

# The Deep Sea Peril

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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## ATTEMPTING TO RESCUE HIS SWEETHEART, PAGET ENCOUNTERS A NOISOME HORDE.

Naval Lieutenant Donald Paget, just given command of a submarine, meets at Washington an old friend and distinguished though somewhat eccentric scientist, Captain Masterman. Masterman has just returned from an exploring expedition, bringing with him a member of the strange race, the existence of whose species, he asserts, menaces the human family. At the club, the "March Hares," Masterman explains his theory to Paget. The recital is interrupted by the arrival of a lifelong enemy of Masterman, Ira MacBeard, and the former is seized with a fatal paralytic stroke. From Masterman's body Paget secures documents bearing upon the discovery and proceeds to the home of the scientist. Paget proceeds to sea on his submarine, the F55, and encounters a German cruiser. He sinks the enemy, which had destroyed the Beotia, on which Ida Kennedy, his fiancée, was a passenger. The girl escapes in a small boat.

### CHAPTER V.

#### The Sea of Jelly.

He sank like a stone. No glimpse of him could be had. No rescue was possible.

Donald clung to the edge of the boat and scrambled in. He saw the amazed recognition flame out on Ida's face. He knew then that she loved him, and his impulse to seize her in his arms was almost ungovernable.

But at the same instant, looking past her into the sea, he experienced the same illusion that had beset him within the house in Baltimore, and again outside it—that of a woman's misty form outlined upon the water! Donald made a cup of his hands.

"Davies, fling out a rope!" he bawled.

But the submarine was some distance away, and in a moment a wall of fog came down, blotting her out.

Ida Kennedy watched Donald with approval. She had always liked him; shaken as she was now, his advent seemed the work of Providence. She had questioned her heart before she sailed, for she had known that her future was of her own choosing, whether it was to be spent with him or no.

Donald continued to call loudly, but the F55 was drifting in the mist and quite invisible. It was in fear of this sudden happening that Donald had told Davies to make for Fair Island if he could not get a rope to the boat.

Fair Island, less than six miles away, was the secret rendezvous where the oil-ship and biplane were to await the F55, the former to replenish her fuel supply, the latter to accompany her back to the mother ship.

Donald picked up a pair of oars from the bottom. He realized that he would have to pull toward Fair Island alone as soon as he got an inkling of its direction, with the chance of being picked up by the submarine when the fog cleared. But it was approaching sundown, and the probabilities of their spending the night in the boat seemed strong.

He sat with the oars in the rowlocks. As he allowed one to drift through the water he discovered, to his surprise, that it was apparently plunged into a mass of some jellylike substance. He dipped his hand into it and scooped some of it up.

The water was apparently curdled, like thickened milk, and on both sides of the boat, which rolled in it heavily and high in the viscous medium.

As he withdrew the oar Donald had the sensation of pulling it from between the clinging fingers of a child.

He looked down. It occurred to him that he might have got the blade entangled in some marine growth; but the water was clear, almost black, and of the same strange, jellylike consistency everywhere.

Then, to his amazement, he realized that the boat was moving!

It was not like the pull of a towline, which is a sequence of crescendo and diminuendo, of starts and jerks, as the rope grows tight and slack alternately. It was a constant impulse. It was an intelligent impulse.

It was beginning to grow dark, and to row seemed useless until the fog dispersed. It was impossible to gauge the direction. Besides, to pull against that force would have been arduous, and to pull with it might have led to unexpected difficulties.

Donald backed water in experiment. Instantly he felt the force increase. It was an effortless, persistent push, stronger than his own powers, and Donald realized that he could not resist it.

Suddenly he felt a stinging sensation on the back of his hand. He pulled in the oar. Five small, red spots had sprung out on his wrist, and the flesh seemed to have been cupped. Donald clapped his other hand down on it, and encountered something clammy and cool, which seemed to slip away. It was like the flipper of a little seal, or, again, like the hand of a child or monkey.

At the same instant Ida screamed. Donald saw that she seemed to be struggling with some invisible adversary. The boat was tipping dangerously. Donald flung his weight over,

and he heard the thud of a soft body against the bottom.

The thing—whatever it was—was in the boat!

