

PROMENADE DECK

By ISHBEL ROSS

First Instalment

A whistle sounded across the harbour, the signal for the *Marenia* to slip from her moorings. Its booming note spread tumult through the midnight stillness and startled a flock of sea gulls into flight. Two snub-nosed tugs prodded the ship's sides and eased her slowly into mid-stream, where she paused for a throbbing second, a dark monster riddled with rings of gold.

Along her decks, passengers leaned at the rails. The band played and the music drifted faintly back to those who stood at the end of the pier, waving good-bye to their friends who were starting out on a cruise around the world.

Keith Macduff turned away from the rail and climbed to the boat deck, where he could breathe the cold night air without distraction. The Woolworth Tower, old and friendly, went shimmering past, as the *Marenia* cleared the tip of Manhattan Island.

Macduff breathed deeply and his chest swelled under his uister. There was no one in New York that he would miss; that was one of the great advantages of going through life without ties. He had boasted to Hamish Ingle that he would sail around the world and never speak to a soul.

Hamish had laughed him to scorn, telling him that there was nothing more difficult to do than the overtures to one's fellow travellers on a cruise. As a solace, he had made him a list of the best cocktails of every port.

A light breeze was ruffling the water's surface and Macduff looked back at the sparkling towers that were now no more than a trail of phosphorescence. New York was the place for work, he reflected, thinking of all the pleasant things that a man could do when he lived by himself.

He would miss his peaceful existence in New York, and his pleasant evenings with detective stories, under the battered lamp that Susannah wanted removed in favour of something she called a bridge stand. His thoughts ran back over his years in New York. Each one was locked in a dark chamber in his mind, and it was only at rare intervals, when something unusual was happening to him, that he switched on the lights; then things sprang to life like pictures on a screen.

Macduff looked back towards New York. It was only a phantom of light on the water's edge now, but he knew that its tiers of store and panes of glass aspired to the drifting clouds. For a brief flash he could see thru' it all, as if the walls had collapsed and before his eyes—bright rooms inhabited by people chattering about nothing, men and women quarreling, making love, reading and dancing, bands playing, radios spreading their children making a noise. Such a racket huddling! They did not know what it was to spend an evening alone, or to seek quiet with a book. Must have company, must make whoopee. Bah! He turned away. He saw a fur coat and a huge bunch of orchids curled against the rail.

Clare Langford, lost in thought, watched his receding back for a moment, then turned her attention to the sea. Dick Charlton, the chief officer, came stalking along the deck, and leaned against the railing, several yards away. His cap was tilted over a profile as sharp as the blade of a knife.

"Are we near Quarantine?" she asked, aware of his presence.

"Just about there." He moved responsively in her direction.

Clare turned her face towards him. It was pale and oval in the half-light, marked only by the full curve of her lips.

"I'm so glad to be leaving New York!" Her admission was as swift as the blaze of her eyes. Then she remembered herself and was quenched. She turned to the rail again and forgot that there was anyone else on the top deck. Dick moved quietly on his way. A shiver ran through her frame. She was glad to be leaving New York, and to be going around the world. It was an excellent thing to be getting away from Hugh. Four months were too many to have devoted to him.

She looked back at the trail of light that marked New York and could see him returning alone to his apartment. How had she ever come to throw in her lot with his? It was so unlikely—a dusty scientist who had turned to writing and worldly living, after a lifetime in his laboratory. Her friends were continually telling her that his mind was gay and enterprising; they had discovered that from his books.

"Poor Hugh!" she thought, as she leaned over the rail. "He looked so mournful as the boat moved out. What will he do with himself now?" But Hugh was less at a loss than she imagined. Soon after meeting Clare, one of his oldest friends had warned him that she was the wrong woman for him, and that he must not neglect his work for her.

Clare was suddenly weary. Yes, she was glad to be getting away. There was no excitement for her in the ethereal beauty. "I think I shall turn in," she thought, looking around to see if anyone were in sight. "I wonder if I couldn't have my deck chair up here. It would be quiet, and more romantic under the stars."

The passengers were disappearing for the night, until only a sprinkling remained on deck. The *Marenia* was heading for the sea, and her four jewelled strings of light were showing blanks above the water line, as one porthole after another went dark.

