

# PROMENADE DECK.

by Ishbel Ross

**SYNOPSIS:** A luxurious five-month cruise around the world aboard the "Marenia" brings together a group of passengers for adventures romantic, entertaining, and tragic.... Like in "Grand Hotel" in human actions and reactions which unconsciously bare their souls.... These characters are aboard the ship: Macduff, dour Scotchman, single, of middle age; Miss Mudge, school teacher, spending the savings of 20 years; Angela, faithful wife of Lovat, gigolo; Dick Charlton, first officer; Clare, a person of experience; Joan, a dissipated flapper; Jenny, run-away wife, and Peter; Captain Baring, master of the ship and his soul. NOW, GO ON WITH THE STORY.

**SECOND INSTALLMENT**

A slight girl strode past with a youth at her heels. She was all in yellow, and her pale gold hair burned in the day's afterglow. Dick's glance swung from Clare's opulence to the figure in primrose, moving with the careless grace of inexperience.

"Ingenuel" commented the chief officer, his gaze settling again on the figure beside him.

"Yes—she darted a fast look at him—and how one has to protect oneself from the young!"

He looked at his watch. It was half-past five. "Sorry. Seaman must work. No time for dalliance now." "But now is always a lovely time," Clare stretched languorous in the depths of her deck chair.

Dick swung along the deck, a tall, blue figure tacking against the wind.

Clare watched day melt into night. She could see Macduff roaming up and down, puffing at his pipe. "I wonder if I could make him talk, she speculated idly. But he looked so forbidding that she decided to leave him alone and go down to dress.

In three days Clare had begun to hear the histories of some of her fellow passengers. She knew that the woman with silver hair, sitting to her right, was taking her husband around the world for his health. Clare decided that her face suggested an interesting past although gloom was blotting her out for the time being.

At the next table, like a modernist doll propped beside a dowager, sat Patty Arundel. Patty had summed up her fellow passengers with the hard disfavour of twenty. She thought them old and stuffy. Clare she regarded as a Victorian siren, a silly woman who did not know that love was never mentioned by name between two modern young people. "Sticky!" thought Patty to herself.

"Johnny"—Patty raised her voice—"there goes Mrs. Langford."

She found she was not drawing Johnny's attention to Clare—it was already there. He blushed slightly, surprised in his own thoughts. He had just arrived at the conclusion that he had never seen such lovely curves, and what was it that lurked in those yellowish eyes? Johnny was fresh from college; his father was sending him around the world before he settled down to being a broker. Patty was fresh from Vassar, and she didn't fall in love with every youth who danced well or beat her at tennis. Johnny was on probation, but failing greater excitement, he seemed a godsend on the Marenia.

"Johnny!" This time her voice was imperative. "You're mooning. Give me your attention, all of it, and another dry Martini."

"Forgive me, Patty. My wits are wandering. Here, steward, two dry Martinis."

"I was wondering what you thought about Mrs. Langford, but now I shall not ask you."

"If you really want to know, I think she's a knock-out," said Johnny, with surprising fervour. Patty snuggled deep in her leather chair and looked a little moodily at the figure in gold. What a lovely gown! She wished that she knew what men could see in women who were as transparent as glass to their own sex.

Patty's thoughts were interrupted by the sudden appearance of her aunt, who walked over to their table to pick her up. She was small and slight, carefully groomed and

faintly bored, a woman who knew the worst and the best that were to be had from life.

"I shall want one, two, three, four, possibly five dances tonight," said Johnny, jumping smartly to attention in deference to Patty's aunt.

"Try to get them," retorted Patty, as she slipped through the door.

Johnny lingered over his cocktail, reflecting that it was luck to have found a girl like Patty on a trip like this. Clare walked past his table on her way to the dining-room, leaving a trail of perfume that made Johnny's nostrils contract with excitement. Wonder what she was doing on this trip, and who her husband was. Probably a divorcee. He would soon



Clare saw Macduff roaming up and down, puffing his pipe.

know, for it seemed that everything was getting about—too much so for his taste. It rather sickened Johnny, the way people talked, the men in the smokingroom, the women on deck. No one would have a scrap of privacy left by the time they had reached India.

Macduff was walking out and the bar was clearing. Johnny decided that it was time to go down to dinner. The orchestra was playing as he entered, and the boat was rolling so much that he staggered on the way to his table. He had drawn agreeable dining companions—a loose-boned Westerner, Bill Laird, with a charming wife whom he teased unmercifully. Bill was getting a reputation already for being the practical joker of the boat. Patty waved blithely across the room.

"Not feeling well?" enquired Bill, solicitously.

"Never felt better," said Johnny. "If you want to try a remedy on some one, you'd better watch out for Patty Arundel. She threatens to be sick whenever the boat rolls."

"Oh, Mrs. Langford! Bill shouted, half an hour later, seeing that Clare had finished dinner and was passing out at a leisurly gait. "Join us for coffee and liquors."

She had already had some deck-chair conversation with the Lairds and liked them both. Drawing in his lazy way, Bill introduced Johnny, who jumped to his feet and stood staring down at her in a tongue-tied manner. They all went upstairs to the salon and settled down to drinks and cigarettes. Clare chatted idly and Bill baited her, but grew bored when he failed to find resistance in her shallow retorts. She had no repartee, but her voice had a husky note that Johnny found alluring. He talked to Mrs. Laird, but kept his eyes glued on Clare. She ignored him most of the time, but when the dancing began she slid into his arms, and he suddenly knew that she had been thinking of him all the time. She danced divinely. Her hand felt alive in his clasp.

"I think I'm going to enjoy this trip," murmured Clare. "I've been seeing you about the boat. You're very strenuous, aren't you. Tennis, swimming, games."

