

# PROMENADE DECK

by Ishbel Ross

## TWELTH INSTALMENT

Joan was dead, but things did not end there. He must rouse Dick Charlton, who was obviously the person to handle this. A knock on his door brought Dick out, his book still in his hand.

"Come quick, Charlton," said Macduff. "Joan Foster is dead. She jumped into the pool. It was drained, for landing tomorrow."

For once in his life, words tumbled from Macduff's lips without deliberation. His eyes were bloodshot behind the impersonal glare of his spectacles. Dick went white and caught at his arm. Without a word he followed Macduff across the corridor and passed from brilliant light into the darkness of the pool. Briefly he hung over the edge, then covered his face with his hand. Macduff stretched out an arm and gripped him round the shoulders.

"It's all right, old man," he said, realizing that the girl had meant something in Charlton's life. "It would have been hell for her, had she lived."

"She came to my room tonight. I shut the door in her face." The words were squeezed through Dick's closed teeth. He pulled himself together. He was the chief officer. "I must report at once to Captain Baring," he said, automatically.

Once more Dick looked at Joan, whose pale body was moving softly with the rise and fall of the boat. Her rhinestones shone like cat's eyes through the green gloom. A dark trickle spread over the tiles.

Macduff went down to his cabin, which was as austere as when he had

sailed. He had spurned the spears of Borneo, the leopard skins of Darjeeling, the mandarin robes of China, and was landing empty-handed. He turned on all the lights, to shake off the feeling that he had been staring for hours into a darkened cave. The sea rolled smoothly under the porthole, but the night was black and moonless. With an effort he forced the dead girl out of his thoughts. In a few hours now he would be back in Gramercy Park. Angela would be on her way to England as he was reaching home. Would her heart stand the strain of her meeting with Wynant? Would the cad consider her health in his anxiety to shake her off, now that he had met a seventeen-year-old whom he wanted to marry? Strange, strange, strange, thought Macduff for the hundredth time, that a woman like Angela should love a man like Wynant. And Jenny wild about Rumford, wild enough to have squeezed herself out through the porthole for love of him. Macduff got up and examined the brass ring. How in hell had she managed to do it? That was something he never would be able to understand. He'd see how far he could push himself through, and what the water was like from a porthole at night. Catching the rim, he pulled himself up by his arms. His head went out, and he saw the water below, smooth as black marble, but he could get no farther. His shoulders balked him at once. "Thin as he was," he thought, "I still don't see how she did it. She must have had nerve, and the strength of desperation."

With a sharp recoil he thought of Joan again, and wondered if her body were still being rocked on the tiles. He began to undress, hanging his tie on the rack, folding his trousers carefully, putting his coat on a hanger. Every move took time. At last he donned his striped pyjamas and pulled down the covers of his brass bed. Climbing between the sheets, he lay on his side, smoking and thinking. Tomorrow they would land. Damned nuisance, customs and all that bother! Angela wouldn't be there, but on her way to England. How strangely Joan's beads had flashed in the green light! The only thing about her that had seemed alive. Macduff reached out for his bottle and poured himself a wee dochan-dorrach. He downed it straight and put out the lights, but his pipe still glowed in the dark. Angela was an exceptional woman. She made him feel at times that life was superb, and that he could write much better if she were always near him. Without any talk, she inspired a man to effort. The glow of his pipe grew feebler. At last he

banged it out on the washstand, sighed and settled himself for sleep. He could hear a grinding below, that crunching sound of the anchor chain he had heard so often lately, and always for new ports, new scenes, new faces. The engines were in reverse; the boat was swinging around. They must be at Quarantine! That meant home. They would lie there for the rest of the night. Macduff rolled over to the wall. The throbbing ceased at last, and stillness descended on the ship, broken by the laughter and cries of the last night revellers. Their voices, drowned before by the pounding sound of the batt in motion, were strangely strident now. The flying steps of excited girls could be heard along the corridors. Everything seemed extraordinarily clear, now that the ship had anchored. Macduff felt as if he had emerged from the Cave of the Winds. At last he fell asleep.

Angela's name was on his lips when he wakened five hours later, looking as hard as a rock, sober and fresh. His first thought was, "I'll soon be saying good-bye." Then he remembered Joan, with a catch of his breath. Ghastly! He was sorry for Charlton. When his steward came with his coffee, he cursed him because it was cold. Dressing himself with care, he selected the dark green tie that Angela had helped him to buy in Manila. He walked along the corridor and out on the deck, to find that they were

"I shall feel quite dull when I get back to my tulips and roses, knowing that, all over the world, Japanese and Chinese and Filipinos and Hindu are doing these strange things we have seen them at, with everyone grasping for a little bit of happiness near at hand. And in America the great panacea is work, isn't it?"