In a minimum rate cabin on D deck Miss Alice Mudge bent with fluttering fingers over a straw suitcase lying open on her narrow bed. Her black eyes gleamed from a nest of anxious folds, for she was nervous and had decided to avoid her glasses as much as possible. Somewhere she had read that glasses were a hindrance to romance, and nothing must interfere with the full enjoyment of her trip around the world.

In a spasm of anxiety her hand moved to her waist. She took off her belt, undid her skirt, and fumbled for the small chamois bag that Hortense, the seamstress of Ononto, Wisconsin, had made for her, along with her travel wardrobe.

At last she had dug her way thru' tapes and buttons and had reached the chamois bag. Twittering, she turned it upside down on the bed, having first made sure that the cabin door was locked. Before her lay five hundred dollars in crumpled bills which Mr. Brown, the banker, had given her with a flourish, remarking that it was not every day that Ononto had a citizen leaving for a trip around the world.

Her ticket, which had cost two thousand was safe in her handbag, ready to be turned over to the purser tomorrow. It had taken her twenty years of saving and scrimping to accumulate twenty-five hundred dollars though now it seemed like a day. By being very careful Miss Mudge would see the world sumptuously on her surplus of \$500.

The boat was beginning to heave and Miss Mudge wondered if she should take her Scaxyl now, or wait until she felt ill. No, the directions said to take it before feeling ill. Had she been wise to have her hair bobbed before sailing, or was it frivolous and out of keeping with her years and occupation? It was too late to worry about it now. Besides, she rather liked it, and, whatever happened, she was going to be utterly frivolous for the next five months. No one could stop her.

Her cabin was comfortable enough although her bunk seemed perched at a great height. She lay on her back and at last she turned out her lights and murmured a little prayer. She was so thankful to Providence for letting her go round the world at last. With the words slipping over her lips, she fell asleep, lulled by the bounding of the engines.

The *Marenia* began to creak and roll in answer to the sea. Sandy Hook was left behind and the pilot had taken off. Captain Mark Baring, standing on the bridge, and straining his eyes into the darkness that lay ahead, was the least cheerful person on board. He saw five hard months ahead of him, care and responsibility, strange harbours and the monotony that drove crew and passengers to erratic behaviour.

A panorama of faces swept before him—middle-aged women starved for romance, travellers who had been everywhere and who made him a target for their ill-assorted knowledge, women who talked too much, women who laughed too much, and, above all, women who drank too much.

He lived in a world of his own and escaped when he could from the ship's festivities, but the cock-tail parties, the teas and dinners, were a necessary part of ship routine that he could not avoid.

Only his intimates knew that he played a muted violin in his own quarters, and that there were times when he wrote verse. None of the crew suspected that the quiet, hard man who skippered the ship was an artist at heart. They thought he was made of ice—hard to chip, slow to melt, but a capital seaman.

The *Marenia* creaked a slow refrain from bow to stern. His heart rose suddenly to the tune of the sea. Here, at least, was something that fitted his mood—master of his boat, sailing the seven seas!

The *Marenia* was three days out and her passengers were settling down to the routine of life at sea. The unwary were rushing heedlessly into friendships which they were soon to regret.

Clare had scarcely left the top deck since sailing. She sunned herself till her skin had the warmth of a pomegranate. The flame of the dying day flickered in her half-veiled eyes as Dick studied her attentively.

"It's an odd thing about sunsets," he was saying, "one can never remember them. They're marvelous for fifteen minutes and you think that all your life you will hold their beauty, but try to summon up the picture the next day! It's gone."

He was staring at the sky, and she thought with impatience that he was lost to her—a missionary like Hugh, the most tiresome kind of man. They were always floating off in their mental airships when one

most wanted their companionship.

"How often have you been around the world?" she pursued.

Dick looked at her suddenly and his thoughts receded like fading pictures, in the presence of this dazzling creature with skin like honey.

"This is my seventh cruise with the *Marenia*, and before that I knocked about the world a bit on other boats."

She measured him with her eyes. "What a wise young man you must be—knowing all about love!"

"What rot! I scarcely believe in love."

Clare laughed.

Dick looked down at her. "Women are constantly building up the fiction of enduring love," he said, "but it really doesn't endure, unless one's life is so deadly dull that there's no chance for romance. Usually women destroy their own images by holding on for too long. They should always be first in knowing when things are over. However, it's an instinct in which they are totally lacking."