Donald leaped forward and clasped Ida about the waist. She writhed in the clutch of the monster, and there was a look of intense horror upon her face. She seemed to be lifted bodily toward the water. Donald felt the slippery fingers of the invisible being clutch his grasp. His hands moved up and down over a smooth, blubbery body.

And then he knew what it was. It was such a creature as he had seen in the glass tank in Masterman's house, but larger and more powerful.

And, glaring into his eyes, were the two eyes, seemingly poised in the air, two pupils of the size of currants, and animated by a diabolical intelligence.

The sun dipped down, and in an instant the fog, only partly dispersed, closed in again. And as Donald watched, he saw the pupils slowly dilate in the dim light until they became as large as saucers.

Then, regaining courage, he dashed his fist into the monster's face, and the struggle began. He felt the impact of his knuckles on flesh, and it gave him new heart. At least he was fighting a thing of flesh and blood, and not a demon.

Ida lay swooning across the seat, where the monster had dropped her as it turned to face its new adversary. And in the rocking boat Donald fought for his own life and that of the girl he loved.

For the first time he understood that Masterman's story was not the dream of a disordered brain, but the experience of one who had striven to warn a skeptical world.

And afterward he understood why the boat had spun so dizzily long after the vortex created by the sinking of the Beotia had subsided. Even then the swarm of monsters must have discovered their prey.

Perhaps it was the plankton in the water, the jellylike infusion on which they fed, that had brought them there; perhaps the presence of drowning men. Perhaps they had brought the plankton with them, equipped for some dreadful journey.

Donald tried to lock his arms about the slimy thing, but he could get no firm grasp of it. And each touch of the flippers drew the blood to the surface of his skin by suction, bringing out rows of reddening spots that stung. He was fighting a devil fish with the intelligence of a man, armed with invisibility, creating overwhelming horror by its presence alone.

He felt his strength falling him. He was dragged toward the edge of the rocking boat.

He stumbled and fell. He felt himself held fast; he felt his ribs were compressed in a stinging vise.

But as he fell his hand grasped one of the oars. Donald snatched it up and, with a last effort of desperation, freed himself for an instant. He raised the oar and sent the sharp edge of the blade crashing forward.

He heard the sound as of a torn balloon. The squirming flippers uncoiled. The boat tipped to the edge and righted itself. A splash followed. Donald sank down upon the seat.

Then gradually a milky cloud began to diffuse itself upon the face of the waters, till it acquired the shape of a dwarflike body, supine upon the waves, with the short limbs, terminating in the webbed hands, budding at obtuse angles to the trunk.

Donald sprang toward Ida, to shield her from the sight of it. He knew that if she awoke and looked she would go mad. But she lay unconscious across the seat and did not stir.

The boat stopped. There was a confused splashing in the water. The dead sea-bent was rent asunder under Donald's horrified eyes; torn limb from limb by that abominable swarm. A mottled, pinkish icher spread itself upon the face of the sea.

Donald plunged in his oars and began to pull with all his might, driving the heavy boat through the water. The plankton gave place to clean ocean again. The sun had set, and it was growing dark; with the fall of night a gentle wind came up that began to dissipate the fog.

Though the drifting mist wreaths appeared a jutting cape that reared itself toward the spangled clouds. Donald pulled for an hour. Then he fell forward over his oars. He was incapable of another stroke, but he believed that he had left the sea devils behind.

He cast his eyes along the horizon. There was no sign of the F55. He turned toward Ida.

As he bent over her her eyes opened. She looked at him intently and sighed. The horrors of that day seemed temporarily to have numbed her mind and robbed her of memory. And Donald did what he had never dared to do before.

He raised her in his arms and kissed her.

"I love you dear," he said. "If we come out of this—as we shall—I want you always. Will you have me, Ida?" She raised her lips to his for answer.

And in the happiness of that moment, which atoned for all that they had endured, Donald perceived that the boat had begun to move again. The respite had been of brief duration. Incredibly pertinacious, and cruel beyond belief, the monsters had once more taken up the chase. But in the unhuman forms were minds as shrewd as his, organizing them for one supreme purpose, the elemental one of food.

They were swimming beside the boat. Donald could see the agitated churning of the water. Were they pushing or pulling? Taking the oar in his hand, Donald went to the bow and drove it down into the sea. But he struck only the jellylike medium in which the boat was traveling.

