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Adventure



A Romance of The South Seas

BY JACK LONDON

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SYNOPSIS

Sheldon, owner of Berande plantation, though desperately ill, overrules and controls 200 head hunting Solomon Islanders by force of will and weapons. Chief Seles calls with forty men.

He returns Arunga, a runaway laborer. Sheldon has Arunga and Billy whipped to quell a mutiny. His sickness increases. His partner, Hughie, and many laborers die.

Joan Lockland, a pretty girl, arrives with her crew of Tahitians. Sheldon becomes unconscious, and she takes charge of things.

She is a self-reliant American girl, a lover of adventure, a native of Hawaii and an orphan. Her ship has been wrecked. She proves to Sheldon that she can shoot.

She resents his friendly suggestions, and they quarrel. She makes it plain that she is not matrimonially inclined. She and Sheldon save two black women from death.

The savage laborers demand the women. Sheldon attempts to discipline them, and Joan shoots a native and saves his life. She scolds him for making her shoot.

Satan, a savage dog, arrives. Despite Sheldon's warnings Joan goes to explore an island she contemplates buying. Financial difficulties threaten Sheldon.

He falls in love with Joan. Left alone by Sheldon, Joan has trouble with Gogoomy and other natives. Armed savages arrive, and danger threatens Sheldon and Joan.

Joan routs them with a fake dynamite cartridge, and Satan drives them into trees. Their chief is punished. Morgan and Raff have Sheldon in their power.

Joan offers to become his partner. His mention of conventionalities angers her. She needs no champion, she says. Sheldon finally accepts her as his partner.

Tudor and Jon Hix, gold seekers, arrive on the Martha. Joan and Tudor seem to interest each other. Sheldon becomes jealous.

Joan starts for Australia with her crew to buy a schooner, but stops at Guvutu and buys the Martha, which has been wrecked, for a mere trifle.

Captain Auckland tells her she did it and applauds her cleverness. Captain Auckland tells her she took the Piberty Gibbet away from him to save the Martha.

Joan returns with the Martha in good condition. Her white assistants describe her business shrewdness. Sheldon refuses to let her run the Martha.

Sheldon proposes marriage, but Joan rebuffs him. They agree to continue as partners and friends. They discover a large number of hidden treasures.

Gogoomy attacks Joan, who escapes and warns Sheldon. Gogoomy flees with other savages, and Sheldon pursues. Bushmen murder all of Tudor's party except Tudor.

Sheldon and Joan rescue Tudor, find the heads of the remainder of his party, rout the bushmen and burn their village.

Joan nurses Tudor back to health. He offends her by trying to kiss her. Tudor forces Sheldon to fight him for the girl.

They start from different points and shoot at each other on sight. Sheldon finally wounds and disables Tudor.

Joan offers to conventionalize matters by marrying Sheldon. He refuses unless she loves him. She admits that she does, and they are married.

CHAPTER XX

THE HEAD HUNTERS

"That fella boy he sick," Binu Charley said, pointing to a Poonga-Poonga man whose shoulder had been scratched by an arrow an hour before.

"The boy was sitting down and groaning, his arms clapping his bent knees, his head drooped forward and rolling painfully back and forth. For fear of poison, Sheldon had immediately scarified the wound and injected permanganate of potash; but in spite of the precaution the shoulder was swelling rapidly.

"We'll take him on to where Tudor is lying," Joan said. "The walking will help to keep up his circulation and scatter the poison. Adamu Adam, you take hold that boy. Maybe he will want to sleep. Shake him up. If he sleep he die."

The advance was more rapid now, for Binu Charley placed the captive bushman in front of him and made him clear the runway of traps. Once, at a sharp turn where a man's shoulder would unavoidably brush against a screen of leaves, the bushman displayed great caution as he spread the leaves aside and exposed the head of a sharp pointed spear, so set that the casual passerby would receive at the least a nasty scratch.

The sun sinking behind a lofty western peak brought on an early but lingering twilight, and the expedition plodded on through the evil forest—the place of mystery and fear, of death swift and silent and horrible, of brutish appetite and degraded instinct, of human life that still wallowed in the primeval slime, of savagery degenerate and abysmal.

