Wireless

Novelized by Thompson Buchanan From the Successful Play of the Same Name # By Winchell Smith, Frederic Thompson And Paul Armstrong

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mmm

start apart guiltily. Sommers tooked up angrily. The big man with the shrowd eves was standing beside the table, his face as unemotional as though carved from stone

"What do you want?" asked the navnt officer sharpty.

"My name is Bradley," sold the man, "United States secret service. I've brought a tarrence to you from Washkegton, Henningz"

"You my wonted at Washington. Benteanol to answer some questions at the court of impriry."

With an involutary exclamation of tear and sympathy, Frances stood ruser to her been He was staring at the say not service man, astounded. "A court of morning!"

Bradiev nedded

Yes sir Your gam exploded three weeks ago. Two men were killed outright and three mangled. One will be blinded if he lives"

> CHAPTER XIII. "DON'T YOU SER I LOVE YOU?" WO dead; three mangled; one

blind"-Slowly, in dazed, mechanical fashion, Sommers repeated the awful summary of his failure. Frances' face was horror stricken, too, but with a quick, impulsive gesture of love and faith she put her hand on his

"It isn't your fault," she said. "I know it isn't your fault." His hand caught hers with a quick

grip of thanks for the renewed courage her sympathy and faith brought him-"Won't you leave us now?" he said. for "I'll see you and tell you what

be bus to say " Rein tare the girl bowed and burried away this the hotel to wait there or part on over could see her and one Sommers turned out his to Bradier

The se ist service man had been simples there has face expressionyes, but his stream eyes taking in and his keen trans multzing all that

"Why was I not informed of this before " neged Sommers, still partly

"They desired to keep it from you such your enture ashere," replied the secret service man "How it all har-- that at the court of inquiry I turn town on the case since the accident commend. Your gun stood the test at the proving ground It's my eninter that it was killed in the tempering both." A wave of light swept over Sommers.

He saw everything now it was all plain. He understood why a drunken Sceman had been left in charge of the job He knew why Pinckney had been so selicitous. He realized why, finally, he himself and been assaulted in the her desperate effort to keep him from witnessing the transfer of the gun to the tempering both

Finally be understood why France and come there that night. She must have suspected, and she had come to save him The thought of the dastardis trick encured him "It was killed in the tempering bath!

I sweat & was!" Sommers exclaimed fercely "Pinckney was in the room that night at the Durant works. He's here-here at this hotel. I'll settle with him!" He had taken a step when the secre

service man caught him by the arm. "Easy, lad, easy!" be cautloned. "Don't lose your head! I've made in-

vestigations to Pittsburg, and I'm going to question Mr. Pinckney myself." With a de perate effort under the restraining hand Sommers regained his

self control. His mind began to work egain logically, shrewdly. He saw what he had to do and how he must belp this friendly officer. "May I ask when you were in Pitts-

org did you question a man named "You mean the draughtsman? No,"

replied Bradley. "Do you think be knew anything of it?" Sommers shook his head in puzzled

"He may have known something. He

ought to. Le was there." Did you ever see a Mr. Rhinestrom stout there?" asked Bradley next.

more still looked puzzied. "No; I didn't see him, but I beard a est deal of him. Mares had been toon had of him. Marsh was greatly

ked keenly at the naval

h. Marsh was interested in that But you never saw Rhinestrom

the that startling flash He began to suspect just ind he had been, but before he d say another word Pinckney came wickly from the hotel. The genmanager stopped, surprised at of the naval lieutenant.

bowed with equal coldness

as Bradley stepped in between the two

"I've been most anxious to see you. Mr. Plockney." the secret service agent

Pinckney looked at him, surprised.

"Who are you?" be asked. "United States secret service man detailed on the Sommers gun case." came the quick reply.

Pinckney suppressed an involuntary

"Ob, I see," he said. "I'm downright sorry. Most unfortunate affair. indeed. But what can I do?" Bradley smiled pleasantly.

"Why, answer a few questions, if you will," he suggested.

The general manager could not keep down all expression of annoyance, but he knew it would never do to completely antagonize the secret service man on the case, so he forced an apology for a smile.

"Of course, with pleasure. But I'm rather pushed for time. We sail almost immediately."

"In that case. I'll begin at once." He turned to the government agent undisturiast

"Mr Durant has kindly consented that I should make a thorough investigation at the works in Pittsburg when I return. He is auxious to do all in his pot er to belp me find upou whom the blame rests."

The general manager drew himself

"Blame," he said sternly.

"Yes, blame," was the pointed reply. Again Pinckney made a move for delay. He wanted to get to Pittsburg as quickly as he could to see Marsh and cover up all tracks before he answered any questions.