He went to the stern, stepping over the body of the girl, who had relapsed into unconsciousness. This time, as he thrust, there was a scurry among the waves, and he felt the yielding, blubbery form, and the same sensation of a burst balloon. The boat stopped. Donald thrust out furiously, feeling always the contact with slippery flesh.

The monsters were pushing the boat, not pulling it.

And gradually there followed the same stupendous incarnation into visible being, the shadowy shape that grew and crystallized into the milky, opalescent body. He heard the school precipitate themselves upon their prey, and saw it rent and dismembered before his eyes.

Through the increasing darkness their pupils glared as the monsters strove together.

Donald went back to where Ida lay and placed her in the bottom of the boat, her head against a thwart. They were moving swiftly.

Suddenly the boat began to tilt up at the bow. Donald heard the scraping of the flippers against the stern. Then, as if a heavy dog had scrambled in, the boat tipped high into the air and righted itself. Another of the monsters had gained entrance.

Donald seized the oar and brought it down upon the beast's head. The oar splintered; he heard the cracking of bone, and a splash followed.

The edge of the boat was dragged beneath the waves. It filled and overturned. Donald found himself struggling to save Ida in the sea of jelly that sucked him down. Somehow he caught her and dragged himself to the keel. He shouted, and the brutes scurried away, leaping and falling with resounding splashes, like sharks at play.

Donald felt Ida's arms seek his neck. She turned to him instinctively, not as her rescuer alone, but as her lover.

He filled his lungs and shouted. To his amazement he heard an answering shout. He strained his eyes through the darkness. Surely that was a human cry! He shouted again, and the answer came once more; and there was no longer any doubt.

The conning tower of the F55 came drifting out of the night. She ran awash, with hatches off, and Davies was standing on the deck among a group of sailors.

"Where are you?" he shouted.

"Here!" Donald cried. "Reverse engines, Davies! Coming aboard!"

The engines stopped and the submarine grazed the sides of the overturned boat. Donald grasped Ida in his arms and clambered to the deck. And Donald found himself shaking a man's hand as if he were his brother, instead of merely Sam Clouts, able seaman in the navy, trying to keep his hands from straying toward his mouth organ.

"We were trying to make Fair Island when we spotted you, sir," said Davies. "I thought we'd pick you up in the morning when the fog cleared. It's been hard work making anywhere there's something the matter with the sea."

"How, Davies?"

"We're only able to make a knot and a half, sir. It isn't the engines. At least there doesn't seem to be anything the matter with them. It's as if the sea's—well, turned to jelly, or molasses, sir. Perhaps you noticed it. I've never seen anything like it in my experience," continued the little midly, whose experience of the high seas was limited to a couple of short cruises on a training ship, and one on a transport.

"Clap on the hatches and make full speed for Fair Island," ordered Donald.

The F55 is invaded by the weird monsters and Paget has a terrible struggle to save himself and Ida. It is described in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

# HOME TOWN HELPS

## FINE FOR PICKING FLOWERS

Ordinance Protecting Yards and Parkings of City Prevents Selfish and Thoughtless Mischiefs.

Of course, in the business sections of a city the front parkings are impracticable and even many shade trees are often not desirable, the attractiveness of the streets depending entirely upon the architectural beauties of the buildings and the cleanliness and good repair of house fronts, sidewalks and pavements, but in residence sections the beauty depends as much upon the condition of the surroundings as upon the houses themselves, and especially upon the flower beds and lawns during at least a part of the year.

It is often very annoying and discouraging to the owner of beautiful flower beds in the front yards, which have been cultivated to a state of high perfection by constant care and strenuous effort, to have their beauty marred or destroyed by mischievous children or covetous adults, who often pluck the flowers and break the plants with seeming impunity. The children should be taught to find pleasure in looking at the flowers without plucking them and an ordinance making it a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine, to pluck or injure flowers or plants in the yards or parkings of others, would be very useful, to restrain adults from their selfish and thoughtless mischief and keep them from being aggressive enemies of the city beautiful.

The back yards, however, protected by fences and gates, are usually safe ground in which the lover of beautiful flowers may employ his taste, knowledge and judgment and expend his efforts to produce results that will afford pleasure to himself and his household, as well as to his neighbors.

