

# SERIAL STORY

## No Man's Land A ROMANCE By Louis Joseph Vance Illustrations by Ray Walters

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### SYNOPSIS.

Garrett Coast, a young man of New York City, meets Douglas Blackstock, who invites him to a card party. He accepts, although he dislikes Blackstock, the reason being that both are in love with Katherine Thaxter. Coast fails to convince her that Blackstock is unworthy of her friendship. At the party Coast meets two named Dundas and Van Tui. There is a quarrel, and Blackstock shoots Van Tui dead. Coast struggles to wrest the weapon from him, thus the police discover that Blackstock is arrested for murder. He is convicted, but as he begins his sentence, Dundas names Blackstock as the murderer and kills himself. Coast becomes free, but Blackstock has married Katherine Thaxter and fled. Coast purchases a yacht and while sailing sees a man thrown from a distant boat. He rescues the fellow who is named Appleyard.

### CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

Appleyard executed an ample gesture. "Romance," he replied, sententious.

"Who are you, anyway?" pursued Coast incautiously.

"I might put the same question to you, sir."

"To your prospective employer?"

The faded eyes twinkled. "As nearly won over as that, Mr. Coast? Decidedly my talents should have been devoted to spellbinding, as you so delicately suggest. . . . But squarely, sir,—he grew momentarily grave and earnest—"I've been painfully truthful: my moniker is actually Melchisedec Appleyard, incredible as it may sound. I give you my word I'm an honest man; the law has no knowledge of or concern with me."

For all his banter he betrayed not a little eagerness as he bent forward, scanning Coast's face.

His verdict was something deferred; Coast was actually and seriously considering the preposterous suggestion. The little man promised a diverting companion, who had proven such up to that moment; and there were dark hours when Coast needed diversion poignantly. Beyond question it would be convenient to have somebody at one's beck and call, to stand a trick at the wheel or advise concerning dangerous waters. And, furthermore, Coast thought to detect in Mr. Appleyard's manner a something which lent more than a mite of confirmation to his hint that he needed food and shelter—if only temporarily.

In the end Coast nodded slowly. "I'll go you," he said, holding the other's eyes; "I'll take you at your word."

Relief shone radiant on the withered face. "Right you are, Mr. Coast!" cried Appleyard, extending a hand. "I promise you won't regret this. Word of honor, sir!"

"That's understood." Coast pressed the hand and released it. "And now let's get under way. I'm for bold water—Nantucket Sound to begin with. Can we make Vineyard Haven by nightfall, do you think?"

"With this wind, via Quick's Hole?" Coast nodded and Appleyard considered sagely. "Of course we can," he proclaimed.

### CHAPTER VI.

"All ready?"

Coast, at the wheel, nodded to Appleyard, who was crouching in the bows. "Ready," he said.

There followed a splash as Appleyard dropped the hook of the mooring at which the Echo had been riding overnight.

In a long and graceful sweep the Echo swung round and slipped briskly down the harbor to the urge of the following wind.

Early in the afternoon the wind began to fall, its volume diminishing by fits and starts; heavy puffs alternated with spells of steady breezing successively more faint.

Over the bows the entrance to Quick's Hole, the passage between Pasque and Nashawena Islands, became plainly visible.

Appleyard remarked the signs of change with a wrinkle of disquiet between his brows.

"Going to have a shift of wind, you think?" Coast asked.

The little man nodded anxiously. "It's a cinch," he asserted. "And when it does swing the chances are ten to one it'll come in from the southwest. That's the prevailing wind round here at this season, you know."

"Well? Even so, it'll favor us up the Sound, won't it? Besides, we've got the motor."

"That'll help a heap in case that fog comes down on us, won't it?" Appleyard snorted in disgust, nodding toward the bank of tawny haze that discolored the horizon beyond the low profiles of Nashawena and Cuttyhunk, over the starboard counter.

"Hadn't thought of that—"

"And yet you had the nerve to resent my suggestion that you needed a keeper!"

"Well, then, it's up to us to make that passage as soon as we can—what? Hadn't I better get the motor going? Here, take the wheel, while I—"

"Never mind," Appleyard returned. "That's my job. You stay put. That is, unless you prefer—"

"No; I'm not crazy about it. Go ahead and break your back turning up a cold engine, if you want to."

"Don't let that fret you any, Cap'n." Appleyard grunted, setting the binnacle aside and lifting the engine-pit hatch. "Me, I was born and brought up with marine motors; they used to fill my nursing bottle with a mixture of gasoline and Vacuum A. Pipe your uncle."

He dropped lightly into the pit, threw in both the main and shut-off switches, opened the globe-valve in the feed pipe, made a slight adjustment of the carburetor, and slowly turned up the fly-wheel. An angry buzzing broke out in the spark-collar.

"You see," he said with elaborate nonchalance. "They're all alike—any one of 'em will feed right out of my hand."

He rocked the fly-wheel to and fro half a dozen times, then gave it a smart upward pull. Instantly there was a dull explosion in the cylinder, and the wheel began to spin steadily to the muffled drumming of the exhaust.