Clare smiled and her hair brushed his chin. He had never held a woman in his arms who magnetized him like this. It was not like dancing with the girls he knew at home.

Johnny began to feel like a man of the world.

At last he gave her up reluctantly, for the music had come to an end. It was hard to wait for the next dance with her to begin. Patty had come in to the room with her aunt, but he had forgotten that she existed. She had found other partners and was dancing now with Dick, the chief officer.

Dick danced with the swing of the sea, and entertained Patty by telling her about some of the things she would see on the trip. The third time he danced with her he suddenly saw that she was not listening to a word he was saying, but was looking over his shoulder with the expression of a hurt child. With the next turn he could see why—Mrs. Langford was adrift in a sea of self-intoxication, her wide lips an inch from the cheeks of the boy whom Dick had seen pursuing Patty around the deck ever since they had sailed. So that was the way! Well, a good thing it had happened quickly, before she had got fond of him. He swung her hastily down the other side and out for a breath of air. The promenade deck was enclosed with glass, and she suggested that they go still higher. "I should love to feel the wind on the top deck," she said. They climbed up the companionway, Patty hugging her white fur jacket around her thin frock.

The moon was a crescent swung on a chain of diamonds, and the waves dashed foam against the bow. Patty had a dim idea that the woman in gold hovered like a shadow between a carefree yesterday and an ominous tomorrow. It was the look in Johnny's eyes that had appalled her. How did a woman make a mer boy, whom she scarcely knew look like that?

Dick kept quiet, preserving a sympathetic air. He was thinking: "A lovely child, but she's in for more of it if she feels that way about the boy. It's just another case of what the sea does to a woman."

He felt her clutching at his arm; all of a sudden she had decided to go down to her stateroom. Telling him to let her aunt know that she had gone to bed, Patty went below



Clare smiled and her hair brushed his chin.

and tried to read. The type danced before her eyes and she wondered if she was getting a little seasick. When her aunt came in, she found her fast asleep.

"Bertrand Russell's Marriage and Morals," said Mrs. Minton, picking up the book and covering her gently. "The child is growing up."

The Marenia lay at anchor at Villefranche, her flags strung like a garland of autumn leaves over the sapphire stretch of the bay. Monte Carlo was snugly tucked in the green curve of Monaco. After eleven days at sea, Macduff blinked at the brilliancy of the scene before him. He had his own plans for the day. He would give Monte Carlo a wide berth and stretch his legs in one of his favorite walks. He had a poor opinion of the place and had never tossed a penny on

the table. Any time he went to the Casino, it was simply to see what fools human beings could make of themselves over a gambling-wheel.

He strode along, with his arms swinging like windmills. More passengers were getting on at Villefranche. That was a pity. There were altogether too many on board already. Things seemed to be happening on the ship, some of which he did not altogether approve. Soon they would all be bickering, where now they were gushing and flirting. It was bound to turn out that way when people saw too much of one another.

He hoped they wouldn't get another Mrs. Langford on board; one of her kind was enough. She was beginning to get under his skin spoiling his pleasure on the top deck, always up to her tricks, and now roping in the American boy. Macduff thought that his sex should be protected from such influences. The Foster girl was showing up badly too. He never went into the bar that he did not find her there. The high jinks of the boat extended even to his own alley, where a diamond merchant across the way was continually entertaining women in his stateroom.

He came down off the breakwater and followed the road to the Italian border, stopping at a restaurant that stood on stilts in the sea.

The short Riviera day was passing and the chill of three o'clock was creeping in from the sparkling water. It was short-lived at its best, warm and vivifying, but swift in its decline. He remembered that he had to be on board the Marenia by seven. He might motor back to Monte Carlo and take a turn in the Casino to see what his fellow passengers were doing.

Hot and stuffy inside, as usual, with an annoying buzzing of subdued voices like a swarm of bees zooming in a distant grove. The merciless lights dug seams in weary faces. He thought he had never seen so many pairs of tired eyes. Wherever he looked, he could spot some one from the Marenia, but very few were throwing counters on the table. They were a cautious lot and ill at ease. He was surprised to see Miss Mudge—little Miss Muffet he called her in his own mind—tossing

two counters on the baize with quite a flourish. He would watch to see what happened. The wheel spun around. The croupier raked up her counters. She looked anxiously at his pasty face, not quite sure which way her luck had gone, but he did not raise his eyes from the table.

(Continued Next Week.)

**Stones in Cheap Jewelry**

A special kind of glass known as strass, which is made by fusing white sand, red lead, borax and several other elements, is used for the manufacture of cheap jewelry. When a colored gem is desired pieces are crushed into a fine powder and coloring substances are added. The mixture is then fused and annealed.

**Cities Called "Manchester"**

Manchester is a manufacturing city of England—particularly of goods. Lowell, Mass., has been called the Manchester of America; also Ghent, of Belgium; Osaka, of Japan; Elberfeld, of Prussia.



**A New Year On Parade**

There's reason to beat the drum announcing the New Year of 1936. More reason for celebration and great, high hopes than for many a year in the past. Happy New Year to all.

**FRANKLIN BARBER SHOP**  
Under Angel's Drug Store



**What the Doctor Ordered**

Old Doctor 1936 has ordered a grand New Year and a happy one. And we join with the Old Doe in wishing you health, happiness, success

**Perry's Drug Store**  
FRANKLIN, N. C.



**Greeting A New Arrival**

As Old Man Time carries in a New Year, our wishes go out to all in Macon County for happiness and prosperity and health.

Happy New Year to All

E. B. SCHULMAN

**Schulman's Department Store**  
FRANKLIN, N. C.