"Can't you deter all questions until the investigation in Pittsburg?" be suggested. "I'm in a great burry, and in Pittsburg I will have all facts before me and can answer fully."

But Bradley was a man not to be

denied.

"I should prefer asking one or two now," he said and without waiting tor response put his first query bluntly.

"What is your belief, Mr. Pinckney, as to the cause of this unfortunate

"My bellef?" said the general manager blankly. "Yes. Do you think the gun was killed in the tempering bath at your

arsenal?" Pinckney's face flushed.

"I do not." be retorted angelly. "I think the gun was constructed on theory, and the theory was unsound." Sommers, standing by, made a quick, angry movement, but a sharp look The from Bradley restrained bim. secret service man was apparently very much interested and thoroughly willing to nevert Pinckney's idea.

In fact, egreeing with people was part of Bradley's stock in trade, and, in fact, in Washington it was generally admitted that this particular star of the secret service bureau could agree with more people and get more information without offense than any man in the service. Now, apparently, he was Pinckney's friend.

'M'm-very interesting." New, what do you think of the Rhine-

strom gun, Mr. Pinckney?" Pinckney tooked at his questioner starply, but the face before him showed only bland agreement and cusual interest.

"I consider the Rhinestrom gun the best gun that has been invented," said the general manager firmly. The face of the government agent

ontinued to show bland interest only. and have you controlled the patents of the Khinestrom gun?"

The Durant steel works control them," corrected the general manager. "And you have a large government order for the Rhinestrom gun now that the Sommers gun is out of the way?" persisted the unruffled questioner

Pinckney had been losing more and more of his self control as each suceeding home thrust struck bim.

"I don't like what that question im plies, sir," be exclaimed augrily. Bradley made a slight conventional

"I'm sorry." he said indifferently.

The conspirator had begun to realize he was fencing a strong, shrewd antagonist and it would not do to lose his temper, so he hastened to explain. "We had the Rhinestrom order before the Sommers gun was forged."

"Who is Rhinestrom?" commanded Bradley, with a sudden sternness that took the general manager completely by surprise. Pinckney had not antici pated that question. For a moment he besitated, repeating blankly after the government agent:

"Who is be?" Bradley's manner had changed abruptly from bland curiosity to stern determination to know.

"Yes," he said sharply, "who Rhinestrom? Where does be come from? Where is be now? Whom did you deal with?"

Pinckney nesitated. "Why, I have no idea who his friends

Does Mr. Durant know?" asked the

detective. Still Pinckney fenced. "1-1 couldn't say, really. Better ask Mr. Durant."

"I did," retorted Bradley shortly. Pinckney saw it was time to end this cross questioning if he was to get away safe. The government agent was shrewder than he thought, and this thin spot in his defense—the identity of Rhinestrom-seemed perilously weak. The only thing to do was to nd it at once.

"I haven't time to talk to you furher." be said.

Bradley made a restraining gesture "Just a mement more, Mr. Pinckney. Bas Rhinestrom ever been at your

"No, sir," returned the general man-

ager promptly. Then how does Marsh know him?"

demanded the government agent stern-It was pure bluff, but l'inckney had no idea of that, and he took the bait,

hook, sinker and all. "Marsh!" he excinimed blankly Why, Marsa doesn't know him." For the first time Bradley permitted

himself a sneering smile, "I can only go by what Marsh says," he declared. "Do you mean to tell me. Mr. Pinckney, that Marsh, the draughtsman of the Durant steel works, does not know the inventor of

the Rhinestrom gun?" Pinckney's face was brick red with anger now, but inside there was a quiver of apprehension that Marsh had talked. If so, all was up. Anyway

this questioning must stop. "I'm not going to talk to you further, sir," be declared angrily. manner is distasteful to me."

Again there came that mocking, sa tirical apology. "Oh. I'm so sorry. But, Mr. Pinck-

ney, you don't mind admitting that the man in charge of forging the Sommers gun was drunk?" Pinckney besitated.

"I do admit that," he said, "but he did his work properly. I was there myself to watch him. Mr. Sommers was there too."

Institutity to be not service agent turned on Sommers "Were you in the furnace room, Lieu-

tenant Sommers at the time the gun went into the both?" "Yes, sir," admitted the naval offi-

rer. "I was." "Did it go in at the right temperature?"

It was Sommers' time to besitate. "I-I don't know," be admitted. "I didn't see it "You were in the furnace room."

exclaimed the secret service man, "and you did not see your own gun go into the tempering bath?" "There was a quarrel with the fore

man," sald Sommers besitatingly "What were you quarreling about? asked Bradley. It was the one question that Som mers could not answer. How could be

bring Frances into it? Bradley was waiting impatiently for his reply "I can't explain the cause of that



Who ex Rhonestona! Bruties

officer firmly, and Pinckney permitted himself his first smile of satisfaction. After all there was a chance of this young fool, through insane chivairy, permitting himself to overlook his only means of vindication.