Gathering way, the boat moved at a more lively pace, with her sail flapping empty and listless and idly swinging boom.

By the time Coast, instructed by his highly efficient crew, had piloted the Echo safely through to the Sound, a dead calm held.

aged, to the cockpit. "I don't like this," he asserted glumly. "There's something gone wrong. We ought to've made the Bight over an hour ago. I've been expecting we'd run aground every minute of the last thirty. . . . Sure you've got the course right?"

"Absolutely," returned Coast with conviction.

"Then what the devil's the matter?" grumbled the little man. "Martha's Vineyard hasn't moved, I'll go ball; and we certainly couldn't hold that course as long as we have without striking land somewhere." He wagged a perturbed head, growling inarticulate dissatisfaction. "Let me think. . . . Something wrong. . . . What . . . ? Wait!" he cried abruptly. "Maybe. . . . Hold that wheel steady for a bit, will you."

Dropping to his knees he peered intently into the binnacle, at the same time opening the cut-off switch and disconnecting the batteries. The motor promptly coughed and was quiet, the drooping in the spark coil died away, and Coast, leaning forward in wonder, saw the compass dial jerk as if suddenly released and then swing through an arc of almost ninety degrees ere it stilled.

"What in thunder does that mean?" he demanded, surprised to the point of incredulity.

"Means we're both asses of blooded lineage," said Appleyard sourly, rising; "though you're not a marker to me. I should've known better—I'd've thought of it right away if I had only half the sense God gives the domestic goose. That compass was right on top of the spark coil. Naturally it magnetized. . . . And I would've known better, too, if ever I had run

# LIVE NEWS OF THE STATE

## Direct Sale Of Produce.

The value of farmers' organizations for the purpose of selling direct to the consumer, and cutting out the commission man, the middleman and the distributor, will form the leading theme of the meeting of the State Board of Agriculture, which is scheduled to meet in the State Capitol during the third week in January. The chief speaker on this subject will be J. Aldus Herr, of Lancaster, a practical farmer and expert in various agricultural lines, who will talk on "The Practical Side of Local Organization in Agriculture." The usual business session will open the meeting on Wednesday morning, January 24, with reports of committees. After that the principal features of each session will be as follows:

Wednesday, 1.30 P. M.—"The Practical Side of Local Organization in Agriculture," J. Aldus Herr, of Lancaster.

Wednesday, 7.30 P. M.—"Hydrophobia in Its Relation to the Farm," Dr. W. Frank Beck, Altoona; "Fertilization of Apple Orchards for Field and Quality," Prof. J. P. Stewart, State College; "Nitrogen—Its Forms and Sources," Dr. Charles W. Stoddard, State College.

Thursday, January 25, 9 A. M.—"Computing Dairy Rations," Prof. H. E. Van Norman, State College; "Earmarks of the Farm," S. C. George, West Lebanon.

Thursday, 1.30 P. M.—"Production of Beef Cattle in Pennsylvania," Prof. W. A. Cochel, State College.

The Thursday evening session will be devoted mainly to reports and concluding business. In addition to the addresses listed reports will be made to the board by the following specialists and standing committees:

Standing Committees—Cereals and Cereal Crops, Chairman J. Miles Derr, of Milton; Roads and Road Laws, Chairman J. C. Weller, of Rockwood; Fruit and Fruit Culture, Chairman J. P. Young, of Marion; Dairy and Dairy Products, Chairman M. E. Conrad, of West Grove; Fertilizers, Chairman J. E. Schultz, of Norristown; Wool and Textile Fibres, Chairman A. L. McKibben, of New Sheffield; Live Stock, Chairman A. P. Young, of Millville; Poultry, W. Theodore Wittman, of Allentown.

Specialists—Botanist, Prof. W. A. Buckhout, of State College; pomologist, Gabriel Helster, of Harrisburg; chemist, Dr. William Frear, of State College; veterinarian, Dr. C. J. Marshall, State veterinarian; sanitarian, Dr. W. H. Banks, of Millintown; microscopist and hygienist, Prof. J. W. Kellogg, of Harrisburg; entomologist, Prof. Franklin Menges, of York; ornithologist, Prof. H. A. Surface, State economic zoologist; meteorologist, E. R. Demain, of Harrisburg, United States Weather Observer; mineralogist, Baird Halberstadt, of Pottsville; apirist, H. C. Klinger, of Liverpool; economic geologist, Dr. Isaac A. Harvey, of Lock Haven; agricultural geologist, W. A. Stout, of Pine Grove; forests and forestry, Robert S. Conklin, State Commissioner of Forestry; feeding stuffs, George G. Hutchinson, of Warrior's Mark.

Orchard Inspections in January.

All of the orchard demonstrators of the State Zoologist's division have been summoned by Dr. H. A. Surface to begin a round of inspections of orchards early in January. It is the plan of Dr. Surface to have all of the orchards which have been placed under State supervision inspected during the first quarter of the year and as soon as the weather moderates to have demonstrations resumed. "The attendance at the demonstrations this fall was the largest we have had yet."

