

THE STRUMPET SEA

By Ben Ames Williams

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W. N. U. Service

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—George McAusland was 38 years old when he sailed from America to undertake his post as a missionary in the Fiji Islands. A crime he had committed in a fit of excitement had shattered all his confidence in himself. He felt forced to avoid pretty Mary Doncaster, who boarded the ship at Honolulu. She was en route to visit her parents, who were missionaries on Gilead Island. Mary was attracted by George's attempts to avoid her. One day George accidentally fell overboard.

CHAPTER II

At the moment when Mary Doncaster leaped overboard, George was almost directly below her. She jumped wide of the vessel's side in order to clear him; and when she came to the surface again, the ship, towering high, was gliding smoothly away across the silent sea. From her decks shouts came back to the girl, and she saw the splash of a grating thrown overboard, and knew help would come quickly.

But in the meantime this helpless George McAusland had sunk, sucked under in the burble at the ship's stern. Mary swam toward the spot where he had disappeared, and saw his foundering arm break the surface. He coughed and gasped and muttered something; and she heard the words:

"Into Thy hands . . ."

She felt a hot impatience with him because he did not know how to swim, and because he now surrendered so supinely. She cried: "Don't talk so silly! You're not going to drown! You're all right! I've got you. Lie still."

At her voice behind him, George stiffened rigidly, and a little wave crest lapped across his face and into his open mouth, and he gagged and revolved in the water like a crocodile twisting to tear off the gout of flesh in which its teeth are set. He rolled over facing her and tried to clutch at her. She dove instantly, escaping his grasp, and ruthlessly caught his foot and pulled him under water. Then she slipped up past him, clear of his hands that were like talons, and from behind him caught his collar again and drew him to the surface.

She was on guard against any sudden movement by George; but he now submitted, rigid as an oar. Yet he was heavy, and his clothes were heavy, and the grating was farther away than she had thought. Before she reached it, she was tired, her heart pounding. The ship now was almost broadside to her. She hoped someone aboard had had the wit to keep an eye on them; and then she saw a man in the rigging, pointing in their direction; and when the next swell lifted them, she saw a boat in the water between them and the ship, the oars glinting in the sun, racing this way like a spider.

She told George: "Hold on to the grating. Don't try to climb on it. Just hold on." His fingers clutched the edge, and she released him and moved away out of his reach.

He said humbly: "I can't swim." She laughed, herself easier now. "I noticed that! You'll learn. Everyone swims in the Islands. I could swim before I could walk, I think. The boat's near." His teeth were chattering. "You're not cold," she said. "That's just nerves. Don't worry, we could float like this for days."

She talked more and more swiftly, fighting to hold him up with words; for under her eyes strength visibly flowed out of him. Yet he must hold on a minute more, a minute more . . .

The boat reached them. The mate was in the stern; two sailors at the oars. "Take him first, Mr. Chase," she said quietly. "He's tiring."

They hauled George McAusland over the gunwale, and he collapsed in the bottom of the boat between the oarsmen and the mate. "I'll come in over the bow," she said. The mate swung the boat and she caught the bow and with a deep kick of her feet thrust herself upward, swung one leg over the gunwale, clambered in. The mate said: "Here's my coat, Miss Doncaster."

deck was barely able to stand. John Gale said to him: "Well, it's lucky for you Miss Doncaster was aboard."

"Yes, I'd have drowned. Where is she?"

"In her cabin, changing."

"I want to thank her."

"Later. The first thing is dry clothes for you, and a noggin of rum. You're blue with cold. Come along."

George followed obediently; but he refused the rum. He shook with a teeth-chattering chill till he had rubbed himself dry and glowing. Then he lay down under blankets to warm himself, and slept till John Gale came to rouse him for supper. "All right?" the older man asked. "I thought you were probably asleep, needed sleep more than anything."

"Yes, I'm fine. I'll be along."

But he was slow in dressing, dreading the necessity of meeting Mary and of thanking her. When he came out into the main cabin, the others except John Gale and the Captain had finished supper and were already on deck. "Gone to watch the sunset," the old minister explained. "It promised to be fine."

George was relieved at this postponement; but when he and John Gale presently went on deck—the sun was gone, the sky fading fast to the deep blue of night—he faced his duty. Mary was in the waist with Mrs. Gale. He went toward them, and they saw him coming, and Mrs. Gale asked:

"All right now?"

"Fine," he told her. She said some approving word and went aft, leaving him alone with Mary. He wished to ask Mrs. Gale to stay; turned to face Mary reluctantly. She smiled, understanding, and said quickly:

"It's all right. You needn't thank me."

"I want to," he told her, blurring out the words; and then he spoke the phrase he had decided was most suitable. "I owe you more than I can ever pay."

Mary smiled. "I'm glad you feel so much in debt to me. It will be fun to have you try to pay. Be very nice to me, won't you?" But then she relented, seeing his embarrassment, and said quickly: "It wasn't anything, really. I could have kept you afloat all day."