They turned aside from the runway at a place indicated by Binu Charley and came to an immense banyan tree half an acre in extent that made in the innermost heart of the jungle a denser jungle of its own. From out of its black depths came the voice of a man slinging in a cracked ceramic voice.

"My word, that big fella marster he no die!"

The singing stopped, and the voice, faint and weak, called out a hello. Joan answered, and then the voice explained: "I'm not wandering. I was just singing to keep my spirits up. Have you got anything to eat?"

Tudor, having pulled through the fever and started to mend, was still frightfully weak and very much starved. So badly swollen was he from mosquito bites that his face was unrecognizable. Joan had her own ointments along and she prefaced their application by fomenting his swollen features with hot clothes. Sheldon, with an eye to the camp and the preparations for the night, looked on and felt the pangs of jealousy at every contact of her hands with Tudor's face and body. Somehow, engaged in their healing ministrations, they no longer seemed to him boy's hands.

The morning's action had been settled the night before. Tudor was to stay behind in his banyan refuge and gather strength while the expedition proceeded. On the far chance that they might rescue even one solitary survivor of Tudor's party, Joan was fixed in her determination to push on. With Tudor, Adamu Adam and Arahu were to stop as guards.

Binu Charley led the way, by proxy, however, for by means of the poisoned spear he drove the captive bushman ahead. They plodded on, panting and sweating in the humid, stagnant air. They were immersed in a sea of wanton, prodigal vegetation.

Caught by surprise fifteen feet in the air above the path in the forks of a many branched tree, a bushman dropped like a shadow, naked as in his natal morn. It was hard for them to realize that it was a man, for he seemed a weird jungle sprite, a goblin of the forest. Only Binu Charley was not perturbed. He flung his poisoned spear over the head of the captive at the fitting form. It was a mighty act, well intended, but the shadow, leaping, received the spear harmlessly between the legs and, tripping upon it, was flung sprawling. Before he could get away Binu Charley was upon him, clutching him by his snow white hair. He was only a young man and a dandy at that, his face blackened with charcoal, his hair whitened with wood ashes, with the freshly severed tail of a wild pig thrust through his perforated nose and two more thrust through his ears. His only other ornament was a necklace of human finger bones. At sight of their other prisoner he chattered in a high querulous falsetto, with puckered brows and troubled, wild animal eyes. He was disposed of along the middle of the line, one of the Poonga-Poonga men leading him at the end of a length of bark rope.

"Close up he stop," Binu Charley warned them in a whisper. Even as he spoke, from high overhead came the deep resonant boom of a village drum. But the beat was slow. There was no panic in the sound. The runaway now became a deeply worn path, rising so steeply that several times the party paused for breath.

"One man with a rifle could hold it against a thousand," Sheldon whispered to Joan. "And twenty men could hold it with spears and arrows."

They came out on the village, situated on a small, upland plateau, grass covered and with only occasional trees. There was a wild chorus of warning cries from the women, and spears and arrows began to fall among the invaders. At Sheldon's command the Tahitians and Poonga-Poonga men got into action with their rifles. The spears and arrows ceased, the last bushmen disappeared, and the fight was over almost as soon as it had begun. On their own side no one had been hurt, while half a dozen bushmen had been killed. "Poor brutes," Joan said. "They act only according to their natures. To eat their kind and take heads is good morality for them."

"But they should be taught not to take white men's heads," Sheldon argued. She nodded approval and said: "If we find one head we'll burn the village. Hey, you, Charley! What fella place he'd stop?"

"S'pose he stop along devil-devil house," was the answer. "That big fella house, he devil-devil."

It was the largest house in the village. Into it they went. Crouched before a slow smoking fire, in the littered ashes of a thousand fires, was an old man who blinked apathetically at the invaders. His task, it seemed, was to tend the fire, and, hung in the smoke, they found the object of their search. Joan turned and stumbled out lastly, deathly sick, reeling into the sunshine and clutching at the air for support.

"See if all are there," she called back faintly and tottered aimlessly on for a few steps, breathing the air in great drafts and trying to forget the sight she had seen.

Upon Sheldon fell the unpleasant

task of tallying the heads. They were all there, nine of them, white men's heads, the faces of which he had been familiar with when their owners had camped in Berande compound and set up the polling boats. Binu Charley, hugely interested, lent a hand, turning the heads around for identification, noting the hatcher strokes and remarking the distorted expressions.

