



CHAPTER TWENTY

Jonathan returned to London on the afternoon of the day Lord Stacy had slowly arrived at the decision to demonstrate his manhood. All Lloyds men stared at him in loathing, but he was accustomed to that now and thought it nothing to worry over. From a clerk he received all the latest news, including the information that John Angerstein was home ill. So he drove at once to Angerstein's home.

"Jonathan," Angerstein asked weakly, "did you send that fake message of a great Nelson victory?"

"I did, sir. I had to. That monumental ass, Drayton, was about to order half of Nelson's fleet detached—"

"Yes, I know. Your fake message caused the order to be revoked—and now, when the old women at Lloyds are trying to induce Drayton to re-issue it, they find him strangely unwilling. The gossip is that the king hauled the fool over the coals in royal fashion. But everybody is crying out on you as a traitor and the newspapers are advocating hanging you."

"I shall not hang. The king and even old Drayton will be so grateful to me for saving Nelson that I may be knighted instead of hanged. However, somebody did induce my Ostend representative to send a fake message—a story to the effect that the French had captured and destroyed a great British merchant fleet from the Baltic. That was for Drayton's consumption—to force him to realize how necessary it was for him to re-issue his lunatic order."

John Angerstein sat up in bed like a jack-in-the-box. "Then your syndicate is not bankrupt?" he shouted.

"Not unless you have bankrupted it during my absence, sir."

"Summon that valet of mine. Tell him to fetch my dressing gown and slippers—no, why should I? I'm weak. I've been ill. But I'm well again. Ring for the butler and tell him to fetch two glasses and a bottle of the Old Tawny."

Jonathan had not been in his own home an hour before the door bell rang and Potts, his man, announced Lady Elizabeth Stacy. "Oh, Jonathan," she cried, "is it true that this latest disaster has bankrupted your syndicate?"

"It is not, my darling." And he told her why. Lady Elizabeth sat down and smiled at him. "Poor dear, I was so worried about you," she said. "I felt certain I should find you home ill, broken, chiding yourself for having permitted me to risk my money in the syndicate. Oh, my dear, I suffered because I believed you must be suffering—"

"The thought that you had lost a fortune—didn't that cause you to suffer?"

"Oh, dear Jonathan, no, I have more left. The loss wouldn't have bankrupted me. Why, I've been trying to wheedle the trustees into raising a few more million so I could help you out."

"Come here, you most blessed of all women," Jonathan cried, and held out his arms for her. But at that moment Potts knocked. "Lord Stacy is calling, sir," he said softly, thrusting his head into the room. "He's quite intoxicated, sir, and declares he will not leave until he has a word with you."

"He wants money," Elizabeth told Jonathan. "I found a note he left for me at my house. He said he had had his pocket picked in Dover and perhaps, for once, he told the truth. Give him a hundred, my dear, and I will reimburse you."

"Give him this," Jonathan said, handing a sheaf of bills to Potts. "And tell him I cannot see him tonight." And then Lady Elizabeth screamed and the sound of pistol shots reared through the room. Jonathan pitched forward and lay still, with blood pouring from the side of his head and Lord Stacy, weaving uncertainly on his feet, stood in the doorway.

"Well, m'dear," he hiccupped, "he swindled you o'—out o'—monish—great gobs—monish—so I've—killed him. Yes, I've killed my wife's lover. Great scandal in the pap—papers. I wish you—pleasant good evening."

He turned and made his uncertain way out, intimidating Potts with his second pistol as he went. Potts opened the door for him and Lord Stacy passed out with all the dignity he could muster; as he did so Potts kicked him with all his might and Lord Stacy rose on tip-toe and shot down the long stairs to the street, head first, turning two somersaults en route. He struck on his head on the flag sidewalk and lay very still, with a thin trickle of blood running down the back of his neck. Potts ran down, bent over him a moment and said to himself: "I believe you'll keep while I'm gone," and fled for a doctor whose sign he had seen in Harley street four blocks distant.

Lord Stacy was lying where he had fallen and a curious crowd had gathered around him. When Potts arrived with the doctor, the latter stood beside him and felt his pulse, peeled back one eyelid and put his finger on the eyeball. He lifted the body and marked how the head aged loosely on the torso. "Broke his confounded neck," he declared. "Dead as Julius Caesar. Lord Stacy, sn't he? Unwholesome little beggar. Member of my club. Tell the policeman on the beat to look after his body."

He entered Jonathan's drawing room and found Jonathan sitting up on the floor, very bloody where he wasn't a sickly white. Nor was Lady Stacy in the room, for the very sound reason that Jonathan had instructed her to go about the business, via the rear entrance and thence to an alley into the next street.