"I'm sorry you had to . . ." He hesitated. "Well, I mean . . . Well, I know how brave you were, how hard it was to do what you did."

Mary frowned a little, puzzled, and then suddenly understanding. "Oh, you mean because I took off a few petticoats?"

He insisted stubbornly: "I know what it must have meant to you."

She touched his hand. "You're sweet; but honestly, I didn't mind. I didn't even think of it. Naturally I couldn't swim in a lot of petticoats." And she said, faintly amused: "You know, Mr. McAusland, you'll have to learn to look at so many things differently on the Islands; to learn new ways."

"I hope instead of learning their ways, I can teach them ours. Do you remember a lot about your childhood down here?"

years, and then went fourth mate with his father again." Her eyes were dancing, amused at his expression. "I thought Richard was pretty wonderful, and Peter too, of course. Richard was so shy he hardly looked at me, but I worshiped him. You know how little girls are."

"I'm afraid I don't know much about little girls."

She smiled. "Or big ones, either. Do you, Mr. McAusland," she challenged; and then she told him quickly: "But maybe you'll see them. Richard and Peter, I mean. Cap'n Corr promised to put in at Gilead to see my father and mother on this voyage. Mother's Uncle Tom's sister. Maybe we'll find them at Gilead when we get there. I hope so."

He asked in curiously thick tones: "Why? Because you want to see your uncle again?"

"I want to see them all, of course," she said.

He said, after a moment, almost wistfully: "I've never known young men. My brothers were a lot older than I."

"I know," she assented softly. "You haven't known young women either, have you?"

"No."

She said, smiling in the darkness, as though he were a child: "I knew you wanted to be friendly with me, but you didn't quite know how."

"I want to be friendly with everyone!"

"But specially with me, a little, don't you?" she urged. "Only you're sort of afraid?"

"I don't think so!" he protested, half-resentful.

"Oh, but you are," she insisted. "You're afraid to do the things you want to do."

He swung toward her as though startled; but someone spoke behind them.

Suddenly George sneezed.

"You'd better go below, hadn't you?" she suggested. "You've taken cold."

He blew his nose. "I'm afraid I have." They went aft together Mrs. Gale prescribed hot lemonade, but George protested that he was all right, till he sneezed again. Then he consented to go below.

During the days that followed, John Gale was pleased to see that having taken the plunge, George no longer avoided Mary. They were much together, as often forward as on the after deck. Under Corran's instructions they practiced rope work and listened to his tall tales. Mary led him to talk of whaling; and sometimes Corran told of bloody battles with Leviathan that made George's pulse pound, and sometimes he made them laugh together in a gleeful incredulity.

She took it; she looked at Jarambo imploringly. Then her dry eyes raced along the lines, and the color drained out of her cheeks. Old John Gale came quick beside her, and she gave him the bit of paper, shaking her head wretchedly. He read it aloud, slowly.

"My dear Daughter, I thought I could wait for you, but since your mother died I am lonely and tired. I cannot wait any longer. I have nothing more to do except leave you my love and my blessing, and draw up my feet like good old Jacob and go home."

"Your father, Ephraim Doncaster."

John Gale read the letter, and George McAusland said, not understanding: "Gone home? Didn't he know Mary was coming?"

John Gale said: "Yes, gone home. Ephraim is dead."

(Continued next week)

GOOD FENCE SHOULD LAST FARMER 7 TO 12 YEARS

Good wire, properly strung between strong, well-braced posts should make a farm fence last from 7 to 12 years, says H. M. Ellis, extension agricultural engineer of N. C. State College. There should be a good coating of galvanizing or zinc on the wire to protect it against the elements, he says.

"Some copper in the wire will add still more years of service to the fence," Ellis stated. "The copper content should not run less than 2-10 of 1 per cent, which is usually spoken of as '20 point' copper. The quality of the wire is the main consideration in building fences, and it isn't good economy to buy cheap wire."

Ellis also says that for a good, long-lasting fence the quality of the posts and the workmanship in erecting the fence must be of the best. The posts must be big enough, properly spaced, well planted, and well braced. If durable wood is not available, soft timber may be treated with creosote or otherwise to make the posts last as long as the wire.

"It is wise," the specialist declared, "to build your fence on paper before you start cutting posts and buying wire. North Carolina farmers spend thousands of dollars every year maintaining fences that are not essential; fences that are of the wrong type to keep animals in or out; and fences that are not worth maintaining because of poor material or poor workmanship."

In conclusion, Ellis said, "fencing is an important item of farm management. It protects property and reduces losses of both crops and livestock. A good fence is also an asset in giving a neat appearance and indicating that the farm owner is progressive."

POTASH IS DEFICIENT IN MOST SOILS OF STATE

Farmers are thinking of their 1941 fertilizer needs, and J. R. Piland, associate soil chemist of N. C. State College, reminds growers that the majority of North Carolina soils are deficient in potash. This is especially true, he says, in soils where cotton, corn, tobacco, and vegetable crops of the Coastal Plain are grown.