Brudley was still looking at Sommers with involuntary surprise when Pinckney made his next move.

'Mr. Bradley, I want you to understand that I'm very sorry for Mr. Sommers about his whole affair. If I can be of any service to him or to you I shall be only too glad."

The secret service man was not one to be whimsical or chivalrous when be had started out to accomplish anything. Promptly he took Pinckney at

"That's very good of you, sir, and you can be of the greatest service to us. Lieutenant Sommers goes to face the court of inquiry at Washington, and it is his desire and mine to reach there with as little delay as possible. No steamer salls from this port to New York for nearly a week.

"Now, the gun that made this trouble was forged at your works, and therefore, whether you wish it or not. you have a direct interest in the case. Perhaps I'm going to ask you something onusual, but it will be a great favor if you will allow Mr. Sommers and myself to sall with you on the Ir-

Pinckney and Sommers both stared at the secret service man in amaze ment. The cool audacity of the pro posal took them both off their feet. Sommers was the first to recover. "Bradley: No," be exclaimed impet-

nously. Pinckney bowed coldly.

"I'm sorry, sir." he said, "but you are asking too much. That'll be impossible."

He turned away just as Frances. tired of the waiting, re-entered the "Ab. Frances, you are ready?" be

Without replying the girl came straight to Sommers What are you going to do now?

she asked directly. "I have been ordered to report at Washington at once to face the court of inquiry." returned the officer.

The girl smiled. There were both sadness and Joy in it sudness for his unfortunate situation, Juy that they had a chance still to be together.

"We are just starting." she suggest "Come with us on the yacht."

Sommers shook his head. "I'm sorry: I can't do that."

The girl stood looking at him, burt and uncertain. She had not expected that rebuff. She could not understand it. Again Bradley selled the situation. "Miss Durant, Mr. Sommers goes to Washington to endeavor to show why he should not be court martialed for neglect of duty the night his gun was forged. It's most important that he get there as soon as possible, and no ship sails from this port for a week."

Pinckney stepped forward augrity. "Mr. Bradley, your explanation is most uncalled for," he exclaimed.

Then Frances began to see. Her head came up, and her eyes lighted. "On the contrary, Mr. Bradley, I'm very much obliged to you for your explanation," she declared haughtily. Would it not be possible for you and

"It would be the greatest favor, Miss Durant," he said earnestly. "I had already requested it, but Mr. Pinckney

Lieutenant Sommers to return with

The girl turned on Pinckney haugh-

tilly. When Mr. Pinckney realizes that the Irvessa is my father's yacht and that this gun was forged in my father's works and that it is my desire that fear.

Lieutenant Sommers and Mr. Bradley sail with us at once I am sure he will have no objections to offer."

Rebuked, Pinckney bowed with ill

"Since Miss Durant wishes it I an only too happy to have you come with us, of course," he said to Bradley, The secret service man bowed in

tura. "Then we'll go, of course, with thanks," he said simply. "If you will excuse me I'll get ready. Lieutenant "The fool;" gasped Harling. "The Sommers and I will be at the dock dirty coward: Sending that way at within an bour."

When Bradley and Pinckney both had gone Frances came over to where her lover was standing.

"That was wrong," she said, gently reproving. "You should have trusted me more. We must have no more misunderstandings: From now on what affects you affects me. You and I are one, but don't you see"-she paused a moment, looking up at him, her heart in her eyes-"but don't you see I love you?"

> CHAPTER XIV. THE PERILS OF THE SEA.

THE steamer Mongolian was pitching tossing, pounding along sturdily as best she could through the night. For ten bours she had fought her way up the coast in the face of the worst storm

Now, off Hatteras, the danger spot in the route from Porto Rico to New York, the sturdy little liner scarcely seemed able to make any progress She had been forced miles off her course and closer in toward the dangerous reefs than her captain liked. Not that the liner herself was in any

rave danger, for the old Mongolian and her experienced cuptain had faced too many Atlantic storms for even a hig one to alarm them. The batches had all been battened down, the passengers were below, and the stanch steamer, stripped as much as possible slowly rising to each attack of the waves, drove on with all the power of er engines under the storm.

