

# SERIAL STORY

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

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10 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 them. Coast 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. They arrive at a lonely island, known as No Man's Land.

### CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

"Cleaning my pipe. Go on and sleep; your time's not up yet."  
"What's o'clock?"  
Appleyard mumbled something incoherent as he stepped out on deck; and Coast turned over and slept again.

It seemed hours later when he found himself abruptly wide awake, in a tremor of panic anxiety bred of a fancy that a human voice had cried out in mortal terror, somewhere within his hearing. He started up, informed by that sixth sense we call intuition that conditions abroad the Echo had changed radically since the last time he had fallen asleep; and it seemed no more than a second from the moment his eyes opened until he found himself in the cockpit, gazing dazedly into the inscrutable heart of the fog.

At first, in his confusion, he could see nothing amiss. The Echo was riding on a quiet tide and an even keel, with scarcely any perceptible motion. The encompassing darkness was intense, unfathomable, profound; only the forward light showed a dim halo of yellow opalescence near the mast-head, and the faint glow from the cabin lamp quivered on slowly swirling convolutions of dense white vapor, like smoke. The port and starboard lights had been extinguished, as they should be when a vessel comes to anchor.

What, then had interrupted his slumbers?  
He turned with a question shaping on his lips.

Appleyard was nowhere visible. Coast required some minutes before he was convinced of the fact of the little man's disappearance. But the cabin proved as empty as the cockpit, and the tender was gone.

The cabin chronometer chimed the hour of four in the morning.

As the echoes died, as though they had evoked the genius of that place, a strange and dreadful cry rent the silence, sounding shrill across the waters, yet as if coming from a great distance.

### CHAPTER VII.

Some moments elapsed, Coast's every nerve and sense upon the rack. Though he heard it no more, still that cry rang in his head, and he could but wait, smitten dumb and motionless, feeling his chilled flesh crawl, enthralled by fearsome shapes conjured up by an imagination striving vainly to account for what had happened—wait (it seemed) interminably; for what he hardly knew or guessed, unless it were for a repetition or some explanation of that inexplicable cry.

He received neither. His straining faculties detected none but familiar noises.  
Insensibly he grew more calm. So silent was the world, seemingly so saturated with the spirit of brooding peace, that he was tempted to believe he had dreamed that first shriek, to which he had wakened, and that the second was but an echo of it in his brain; some hideous trick of nerves, a sort of waking hallucination.

And yet?  
Appleyard? What of him? Was there any connection to be traced between his mysterious disappearance from the Echo and that weird, unearthly scream? Was there really land near, and had the little man found it only to become the victim of some frightful, nameless peril? Could that have been his voice, calling for help? And in what dread extremity?

There was nothing he could do, no way to reach the man. The tender was gone, the shore invisible—and who should say how far distant? Otherwise he would not have hesitated to swim for it.

Presently it occurred to him to wonder where the Echo lay—off what land. Appleyard's responses to his inquiries, several hours back, returned

to memory. The name, No Man's Land, intrigued. He interrupted his vigil to investigate such sources of information as he had at hand.

In the cabin again, with the lamp turned high, he dragged out a chart—number 112 of the admirable series published by the Coast and Geodetic Survey, delineating with wonderful accuracy the hydrography of Buzzard's Bay and Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds, together with the topography of the littoral and islands.

With pencil it was easy to trace the Echo's course from New Bedford harbor through Quick's Hole; a little to the east of which, say of Robinson's Hole, the fog had overtaken them. To the south and east of that point lay Martha's Vineyard, for all the world like a trussed fowl in profile. And there—yes, due south of Gay Head—was No Man's Land, its contour much that of an infant's shoe, the heel digging into the Atlantic. Comparison with the scale demonstrated it to be roughly a mile and five-eighths long by a mile wide—extreme measurements.

Coast stared at it with renewed interest, for the first time convinced of the existence of a spot so oddly named. A number of black dots along its northern shore seemed to indicate buildings—but Appleyard had distinctly said "uninhabited."

Coast turned out the lamp and went back to the deck.

There was nothing to be seen, nothing to do.  
He dozed.

