On Wings of Wireless

by ARTHUR B. REEVE

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

Alone in the comfortably furnished saloon, Garrick glanced at Dick, who shrugged at the unconventionality of it all, then made a hasty survey of the place. At one end was a sort of closet or clothes press. "Snooping?" He nodded as he opened the door.

Inside hung a nondescript array of old clothes. In the back corner, on the floor where it had been thrown, lay a girl's cloth hat. He picked it up, smoothed it out, then with a suppressed "Ouch!" drew his hand away and loosened a pin caught in its folds.

"H'm—a diamond clasp—initials V. G.—Vira Gerard?"

"Diamond clasp . . . that's one of the pieces of missing jewelry," whispered Dick excitedly. "Say—hold that hat again as you had it. There. By jove, it's not only a hat—it's a bag! Tomato color . . . they said the girl at the Radio Dance put the stuff in a little tomato colored bag. By jove!"

"Here's a camera, too," was all Garrick answered. He turned the camera over, saw the number "6," then deftly unloaded it and dropped the roll of film into his coat pocket.

There was a step on the companionway. Softly he closed the door, rolled the hat tightly and stuffed it in his hip pocket under the tail of his coat.

The party thawed a little bit as the ice in the shaker thawed. Finally Garrick took advantage of a lull in the conversation.

"I may as well tell you just why we dropped in," he remarked casually, taking the diamond clasp from his pocket. "Is this by any chance yours, Vira?"

Vira looked at the clasp a moment, then gave a little scream. "My Irene clasp—that they took off my shoulder! Yes . . . the day it was almost all—the night before—and the board's congested."

In the laugh that followed, Ruth was the first to speak. "Where did you get it, Guy?"

Garrick assumed a mysterious air and told the others at the dinner table that he found it on the morning after Vira had lost it and thought it was worth while to return it to me. I thought it was worth while, I'd watch it.

Garrick was unable to discover whether or not there was any connection between the "Sea Vamp" and the robbery.

"Was Miss Rae there?" he casually asked Vira at the opportune moment in proper interval.

"No," hastily. "Why?"

"Beth's here."

"And Jack Curtis?"

"Oh, yes. He was there . . . rather late."

A buzzing interruption . . . Garrick apologized to Glenn, who was anxious to discuss crossing swords with the champion killer and had remained in the background. Vira: "That radio . . . I'm eager to show off . . . Glenn drew a certain . . . and stood at the end of the table . . . a very co . . . speaker . . . His adjustment . . . and . . . and . . . from the . . . speaker . . . Ruth . . . "Show . . . that you get . . . Glenn . . . the radio . . . A few minutes later . . . Glenn . . . "Now—Glenn . . . closer to the loud speaker . . . you know . . . check, Glenn—"

There was a . . . laugh. Glenn smiled . . . but turned his . . . toward the speaker . . . him.

Garrick had . . . what was coming. "Sort of Freudian . . . guess," he whispered to Ruth, . . . her mother . . . repetition of Ruth's psychoanalysis.

"Hah!" laughed Ruth, making no . . . to mediate her tone. "Mere . . . the terrier—'His Mistress' Voice!"

"Come now—pout . . . lips, Glenn," came from the loud speaker . . . by a laugh—"he's . . . mistake for a . . . kiss.

Disconcerted . . . attention to Vira, Glenn . . . if he would have dropped . . . the hold.

Ruth glared . . . Garrick's cheerin to Vira's . . . the humor.

"Never mind, Glenn. She . . . then!"

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY CRAFT.

Dick rejoined Garrick late in the afternoon in his room at the Newport Country Club. Garrick had been developing the roll of films.

"What do you see there?" he asked, holding up the strip.

Dick turned toward the light and looked carefully. "A boat. Looks like one of those scout cruisers built for the government during the war."

"It's autographic, you see. The name, 'The Bacchante' is written under it, and the date."

"Oh, yes; but by whom? Whose writing is that?"

"Never mind that now. What is that shore line? Do you recognize it? Take my glass."

Dick studied it intently and minutely for some minutes. "I think . . . it looks like Greenport Harbor."

"That was what I thought. I wanted your opinion. Now look at the next one."

"Why—that's Brock—at the wheel!"

"Here's another of a party—Glenn, Ruth, Vira—"

"And that other girl is Rae Larue. That fellow in back is Jack Curtis."

Garrick stowed the girl's hat and the films away in a chest.

"Well, what's next?" asked Dick. "I suppose they'll all be at the club tonight at that Subscription Dance—"

Garrick nodded silence. He was calling Greenport, where he had a friend, a boat builder.

"Guess that she's a mystery ship—on mystery cruises," he frowned as he turned to Dick from the telephone. "They know her out there all right. But no one out there seems to know who owns her. She slips out on these mysterious cruises, then back just as unexpectedly—then away again. From the description, I'd say that Brock often handles her as captain. There's nearly always some of that crowd of young folks on her, too; sometimes a party. My friend says he will telephone if the 'Bacchante' comes in. She went out yesterday."

It was after dinner and as little absent-minded knocking about of the billiard balls alone, that Garrick was recalled to the matter in hand by the penetrating tuning up of the orchestra in the ball room.

He sauntered out on the wide club porch that faced the harbor and looked out straight ahead through the wide opening of the twin headlands into the Sound. It was a beautiful starry night, with no moon. Far out in the Sound could be seen one of the big New England steamers, a majestic mass of lights. Here and there, knots of young people had begun to gather.

He was endeavoring to select a quiet corner where he could watch when three girls, arm in arm, in high shimmery summer frocks, sauntered across the lawn and up the steps.

"Oh, Guy." He turned. It was Ruth nearest, with Vira on the other end and a piquant little bobbed-haired happy-eyed, lithe, animated brunette between them. "We've been talking about you—and Rae wants so much to meet you." Ruth presented Garrick to Rae Larue. Garrick was in adept with a little persiflage. He managed to cover up his confusion with which he studied the girl standing before him.

"I've heard so much about Mr. Garrick," she laughed easily, with a slight accent and a hesitation given the "Mr." that emphasized the intimacy of a first name. "Vira love at . . . don't you . . . Ruth . . . Have you . . . Guy . . . Ruth . . . Vira . . . Rae . . . Guy . . . Ruth . . . Vira . . . Rae . . . Guy . . . Ruth . . . Vira . . . Rae