Up to the little wireless room, the highest point on the ship. Harling, the young operator, clung to his berth and wondered what was going to happen It was his second trip to sea and his first hig storm, so no wonder the young operator felt the thrill of the struggle and just the faintest fear for the

outcome. Every officer and man connected with the liner was on pest, waiting anxiously for whatever might happen They had little fears for the stanci Mongolian, but there were many ships less sturdy in those waters, and on such a night, with the vessel out of her course, there was no telling what might occur. The captain's last in struction had been to look out for

Most of the vessels of any size it these waters carried wireless outfits, and in case of trouble they would be sure at once to send out broadcast their appeals for help. Little could be done in any case, but at least the Mon gollan could stand by to help as much as she could or, if absolutely necessary, take advantage of the warnings to keep clear of wrecks.

For hours the pitching of the ship timed irregularly to the roaring drive of the storm, had held the wireless man fast at his post. It was now past midnight and with little chance of any abatement before dawn.

Harling's nerves were on edge as he clung to his berth, wide eyed, niert, waiting, listening to the faintest click that might be the forerunner to tell of disaster and death. Half a dozen times his strained nerves had brought him struggling from his berth to receive such a message, only to find his imagination had been playing tricks with

Suddenly there came from the in strument clicks so sharp, so distinct and yet so burried that the young fel low sprang from the berth and stum bled to the table, sure now that at last omething was coming. Again the instrument clicked wildly.

To the ears of the strained operator 't brought a chill, for he knew it was the sending of some one wild with fear. Anxiously, impatiently, be listened. At first he could make out

inuseif. "What's the matter with m'? They're crazy!" The wild rattle of the receiver ston ped, and Harling seized his own key.

"What's wrong? Don't be a fool. Keep your nerves. Send sense. The touch of the key had brought

him thoroughly to himself. His nerve tightened and his bead grew cool as he drove his message fiercely out into the

He paused, listening eagerly, and again the receiver began to click, almost as wildly, as insanely, as before. Only the skilled operator could make

out "C-Q-D." "A distress signal!" he gasped, "It's

Again the Mongolian's wireless opererator seized his key and drove out his answer into the night.

As he walted he seized the telephone connected direct with the captaip's stateroom. "Captain, have just received a distress signa;" he shouted. "Have sent them our position in course, but the

fool seemed to have lost his nerve.

Have not been able to get anything from him yet." The answer of the captain came back cool and sharp.

"Make him tell where he is and who he is at once. I'll be with you." The receiver had begun to click again wildly, and Harling, gripping the table to keep himself steady, listened with disgust, for the sending now was that of a man absolutely insane from

"Help! Help! For God's sake belp us." was all the receiver clicked. At last it stopped a moment, and

the Mongolian operator managed to "Send name and position," he pound ed fiercely. "Send position.

nerve. Send position." He stopped, grasping the table and walting auxiously. "M-o-n-g-o-l-l-a-n!" the receiver click

ed wildly. such a time:"

He seized the key and drove oct tiercely his command: "Send position." For reply the receiver clicked bac

in the same rattled way: "Yacht Irvessa breaking upon reef For God's sake belp us! Will pay any reward if you will save us at once! Help us quick, for God's sake." The rage of the operator had risen.

The thought of lives resting on the

work of the coward was awful. "The foot" he gasped. "If he's breaking up, why is he wasting time that way?" And then his own message volleyed out into the night: "What reef? Send position Quick!"

In panicky clicks the answer came lack. It was the same idiotic raving of a fear crazed man. "I'll reward you. I am E. H. Pinckey and rich. Have thirty on board.

Will reward bandsomely." Again Harling drove out the short demand for the position of the wrecksi jucht. Then, as he waited for redy, he selzed the captain's telephone a erond time.

"It's the sucht irvessa, captain. She eports going to pieces. There's a rightened tool at the key-E. H. clackney. Can't even get his position. to doing my best, sir, but Pinckney's ... t his nerve completely. If they had onto at the key we might get some-

He hung up the phone to listen in limited and despuir to Pincaney's ravings driven out through the storm. There was no chance for Harting to send. The man at the irvessa key sept pounding with no sense to his nessages. As the Mongolian operator waited for a break to cut in the captain, driven by the force of the wind, fairly burst into the little wireless

Well." he snapped, "what is it now? Have you got the position of the irressa Y

Harting shook his head in disgust. "I can hardly make out what be says, captain. His sending is awfut. He's a good operator, too, I believe, only he's lost his nerve completely. Hut as nearly as I can make out"-he ilstened a moment anxiousiv-"it's a little better now. He says Irvessa. bound for New York from Porto Rico. struck reef two bours ago. Don't

"Yes, yes, I understand," broke in the captain impatiently. "But can't be give us any idea of his course? Can-



He volleyed out into the night a mema

dada reef is the only charted reef within 200 miles of our present position. Could you send 200 miles to "They're crazy!" be exclaimed to Harling shook his bend.
"I don't think we could, sir. And

200 miles for a yacht would be impos 170 BE CONTINUED.

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