"You haven't told me half enough," she observed. "Tell me some more about women. Tell me what you think of American women."

Dick threw back his head and laughed. "I wonder if you were wise to ask me that," he said. "Shall you be offended if I tell you I think them a little overbearing—too intent on their looks, their clothes, their careers, their ambitions? And I haven't words to describe the way they treat their men, nibbling at their self-respect, leading them by the noses, making them wait for hours for the merest whim."

"You rather extreme, aren't you?" said Clare, lazily, amused by Dick's tirade, "and you're not very polite. Take my word for it," she added, defensively, "American women are beloved by the gods. Show me any women on earth who are more clever and chic, more free and independent, or having so good a time."

"That's it," said Dick, equally. "They're self-sufficient, self-contained and frozen over with ambition." He was watching her with a glimmer of amusement. Clare's mood flashed to annoyance.

Continued Next Week

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Thousands Old Cars Sent To Junk Heaps

Thousands of old automobiles so decrepit that they were potentially a danger to users of the highway have been smashed up since January 1 under the nation-wide "junking" plan instituted by Chevrolet Motor Company in January and continued in February, according to W. E. Holler, vice-president and general sales manager. Full reports for the period to date have not been compiled.

"The operation of the junking plan is bound to reduce the hazards of the highways," Mr. Holler pointed out. "Literally thousands of cars whose further operation on the highways would be a menace to their owners and to others will be retired permanently, and the probabilities are that the number will run even higher."

The removal of the cars already scrapped from the streets and highways will definitely reduce the traffic hazard, for next to the driver himself, the most important factor in highway safety is the condition of the vehicle.

Mr. Holler explained the plan under which Chevrolet and its dealers are carrying out the junking program. The Chevrolet Motor Company, he said, pays the dealer for each car, taken in trade on a new Chevrolet, that is scrapped. The actual junking is supervised by the Chevrolet district manager, who certifies that the car was destroyed in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

"The announcement of the junking program," said Mr. Holler, "caited forth enthusiastic public response. Many newspapers and magazines commented upon the plan editorially, calling it a worthwhile step in the direction of street and highway safety."

That it is sound from an economic standpoint is shown by the latest sales figures available. Both used cars and new Chevrolet cars and trucks have set all-time records for this season.

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Obituary

The angel of Death has entered our home and taken a beloved father—husband, neighbor and friend from our midst.

James B. Calloway, one of a family of 8 children, of James Ervin and Josephine Calloway, was born at Shulls Mills, N. C., June 15, 1875, and died at his home at Amelia, Ohio, December 3, 1935, aged 60 years, five months and 18 days.

He was twice married, the first to Elizabeth Shook, December 20, 1895. To this union was born one son, Arcilar. They soon afterwards moved to Oklahoma, when his wife died May 20, 1899. Coming back to North Carolina he married Mae Church on January 3, 1901. To this union was born four children of which two died in infancy.

He is survived by his widow, Mae Calloway, two brothers, Harrison, and Melvin, both of North Carolina, one son, Arcilar Calloway, of Amelia, Ohio, two daughters, Mrs. Azalia Coffey of Shulls Mills, N. C., and Mrs. Edith White of Amelia, Ohio; also eight grandchildren.

They took upon themselves the rearing of an infant whose mother died at birth, and which is now four years of age, caring for him as tenderly as if he was their very own. May the good Lord bless them for this mercy act. In his earlier life he followed the carpenter trade. For several years he was contractor for the Whiting Lumber Co., working around the old Grandfather Mountain, in the shadow of which he was born.

He came to Amelia, Ohio to his home on Coles Road March 3, 1929 where he resided until his death. He quietly went to rest after an illness of about a year. He was genial, friendly, kind, a true friend and a good neighbor. He was a man very devoted to his wife and home. He made several visits to North Carolina to visit his relatives and friends and from every side you could hear the honorable name of Uncle Jim by which he was known.

He is leaving his family and friends

only for a short time until they are joined in companionship in that permanent home where there will be no more parting.

Funeral services at Amelia Baptist Church Friday, December 6, 1935. Interment at Mt. Moriah cemetery.

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