Other heads, thoroughly sun dried and smoke cured, were found in abundance, but, with two exceptions, they were the heads of blacks.

"Me savvy black Mary, me savvy white Mary," quoth Binu Charley. "Me no savvy that fella Mary. What name belong him?"

Sheldon looked. Ancient and withered, blackened by many years of the smoke of the devil-devil house, nevertheless the shrunken, mummylike face was unmistakably Chinese. How it had come there was the mystery. It was a woman's head, and he had never heard of a Chinese woman in the history of the Solomons. From the ears hung two inch long earrings, and at Sheldon's direction the Binu man rubbed away the accretions of smoke and dirt and from under his fingers appeared the polished green of jade, the sheen of pearl and the warm red of oriental gold. The other head, equally ancient, was a white man's, and Sheldon wondered what forgotten beche-der-mer fisherman or sandalwood trader had gone to furnish that ghostly trophy.

Telling Binu Charley to remove the earrings and directing the Poonga-Poonga men to carry out the old fire tender, Sheldon cleared the devil-devil house and set fire to it. Soon every house was blazing merrily, while the ancient fire tender sat upright in the sunshine, blinking at the destruction of his village. Every member of Tudor's expedition was accounted for, and it was a long, dark way out of the head hunters' country. Releasing their two prisoners, who leaped away like startled deer, they plunged down the steep path into the streaming jungle.

That night found them back in camp with Tudor, and at high noon of the third day, travelling with the current and shooting the rapids, the expedition arrived at Berande. Joan, with a sigh, unbuckled her revolver belt and hung it on the wall in the living room, while Sheldon, who had been inking about for the sheer joy of seeing her perform that particular homecoming act, sighed, too, with satisfaction. But the homecoming was not all joy to him, for Joan set about nursing Tudor and spent much time on the veranda when he lay in the hammock under the mosquito netting.

The ten days of Tudor's convalescence that followed were peaceful days on Berande. The work of the plantation went on like clockwork. With the crushing of the premature outbreak of Gogoomy and his following all insubordination seemed to have vanished. Twenty more of the old time boys, their term of service up, were carried away by the Martha, and the fresh stock of labor, treated fairly, was proving of excellent quality. As Sheldon rode about the plantation acknowledging to himself the comfort and convenience of a horse and wondering why he had not thought of getting one himself, he pondered the various improvements for which Joan was responsible.

There were times when he was dizzy with thought of her and love of her, when he would stop his horse and with closed eyes picture her as he had seen her that first day in the stern sheets of the whiteboat, dashing madly in to shore and marching belligerently along his veranda to remark that it was pretty hospitality, this letting strangers sink or swim in his front yard.

It was patent to Sheldon that Tudor had become interested in Joan. Often after his morning ride over the plantation or coming in from the store or from inspection of the copra drying, Sheldon found the pair of them together on the veranda, Joan listening intent and excited and Tudor deep in some recital of personal adventure at the ends of the earth.

Sheldon noticed, too, the way Tudor looked at her and followed her about with his eyes, and in those eyes he noted a certain hungry look and on the face a certain wistful expression, and he wondered if on his own face he carried a similar involuntary advertisement. He was sure of several things—first, that Tudor was not the right man for Joan and could not possibly make her permanently happy; next, that Joan was too sensible a girl really to fall in love with a man of such superficial stamp, and, finally, that Tudor would blunder his love making somehow. And at the same time, with true lover's anxiety, Sheldon feared that the other might somehow fall to blunder and win the girl with purely fortuitous and successful meretricious show.

The situation was very unsatisfactory and perplexing. Sheldon played the difficult part of waiting and looking on, while his rival devoted himself energetically to reaching out and grasping at the fluttering prize. He did not belong to Berande, and now that he was well and strong again, it was time for him to go. Instead of which Tudor had settled himself down comfortably, resumed swimming, went dynamiting fish with Joan, spent hours with her hunting pigeons, trapping crocodiles and at target practice with rifle and revolver.

But there were certain traditions of hospitality that prevented Sheldon from breathing a hint that it was time for his guest to take himself off. And in similar fashion, feeling that it was not playing the game, he fought down the temptation to warn Joan. Had he known anything, not too serious, of Tudor's detriment, he would have been unable to utter it, but the worst of it was that he knew nothing at all against the man.