"In the fertilization of cotton where cotton rust is prevalent, the use of fertilizers containing 5 to 8 per cent potash has materially increased yields," Mr. Piland reports. "Sometimes, under severe conditions of rust, sided dressing with potash has proved beneficial."

The chemist says that, in general, the soils of the Coastal Plain are relatively low in their potash.

BUYING FURS—Mink, Raccoon, Muskrat, Opossum, etc. Top market prices—Spot cash. W. C. GLOVER, Elizabeth City, N. C.

reserves, especially under conditions of inadequate fertilization. Tobacco has a high requirement for potash, and usually there is a noted response of the crop to this element with regard to the quality of the leaf produced. The tobacco fertilizer grades now recommended seem to furnish sufficient potash for the production of the crop in most soils.

Explaining the symptoms of potash deficiency, Mr. Piland says, "Potash deficiency is usually accompanied by yellowing of the leaves of the plant, with development of brown spots and death along the margins of the leaves. Cotton, tobacco, corn, soybeans, small grain, vegetables and fruits are all subject to potash deficiency which can easily be identified by its characteristic leaf pattern."

The State College man suggests that where such conditions were noted in crops in 1940, farmers should plan their fertilization program for 1941 so as to eliminate this trouble again. He urges tobacco farmers, especially, to consider the effect that potash might have on the quality of their crop.

BUFFALO CITY NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. B. N. Basnight and little son, Bobby, have returned to their home in Elizabeth City after spending the holidays here.

Mr. and Mrs. James F. Weatherly and family spent the holidays here, with their daughter, Mrs. J. V. Pierce.

D. A. Sawyer of Columbia spent Christmas day here. Mrs. Sawyer and little daughter, Rita, of Columbia, spent the holidays here.

Mr. and Mrs. Ben F. Shannon and son, Roger, of Titusville, Florida, spent Tuesday here as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Smith.

Mrs. James C. Hassell has returned after spending sometime at Edenton.

Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Smith, Rev. Basnight and Nina Smith motored to Manteo Thursday.

Mrs. Ernest Rogers of Norfolk was here Sunday.

George Ambrose motored to Columbia and Elizabeth City Sunday. Gilliam Hassell of Norfolk was here Sunday.

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BUYING FURS—Mink, Raccoon, Muskrat, Opossum, etc. Top market prices—Spot cash. W. C. GLOVER, Elizabeth City, N. C.



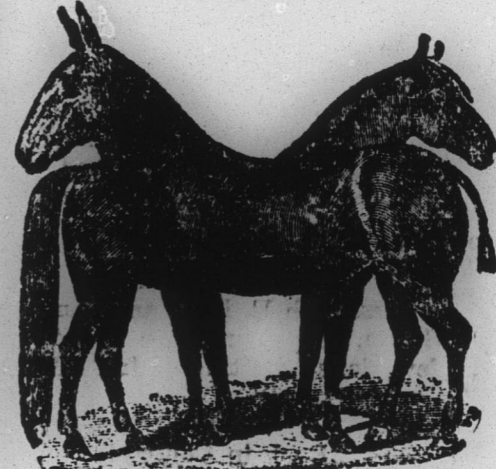
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Farm Journal	2.50
Flower Grower	1.75
Flying Aces	1.75
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Liberty (weekly)	2.00
Magazine Digest	3.45
Modern Romances	1.75
Nature Magazine	2.00
National Sportsman	2.50
Open Road (Boys)	3.00
Parents Magazine	2.25
Popular Mechanics	3.00
Prize Photography	3.45
Redbook Magazine	2.00
Science Illustrated	2.00
Silver Screen	2.00
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True Romances	3.45
True Story	3.45
World Digest	2.25
Your Life	2.25
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GROUP A—Select 2 Magazines

McCall's Magazine	1 year
True Romances	1 year
Fact Digest	1 year
Screenland	1 year
American Boy	1 year
American Girl	1 year
Parents Magazine	1 year
Motion Picture	1 year
Pathfinder (weekly)	1 year
Modern Romances	1 year
Silver Screen	1 year
Sports Afield	1 year
Open Road (Boys)	1 year
True Experiences	1 year
Christian Herald	1 year
True Confessions	1 year


GROUP B—Select 2 Magazines

Household Magazine	1 year
Home Arts-Needlecraft	26 issues
Pathfinder	1 year
Hunting and Fishing	1 year
Successful Farming	1 year
Cropsey's Fruit Grower	1 year
American Farmer	1 year
Cropsey's Fruit Producer	1 year
National Live Stock Producer	2 years
National Sportsman	2 years
Progressive Farmer	1 year
Southern Agriculturist	1 year

GROUP C—Select 1 Magazine

Comfort	1 year
Farm Journal-Farmer's Wife	1 year
Mother's Home Life	1 year
Southern Agriculturist	1 year
American Poultry Journal	1 year
Leghorn World	1 year
Breeder's Gazette	1 year
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