceded by the flicker of an electric torch, bringing with him a modern magazine rifle newly filched from the stores in the vault.

"Are you ready?" he whispered.

Patricia arose with a nod of assent, and picked up the tin of explosive in a cautious hand.

"Follow the aisle between the packing cases," he instructed with a gesture toward the tunnel. "It leads to the hangar doors. If the guards on the beach run off to see what's the matter when I begin shooting, unbar the doors—but don't open them till I join you."

She nodded again, and entered the tunnel as Juarez tiptoed to the window and stealthily unbarred it.

Picking her way cautiously, she arrived beneath the wings of the biplane before the silence of the island night was shattered by a rippling fusillade.

An eye to the crack between the great doors, she saw two armed Japanese who had been patrolling the beach turn and, after momentary hesitation, run off in the direction of the disturbance.

Working swiftly, she had lifted down the last heavy bar of wood that held the doors together before Juarez appeared at her side.

"Good!" he breathed, eye to the crack. "I got one of them. The others are preparing to storm the shack. We've got perhaps two minutes. . . ."

Putting his shoulder against one of the doors, he swung it widely open. Patricia had the other open almost as quickly. She stepped into open night with a little shiver of excitement and fright, and waited to one side while Juarez wheeled the biplane out as easily as though it had been a perambulator.

He turned and beckoned. A vicious tongue of flame licked out of beach

that crowned a nearby dune. Simultaneously a rifle spoke, Juarez threw his hands high, spun in his tracks, and dropped.

There came a second shot. A little spurt of sand flew up at Patricia's feet. Needless in her terror, she dropped the tin of nitroglycerin and sped swiftly to the beach, without thought or alia other than to find shelter from those bullets which persistently hounded her footsteps, singing past her or sullenly burying themselves in the sands.

Of a sudden she saw Hakuseki running to meet her, the brilliant moonlight glinted on a weapon in his hand. With a sob of despair, Patricia turned blindly at right angles and ran—without really appreciating whether she ran—out upon the harbor dock.

Behind her the automatic of the Japanese rattled shrilly—and was unexpectedly answered from offshore.

At the end of the dock, the girl paused and glanced back. Hakuseki had given up the pursuit—was, indeed, running swiftly for shelter in the dunes; but the rifles of his followers were speaking animatedly.

A great flood of hope surged in Patricia's bosom as she looked offshore and discovered an airplane settling down like an immense water fowl upon the surface of the harbor, not twenty yards

distant. If doubt existed in her mind as to the identity of its pilot, were he friend or enemy, it was soon erased by his hail.

"Patricia! Quick—swim off to me!" The pilot's pistol rattled again.

Donald's voice! Patricia was no more afraid; and water was as her native element. Without hesitation she dived and struck off toward the plane.

Little more than a minute later Parr was helping her to climb up on one of the pontoons, then to a seat beside his own, while bullets continued to sing ricocheted over the waters and tear through the covering of the planes.

She was no more than settled in her place when Parr began to manipulate the controls and the seaplane skimmed the surface of the harbor in a long, graceful curve, then began to rise. . . .

Back on the island, standing beside the biplane, Captain Hakuseki witnessed the successful evasion in a rage that ruffled even his racial placidity. In his understanding the affair was intolerable; though he perished endeavoring to prevent it, this escape must not be permitted.

Summoning assistants, he turned toward the biplane—and paused as his foot struck what one swift downglance identified as the tin of nitroglycerin. Inspired by this accident, he picked up the tin, crammed it into a side pocket of his khaki coat, and clambered to the pilot's seat. Provided he might maneuver his aircraft above the other, he would need only to drop this deadly bomb; and there would be nothing left of the fugitives.

His aids started the motor. With a roar the propellers began to revolve. Hakuseki grasped the controls. The machine shot off down the beach and took the air at the water's edge.

The seaplane, seeking a high level, was rising in a wide spiral. As yet it was not high, and the Japanese plane was the better at climbing. Within a space of time incredibly brief the two were hovering on an approximate level, high above the island.

One shot might serve his end. The temptation was too strong to be resisted. Hakuseki drew his pistol, and opened fire.

In Parr's machine, Patricia Channing took the weapon proffered by her rescuer and, leaving him free to attend to his duties as pilot, drew herself back at length upon the plane and returned the fire of the Japanese.

Hakuseki was conscious of something like the impact of a fist between his eyes. Blindness followed, with agonizing pain. He crumpled in his seat, lurching forward against the controls. His last conscious thought was one of terror; the biplane was falling; the tin of explosive remained in his pocket; when he came to earth he would be utterly annihilated. Unconsciousness mercifully ensued.

Nose down, the biplane dived like a plummet; but the body of Hakuseki, thrown from its place, distanced the machine. The summit of the great dune that housed the store of explosives received the full impact of its

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.

THE RESCUE.



"Keep Away!" Ordered Patricia.