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"For fourteen months I was so badly afflicted with Rheumatism that much of the time I was obliged to use a cane. I used one bottle of RHEUMA and THE CANE IS IN THE CORNER NOW. No one could be happier to be rid of the pain, swollen knees and badly swollen ankles. I certainly believe there is no remedy for the disease like RHEUMA."—Mrs. Daniel S. Knox, Severance, N.Y., August 8, 1912.

TEN YEARS IN KINGSTON AND ALSO TWENTY LASHES.

Simcoe, Sept. 24.—In the case of King vs. John Underhill, of Washinton, before Mr. Justice Kelly here to-day in the high court, the prisoner was sentenced to ten years in Kingston penitentiary and twenty lashes; ten lashes to be given during the first month, and ten during the sixth month. Underhill was convicted under the Charlton act.

The court gave Underhill a severe lecture, and said he hoped the sentence would have a good effect throughout the whole country, as crimes of this nature are unfortunately far too common. Underhill heard his sentence with much composure, although at the mention of the lash winced.

WALKERTON FIREBUG GETS THREE YEARS.

Walkerton, Sept. 24.—Wesley Russell was to-day sentenced to three years in the penitentiary at Kingston for having fired the Hartley House barn. Russell, in giving evidence, stated that he was guilty, but said he had done it accidentally while lighting a cigarette. Seeing that he could not put out the fire, which caught immediately, and spread fast, he took fright and ran out of the barn. Russell appeared to be a combination of a partial degenerate and an imbecile. He has been ill with a nervous trouble for some time, and his moral responsibility was hard to establish. The judge found it very difficult to come to a conclusion as to what sentence to impose. As Russell is over age, he could not send him to a reformatory and he deemed it unsafe to the public that he be allowed his freedom. Had any motive whatever been shown, the judge said the sentence would have been more severe, but it would almost appear to be that it was done in a spirit of recklessness.

EXPLOSION ON COLLINGWOOD FARM ENDS FATALLY.

Collingwood, Sept. 23.—One man killed, another not expected to live, and two others seriously hurt is the record of a boiler explosion on the dairy farm of Blackstock Bros., just outside the town limits to-day.

The four Blackstock boys were engaged in filling a silo with corn, which was being drawn in from a field as it was required. A steam boiler used to run the cutting box suddenly exploded, killing Ed. Blackstock and injuring Neil, his brother, so seriously that he is not expected to recover. The two other brothers, Jack and Tom, were rendered unconscious, but the extent of their injuries is not yet known.

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C. L. GRANT

TWO COUNTY JUDGESHIPS ARE SAID TO BE FILLED.

Ottawa, Sept. 23.—It is understood that George M. Vance, K.C., of Shelburne, will receive the appointment of county judge of Simcoe, C. S. Livingstone, of Tillsonburg, will be made judge of the court of Welland.

HAND IS LACERATED.

Chesley, Sept. 23.—Charles P. Wilkins, one of the proprietors of the Chesley woollen mills, met with a very painful accident on Monday morning, by which his right hand was badly torn and the cords of the wrist lacerated.

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MILDMAY HOTEL KEEPERS ARE FINED AT WALKERTON.

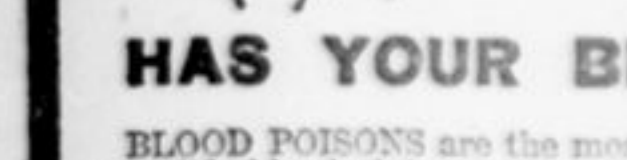
Walkerton, Sept. 25.—Inspector White is keeping pretty close tab on the liquor dealers of this riding. Recently he paid special attention to Mildmay, with the result that two hotelkeepers were invited to visit magistrate Richardson. Mrs. Senurr, of the Station Hotel, pleaded guilty to selling after hours, and it cost her \$40 for the privilege. Albert Butham also pleaded guilty to selling liquor to be consumed off the premises and was fined \$20 and costs.

THE ROYAL

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The Down Town



FOR... SHE SUPPOSED RIGHT. She was a little girl, ask questions. "Ma," she began, "what's trans-Atlantic mean?" "Across the ocean," replied a suffering mother. A long silence, broken by a strident sound of...