"One simply has to work in New York or perish of boredom and disapproval," Macduff observed.

Angela's thoughts were centered on Macduff, who was looking profoundly miserable. She hated to leave him. Such a good friend, such a good companion! Her black-gloved hand touched his sleeve.

"Macduff, I think we must say good-bye."

"Not good-bye, Angela." His lips were stiff with cold.

"Yes, my dear, at once! Now leave me before I burst into tears. I shall see you some time in England."

Macduff caught and held her hand. He raised it slowly to his chest and his eyes burned into hers. "Angela," he said, "I—well, good-bye!" he snapped, and turned his back on her.

The gangplank was down. He walked across it in time to see Johnny embraced by his father, and to hear him say: "Dick, this is Patty, your future daughter-in-law." He saw Johnny's father catch her hands, and Patty's piquant face turned up to him, sweet and eager.

"Good-bye, Mr. Macduff," Johnny shouted. "We're going to send you an invitation to our wedding."

"Good-bye and good luck," Macduff responded, cursing as he made his way to the letter M in the customs shed. Halfway down the wharf he noticed Dick, talking ar-

long, deep whistle stopped his brooding. That would be Angela's ship sailing at noon. He moved to the door. Too late now. She would be gone. He sank wearily on his ruined chair, and in blinding flash Macduff knew that there could be no life for him now without Angela.

## THE END

## South Begins Easter Buying

Atlanta—Easter buying was reported started in the sixth Federal Reserve district by merchants, but was not expected to reach its peak until next week.

General ready-to-wear predominated as a buyers' favorite, with other lines of merchandise getting good response, executives said.

Inclement weather had a slight effect on sales.

Bank clearings were slightly down for the week, the Federal Reserve bank reporting \$44,600,000 for the week, against \$51,300,000 for the previous week.

Steel operations in the Birmingham district continued unchanged at 69 per cent capacity.

Building operations were reported maintaining a good pace.

## BOYS! GIRLS! LEARN AVIATION

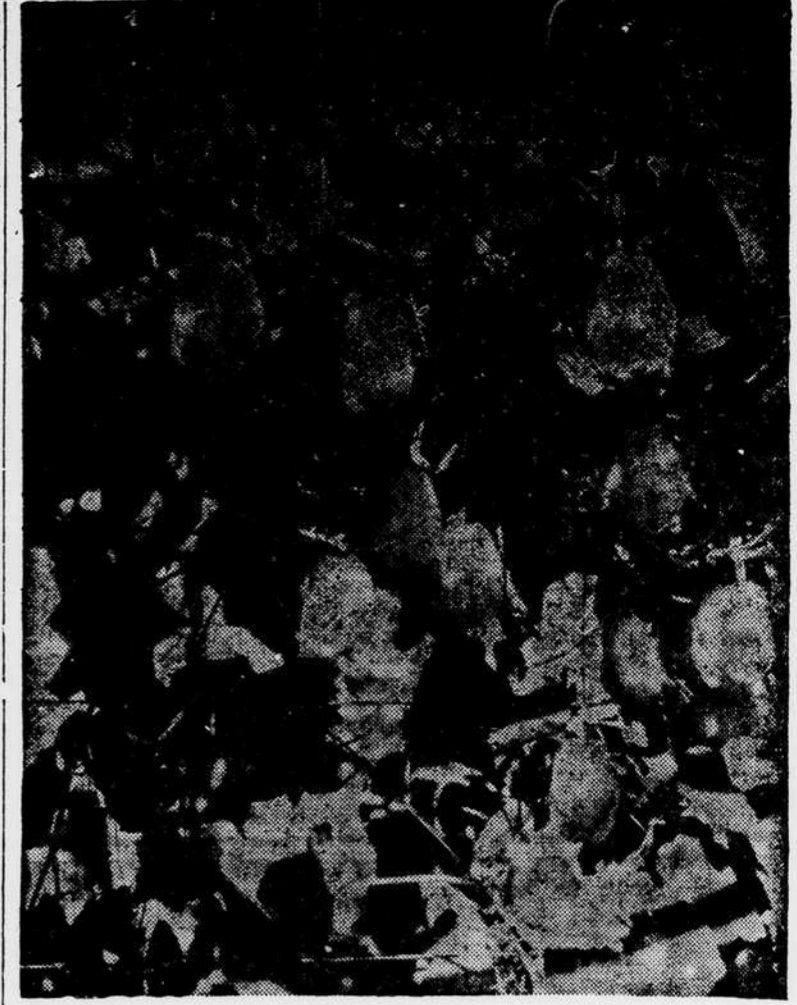
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In each pound of flour you buy there are more than 160,000,000,000 separate particles. Cornstarch contains 11,000,000,000 separate particles to the ounce.