Then out of the confusion of his temper, in which ennui stalked in singular companionship with perturbation, he chanced upon an odd end of thought, one of those stray bits of information, mostly culled from desultory reading, that clutter the back of every man's brain.

It happened to remember hearing, some time, some where, that fog rarely clings to the surface of moving water; that, by putting one's vision upon a plane almost horizontal with the water, it is ordinarily possible to see for some distance roundabout.

"There may be something in it. No harm to try."

Forthwith he scrambled out upon the stern, from which, after some intricate maneuvering and by dint of considerable physical ingenuity, he managed to suspend himself, at peril of a ducking, with his head near the water.

He was promptly justified of his pains; the theory proved itself—in that one instance at least; between the slowly undulant floor, glassy and colorless, and the ragged fringe of the mist curtain, he discovered a definite space.

Directly astern and, roughly, some forty feet away, a shelving stretch of pebbly beach, softly lapped by low-voiced ripples, shut in the view. The Echo's tender, drawn up beyond the water's edge, bisected it.

"Good," said Coast, abstracted, recovering from his constrained position.

Curiosity gripped him strongly, caution contending vainly; he knew quite well that he would never bide content until he had probed for the cause and source and solved the mystery of that wild cry in the night just gone.

Moreover, he felt in a measure responsible for Appleyard. Surely there must be some strange reason for his protracted absence.

Abandoning himself, deaf to the counsels of prudence, Coast rose and stripped off his clothing.

He let himself gently into the water (fearing to dive because he did not know its depth) and found it warmer than the air. He struck out cautiously, using the slow, old-fashioned but silent breast stroke. In two minutes, however, he was wading up to the beach.

There was no sign of Appleyard; only the tender. Upon that stone-

strewn shore the feet of the run-away had left no trail. Though Coast cast about in a wide radius, he found no sign of the missing man. The pebbles scratched and bruised his unprotected feet, and he began to shiver with cold. He gave it up, presently, returned to the tender, pushed off and sculled out to the Echo.

Then, having rubbed his flesh to a blush with a coarse towel, he dressed, took the small boat back to the beach, drew it up and, now fully committed to an enterprise the folly of which he stubbornly refused to debate, set off to reconnoiter along the water's edge, feeling his way.

After a time the beach grew more sandy, and emboldened by the knowledge that he would have his footprints to guide him back, he left the water and struck inland—but only to find his progress in that direction checked by a steep wall of earth, a cliff-like bluff of height indeterminate, its flanks wave-eaten and deeply seamed by rain.

At random, with no design, he turned again to his left and proceeded as before, but now along the foot of the bluff, trudging heavily through damp, yielding sand.

Still no sign of Appleyard.  
He must have tramped, at a rude guess, several hundred yards before he discovered either a break in the bluff or any change in the general configuration of the shore. Ultimately, however, the eye fell away inland and the other widened.

A moment later he came upon a small catboat careened above high tide mark, with a gaping wound in its starboard side, forward and below the water-line.

She lay stern to the water. Taking the point of her stem as his guide, Coast turned inland again, on a line



"Good God!" He cried aloud. "What—"

as straight as possible considering the slanting lay of the land and the impossibility of seeing anything beyond a radius of a few feet.

He had not gone far upon this tack before he stumbled upon a path of hardpacked earth, obviously made by human feet. Then he found himself mounting a rather steep grade, and in another moment was face to face with a plain weather-boarded wall of a wooden building.

There were no windows that he could discover on this side, and though he listened keenly he heard no sounds from within.

Other buildings presented themselves successively, as like as peas to one another and to the first he had encountered: all peopled exclusively by the seven howling devils of desolation and their attendant court of rats—or so he surmised from sundry sounds of scurrings and squeaks.

He gathered that he was threading a rude sort of street, fringed on one side—to seaward—with the abandoned dwellings of what had apparently been a small fishing community.

"No Man's Land indeed!" he commented. "Certainly lives up to the name, even if it's some place else. It begins to look as if I'd drawn a blank."