Auditor General's Term.

State officials here say that the suit to determine the length of the Auditor General's term under the constitutional amendments of 1909 will not be started until after the nomination for that office is made in the State convention in the coming spring. This was the plan followed in the State Treasurer nomination controversy in 1910, and will not only settle the right to make a nomination, but decide whether the amendments apply to Auditor General Sisson, who was elected at the same time.

No Official Computation.

No official vote will be computed on Capitol Hill in 1912, it being the first year in a generation that this ceremony will not be gone through with. This condition is due to the fact that only county officers were elected last fall, and the law provides that constitutional amendments need only be proclaimed after the official returns are counted up by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

War Pictures Withdrawn.

Reports received from a number of cities of the State show that offensive pictures of the Turko-Italian war, about which complaint arose a few days ago, have been withdrawn and that little more than an official statement by the Governor was necessary. Some time ago a number of letters were received at the Capitol complaining of the character of the films shown in this and other cities. The State police made a number of investigations, and the owners of the films have withdrawn them.

TERMS.—The terms of subscription to the paper are one dollar per year in advance.

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"We're Perfectly Safe Unless We're in Ship Channel."

A little later a chill breath of air fanned Coast's cheek, the first whiff out of the southwest. The water flared and darkened with the flying catpaws.

The fog swept in swiftly. Far across the breadth of wind-dulled water Coast could see it moving onward like a wall, momentarily gaining in bulk. Already it was hovering threateningly over Gay Head, and while he looked a thin, gray, spectral arm stole across the low land at Menemsha Bight and began to grope its blind way up the Sound.

Coast steered with his gaze fixed upon the compass on the engine-pit hatch, now his sole guide. Inensibly the fog grew more dense, so that in time the mast was more or less indistinct and only a yard or so of pallid water was visible on either hand.

"Vineyard Haven tonight, by any chance?" he asked suddenly. Appleyard shook his head decidedly. "Not unless we get a breeze stiff enough to blow this off."

"Then we'd better find an anchorage for the night?"

"Only thing to do. I'm willing to risk my valuable rep. as a weather prophet, that this won't lift before morning."

"Tarpaulin Cove?" Appleyard pursed his thin lips and rubbed his nose, considering. "Good enough anchorage," he admitted; "but for mub, I ain't strong for it. Menemsha Bight would do us more comfortably—across the Sound, you know, a bit east of Gay Head."

"Why Menemsha Bight?"

"Because there's an able-bodied and energetic fog bell at Tarpaulin. Take my advice. There'll be nothing but dead silence at the Bight, and it isn't much of a run over there."

"You know best. How shall I hold her?"

"Son'east."

"So." Coast put the wheel over and brought the Echo round to that course, as indicated by the compass. Monotonously the chronometer in the cabin knelt the half-hours. About two bells (five o'clock) Appleyard began to fidget uneasily. He knocked out his pipe and, jumping up, trotted forward to the bows, where, an arm embracing the mast, he remained for many minutes stubbornly peering ahead into dreary blankness.

an engine with the coil on the cylinder before! Oh—piffle!"

"Then I've been holding the wrong course for several hours."

"Precactly."

"And you haven't any idea where we are?"

"Not a glimmer."

Thoroughly disheartened, Coast left the wheel. "Nice mesa," he observed quietly.

Appleyard sighed profoundly. The worst of it is, I'm a sawed-off little runt, too small for you to kick as I ought to be kicked. . . .

"Yes," said Coast. They dined simply and solemnly on cold things, after which Appleyard, at his own suggestion, took the first watch. "You need rest," he argued, and I don't—rarely sleep over three hours a night. You turn in now and when your time's up I'll call you. There's nothing to worry about."

Coast was really very tired and little loath to be persuaded. He dropped off instantly into dreamless sleep.

At some time during the night he was disturbed by a heavy splashing under the bows. He roused just enough to appreciate where he was, and lay staring drowsily at the cabin lamp until (he seemed to have dozed off again and again awakened) he was aware of Appleyard's presence in the cabin.

"Hello," he yawned, staring at the little man's head and shoulders as he sat on the other transom, beyond the center-board trunk, busying himself over something invisible in his hands. "What's that?"

"Sorry I waked you," returned Appleyard. His eyes flickered keenly over Coast's face for an instant. "We drifted aground a few minutes ago," he explained in a perfunctory tone; "I pushed off with the sweep and anchored with a short cable."

"Whereabout d'you think we are?" Coast pursued sleepily. "How should I know? Menemsha Bight for choice, but it might be anywhere along the Vineyard Coast—possibly Pasque—or No Man's Land."

"What's that?"

"No Man's Land? Oh, a little island south of Gay Head, 'bout as big's a handkerchief. Practically uninhabited."

Appleyard rose. "What you doing?" Coast yawned extravagantly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)