The Sea of Galilee is only 14 by 8 miles, while Lake Superior covers an area of 32,000 square miles.

## Women Who Have Pains Try CARDUI Next Time!

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Chayotes, once a staple of a decadent Mayan civilization, were brought to Dade County, Florida, by the late Colonel Prentice, army officer and horticulturist of note. When baked they have the flavor of a nut, and are used raw in salads when a hostess wishes something different.

## Body Of Missing Man Found Beside Tracks

Kannapolis—A mutilated body of a young child. The mutilated torso was found by a negro beside the track about 6:30 in the morning. The tracks bore evidence of the body having been dragged by a train about 400 yards.

Newsom last was seen alive about 11 o'clock Sunday night. He had been employed in an electrical shop here for four weeks but gave up his job Saturday night, saying he intended to visit relatives in Winston.

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"Good bye, Angela," said Macduff, and his heart was strangely heavy.

moving slowly up the bay in the haze of the early morning. The shore and the water seemed dead, dull after the sharp contrasts of the tropics. There was nothing in the neutral landscape to excite the eye until the skyscrapers came into view. The passengers did not look like themselves this morning, for they were all togged out in their city clothes. The celebrants of the night before were slowly coming to life, feeling sick and depressed. Couples who would soon be parted hung together at the rail, watching the encroaching shore line with dismay. One youth was fumblingly trying to say good-bye to a girl whom he now adored. Soon he would be meeting his bride of a year; and their baby born, a month ago. His hand plucked nervously at his companion's coat. Their glances were telling their story, but nobody cared. Angela was there—cool, composed, in a black tailored costume and a small black hat, with a fur around her shoulders. Her face was drained of colour. As usual, she had dreamed through the night of Jenny's face and her thin, pale hands clutching at the water. It dawned on Macduff that none of them knew about Joan, not even Angela. He moved over towards her.

"Good-morning, Angela."

"Macduff, I'm glad to see you. I was afraid you were sleeping in. I wanted you to watch the skyline with me. It's thrilling."

"I'm sorry to see it," said Macduff, gloomily.

"Not really?"

"Yes, really."

They stood close together and watched the buildings swimming into view—tall grey spires, glittering through the morning haze, like a gigantic fresco flung against the sky. Angela could imagine thousands of people going to work, typewriters clicking behind the myriad panes of glass, and captains of industry starting out on their daily tasks.

"An exciting city!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, if you get what you want in it," Macduff conceded.

dently to a girl in powder blue. She was handing him a card with an address, while she devoured him with her eyes. He remembered now that it had been like this at every port, always a girl waiting for Dick—except at Bombay, where he had devoted himself so disastrously to Miss Mudge.

Angela would be across the docks and on her other boat now, finding her way to a new stateroom. He felt like driving back to see her again, to tell her some of the things that were welling up within him. Better not to see her again, better to see her some time later in England, wait for her life to straighten out. He wished that he could help her over the difficult bit that was coming. She looked so calm when he left her on the boat, the only woman he had ever known who was clever enough to accept a crushing blow without showing her distress.

He did not like being at home. He had nowhere to sit, and even his bookshelves looked unfriendly. He glanced over the titles and came to rest on one of his own books. That made him think of his typewriter, which was still in its dusty corner among his papers, safe from Susanah's cleaning. She did not dare to touch his papers. He opened it up and started to type but his fingers were stiff from lack of practice. There was nothing to write. His mind was a blank. The bloody flatness of everything! His thoughts went round in circles—the boat, Angela, cherry blossoms, the mists of Darjeeling, the elephants at Kandy, Johnny and Patty, Jenny squeezing her way into the China Sea, Joan crushed at the bottom of the tank, Angela, Angela! He covered his face with his hands to ward off the spectres that hunted him now. Macduff was stung at last to suffering; alive as he had never been alive before. This, then, was the way that Angela had felt about Lovat, and Jenny about Rumford, and Joan about Dick. It was easier, to understand things now.

In desperation he went to the window and looked out at Gramercy Park, a sight that had often soothed him in years gone by. A

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