But Appleyard?  
He was moved vaguely to liken the place to the Cold Liars of the Jungle Books. "Only infinitely sordid," he mused, at pause; "lacking the majesty and the horror."  
Wonder had I better go back?  
As he hung in the wind, debating what to do, whether to press on or to be sensible, swayed this way and that by doubts and half-formed impulses, somewhere near, seemingly at his very elbow, certainly not twenty feet away, suddenly a dog howled. Long drawn, lugubrious with a note of lamentation, the sound struck discordant upon his overtaken senses, shocking him (before he knew it) to outspoken protest.

"Good God!" he cried aloud. "What—?"  
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

# STATE CAPITAL CHAT

## Grange Forming Buying System.

Steps for the formation of a State-wide organization for co-operative buying of articles used by farmers and the sale of agricultural products direct to the consumer and the establishment of a system to protect farmers against investments in fraudulent mining, real estate, farming and other schemes were discussed by the executive committee of the State Grange here. Practically every member of the directing body of the organization was present and subcommittees were named to work out the methods of carrying into effect the two projects which are favored by the State organization of the Grangers. W. T. Creasy, the worthy master, stated that the Grange proposed to incorporate an organization which would work through the subordinate granges and enable members to buy coal, agricultural implements, feed, fertilizers, seeds and other articles at the lowest possible price even if it became necessary to buy the output of mines and factories.

The headquarters of the organization will be established in this city and by a system of crop reports all members of the granges can keep in touch with the markets, so that if there are demands for any kind of produce in one section of the State which is stored in another section it can be brought where needed.

Mr. Creasy stated that the committee had already received propositions from the Philadelphia Retail Grocers' Association and other organizations desiring to co-operate with the new association, but that no agreements would be made for some time to come. The whole plan, he said, had to be worked out with the idea of doing away with the agent and the middleman and obtaining for the farmer the best prices both in buying and selling. The proposition to protect the grangers from unprofitable or fraudulent projects will be handled through requirements that all subordinate granges submit to the Executive Committee outlines of what their members have been invited to buy. The headquarters will then investigate and issue a bulletin advising members of the actual nature of the projects. The committee determined to designate January 16 as grange day at the Pittsburgh Agricultural Exhibition.

## Water Supply Board.

The State Water Supply Commission has approved the application of the Howanda Water Company for the construction of a power dam in the Susquehanna in Bradford County, but the application of the Shohola Hydro-Electric Company for a water power project in Shohola Township, Pike County, was held over. At the same time the commission considered reports on the dams in Montoursville and Rickett's dams, Luzerne County, which had been inspected in the course of the general inspection of all dams in the State. A charter for the Hooversville Water Company, Hooversville, Somerset County, was approved, but permission was refused the Lewisburg Bridge Company to reconstruct its bridge at Lewisburg on the west branch of the Susquehanna.

## Must Obey Orders.

A general order has been issued from National Guard headquarters calling the attention of the organizations of the militia to the fact that the regulations of War Department in regard to use of cleaning materials for arms and equipments must be followed. Announcement is made that an issue of cleaning materials is to be made without requisition.

## Petitions For Pardon.

Thomas Gallagher, convicted in 1910 of fraud in voting by impersonating a voter in the Ninth Division of the Eighth Ward of Philadelphia, has applied for a pardon, petitioning the State Board on the ground that he is suffering from tuberculosis. Gallagher was sentenced to eighteen months in the early part of last January.

## Must Have Oleo Licenses.

Dairy and Food Commissioner Foust has instructed his agents in Philadelphia, Allegheny, Lackawanna and other counties where there are large sales of oleomargarine to gather in all dealers who sell the product without a State license. The license period expired on December 31.

## Prepare Bank Act Case.

Attorney General John C. Bell is preparing for the State's side of the action in equity brought against the banking commissioner to restrain enforcement of the private banking act. The hearing will take place in Philadelphia later in the month.

## To Open Ballot Boxes.

Judge S. J. McCarrell, presiding in the District Attorney contest, announced that he would hear very little additional testimony regarding the counting of double-marked ballots, but would open the boxes and find out. The count of the votes will be made by an examiner and then the Court will determine the legality of double-marked ballots. Attorneys for Stroup have protested against the refusal of the Court to hear testimony from their side.

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