"Almost scalped you," the doctor announced. "Grazed the bone and knocked you out for a bit, I fancy. You'll have a small scar. No reason why you shouldn't go to work in

the morning. By the bye Stacy lies dead at the foot of the stairs leading to your home. Your man says he came here drunk and shot you, then fell down stairs and broke his neck."

"God," murmured Jonathan Blake, "is very good and the devil not half bad."

When the doctor had bandaged the wound he suggested a drink of whiskey and bed. Jonathan paid him and presently was alone with the faithful Potts. "Sir," said Potts, "'adn't we better rehearse our story so it'll sound natural no matter how many times we tell it sir. The police, I believe, always strive to make one out a liar. I could take my oath nobody saw me kick him downstairs, because I did the job from at least four feet inside the door and the top light was not lighted. Lady Stacy is gone, so when the constables arrive, sir, as they're bound to do in a pig's whisper she'll not be dragged into it. Quick thinking, sir, quite—an' you my poor master, with a hole in your poor head."

Lord Stacy had a hundred pounds on him when he took that header."

"Begging your pardon, sir, but the moment I saw 'e was badly hurt, I ran down to 'im an' lifted 'im up, worried like. Whilst pretendin' to be concerned over the unfortunate man, I pinched that 'undred back from 'im, sir."

"Keep it, Potts. No words of mine can ever adequately express my thanks. You are a stout fellow and I shall raise your wages considerably. Now, then, Lord Stacy arrived at—what was the exact hour?—and you, realizing he was intoxicated, refused him admittance. But he drew his pistol and, after intimidating you, forced his way in and shot me."

"Ahter all, sir," said Potts, "Stretchin' the facts a bit isn't lyin' in this case. It isn't as if I'd intended to murder the blighter. Me action was quite involuntary, sir, I assure you, sir."

"Shut up, you glorious ass, and get on with the rehearsal. What's that cheering in the street?"

"I'll duck out and see, sir."

When Potts returned: "A message from Plymouth, sir, says a fast-sloop-o-war from Lord Nelson's fleet arrived there this afternoon an' reports that they met the French fleet off Trafalgar two days ago, sir, an' destroyed it. Lord Nelson was killed in the action, sir, but the victory was quite complete. There's an extra edition of the Times out, sir. I bought one. 'Ere it is, sir. But 'ere'll be now lid celebratin' o' this victory, sir, with Lord Nelson dead,—why, sir, are you going to faint, sir?"

"No, Potts, I shall not faint. Help me to my bed, Potts, there's a good fellow. It's been so long ago—and we never met again—he'll never know how hard I tried to play the game with him—how I saved his fleet and left it intact—that England might know—the power—

and the glory—oh, Potts, he was my friend. He wrote me. He signed himself—always affectionately, Horatio, Potts, he kept the faith. He didn't let England down—oh Potts, Potts—"

With Elizabeth he stood a week later, in the great bay window of John Angerstein's house and listened to the slow sad dirge of the pipes of a Highland regiment skirling the dead hero. He heard the sad sweet music of the band of the Horse Guards, of the Life Guards, the Black Watch and the Coldstream Guards; he saw the metal coffin borne on a caisson, with an honor guard of salty old men-o-wars men walking weeping beside it; he saw all the pomp and circumstances attendant upon Britain's tribute to the Man of Copenhagen, of the Nile, of Trafalgar, and into his mind here flashed a verse from Lallah Rookh:

Oh, if there be in this earthly sphere,
A boon, an offering heaven holds dear,
'Tis the last libation that Liberty draws,
From the heart that bleeds—and breaks in her cause.

The years fell away and once again he was a little barefoot ragged boy standing outside Reverend Mr. Nelson's carriage house talking to a little pale slight boy in shorts and a ridiculously long-tailed coat. And that little boy was saying: "Remember our past Jonathan. I have failed to follow you and it is your right to hit me a clip on the jaw." Again he struck the little pale face—a fake blow an accolade of love—and the hot tears were starting. Again he heard the great Admiral's thin piping voice: "Goodbye, Jonathan. Tip me your mauley."

His hand closed over Horatio's. He looked down through his tears—and lo, his hand enclosed Elizabeth's; suddenly the light flared up in the world again and he was no longer unhappy. For he would live out his years in honor and happiness with the sweet lady by his side, and, God willing, she would bear him sons and the youngest should go to sea and tread in the Nelson tradition. Yes, he must have sons. He must not live in vain; he was not wholly a money grubber and he must not let England down—ever.

"They're taking him to Westminster Abbey," Elizabeth whispered, "where he will lie with the kings and future generations of Britons will come to visit him and his dust will speak and tell them without words, what the Empire meant to him."

THE END.

**NEWMONT MINING TO PAY
DIVIDEND OF 75c A SHARE**

The Newmont Mining Corp. has declared a quarterly dividend of 75c a share, payable March 15 to stock of record February 26. This is the same as the distribution in December.