## KEEP BEAUTY OF ROADSIDE

Some Towns Appreciate the Value of Permitting Flowers and Shrubbery to Grow on Highways.

In many a charming countryside the town road-destroyer with his bush-scythe garners the beauty and leaves bleakness, a singularly unkept result of an attempt to clean up. Sometimes it is the village improvement society itself, meaning well, that sends him forth, says the Boston Transcript. More often it is his individual sense of responsibility to the office whose salary he is expected to earn. He, too, means well, and would be greatly indignant if told that his labors tended to drive prosperity away from his district. Yet such is without doubt the fact. The summer visitor loves the country for its wild tangle, its untrammelled growth, its bushy dells and its friendly shrubbery which crowds into the road itself, flaunting dewy fragrance in his face as he walks. When the day comes that he returns and finds in place of these along his accustomed walks dry brush, bare stubble and clumsily unkept cleanliness, his soul revolts and on the morrow he seeks fresh woods and pastures new. Some country towns seem to have a realizing sense of this purely utilitarian side of the value of roadside beauty. They build good roads, but they take care to leave the roadside growth untrammelled that those who pass may enjoy it. It is a business asset.

There is more to it, too, than the fact that sentimentalists and nature lovers come to worship this beauty. The school children of such a town go to school along roads lined with object lessons not only in beauty but in natural science, lessons which they learn without knowing it and which remain with them all their lives.

## Landscape Fundamentals.

Every owner of a bit of soil should make a limited study of the art of landscaping so that fundamental mistakes are not made. First, do not plant your space all over, as though it were an orchard. Leave an open center for lawn or even a bare soil and plant only about the borders and in varying widths. Never cluster the center with trees or shrubs. Mass the planting by placing many of a kind together; do not space regularly so each will appear lonely or have an orchard effect. It matters little if they grow together in a mass—nature so disposes them. This effect is more necessary in shrubs than trees but even trees should interlace. In a small garden some or even all of formality must be had but in a place of size we need little or none. In the large places we should avoid straight lines. If one will follow these few simple rules he cannot go far astray in planning his own garden.

## Never Too Many Parks.

Some things are never enjoyed in excess. They never breed regrets, says an exchange. Who ever heard of a city that learned, as it grew from youth to maturity, that it had too many parks? Where is the municipality that is sorry it has so many pleasure grounds for the use of its citizens? Was there ever a town which felt that its children enjoyed too much room for their play, its invalids too many quiet nooks for rest and recuperation, its aged and infirm more than sufficient outdoor space for their special wants?

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## His Plaintive Plea.

Philadelphia draws the last number in exemption stories. A colored citizen declared to his board chairman: "Boss, Ah ain't got no wife. Ah's only just 'gaged. But kahn't Ah go to jail for that?"

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## Keen Business Man.

"Excuse me, sir," said Blison, a little timidly, "but you appear to be following me. Is there anything you want?"

"Well, I'm just trying to find where you live, and introduce myself, like I'm McPherson, the undertaker," said the burly stranger.

"Oh—quite so! I'm pleased to meet you, I'm sure! But there's nobody dead at my place!"

"Nae, nae," said the undertaker, smiling sweetly. "But I just heard you cough an' I had hopes!"—London Answers.

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## Too Much Grammar.

A man made a bet with a friend that he could go into the Billingsgate fish market in London and put one of the well-known loud-mouthed fishermen in a rage without saying a word that she could understand. The man commenced by silently indicating with his nose that her fish had passed the fresh stage. The Billingsgate lady at once made a verbal attack.

The man answered: "You're an article, ma'am."

"No more an article than yourself, you villain."

"You're a noun, woman."

"You—you—" stammered the woman, choking with rage at a list of titles she could not understand.

"You're a pronoun."

The beldam shook her fist in speechless rage.

"You're a verb—an adverb—an adjective—a conjunction—a preposition—an interjection!" suddenly continued the man.

The nine parts of speech completely conquered the old woman, and she dumped herself down in the mud, crying with rage.—Ladies' Home Journal.

## An Unreasonable Complainer.

"Most unreasonable man I ever met. Kicks because he has to get up in the morning at six o'clock and throw coal into the furnace."

"Pretty hard, I say."

"Yes! But think of having the coal to throw!"

Time and tide wait for no man. Neither does any real man wait for time or tide.

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