

HOLTON OF THE NAVY

A STORY OF THE
FREEING OF CUBA

By Lawrence Perry
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Illustrations by Ellsworth Young

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SYNOPSIS.

Lieutenant Holton is detached from his command in the navy at the outset of the Spanish-American War, and assigned to important secret service duty. While dining at a Washington hotel, he detects a waiter in the act of robbing a beautiful young lady. She thanks him for his services, and gives him the name as Miss La Tossa, a Cuban patriot. Later, Holton is at ball. A secret service man warns him that the girl is a spy. Miss La Tossa leaves her home in Cuba. Holton is ordered to follow her. They meet on the Tampa train. Miss La Tossa tells Holton she is a Cuban spy and expresses doubt regarding the sincerity of the United States. Holton agrees to go to Tampa to guard the transport transports. He saves the transports from destruction at the hands of dynamiters and reports to Admiral Shafter. Holton is sent to General Garcia's command in the guise of a newspaper correspondent to investigate Cuban plots against the American troops and learn the plans of the Spanish navy. He detects a trusted Cuban leader in the work of fomenting trouble among the Cubans in the interests of the Standards. Holton is seized by friends of the spy and is ordered executed as a spy. He escapes and saves the American troops from falling into a Spanish ambush. He learns from General Garcia that the spy is Cesnola, one of the most trusted leaders. Holton takes part in the battle at San Juan, disguised as a Spanish soldier. He enters Santiago at night, to the home of Miss La Tossa, where he overhears a discussion of the Spanish plans by leading army and navy commanders. He learns that the Spanish fleet will enter the harbor at Santiago on July 1. Holton escapes and arrives in sight of the American fleet in time to see the admiral's flag signal to the Spanish to fire their signal gun. He is answered by the English. He warns Schley of the intentions of the Spanish fleet and witnesses the destruction and capture of the enemy's vessels. Holton learns that Shafter has received a message from President McKinley declaring that the war was instituted for the sole purpose of freeing Cuba. He learns that a meeting of Cuban patriots in Cuba is to be held that night to plot against the American army. He gives Miss La Tossa the president's message. He speaks to her and hears Cesnola attempt to inflame the Cubans against the Americans. Miss La Tossa denounces Cesnola and reads McKinley's message.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"I am an American who was set to watch you, a Spanish spy, who, in disguise of a loyal Cuban leader, has been leading your country to the edge of destruction.

"Wait, gentlemen, allow me to finish!" Holton cried, as the Cubans, pressing closer, began to mutter. "I can prove to you, and I can do it now, that this man, Cesnola, was the man who led General Castillo into that ambush at Matamoras, a month ago. I can prove to you that it was this man who conducted Garcia into a trap at Mariel last year. Only be quiet and be patient. I received all you should wish to know concerning him from Washington by the last dispatch-boat. His dossier is very complete. He is a spy! I will prove it.

The mercurial men in front of Holton turned from him to Cesnola with frowning faces. The rapid shuttling of events had bewildered them. They knew not what to do.

Miss La Tossa, who had stood by Holton throughout, clinging to his sleeve as though to protect him from her countrymen, now raised her head to speak when, suddenly, Cesnola lifted something to his lips, and a whistle resounded above the confusion.

Silently more than one-half of those present disengaged themselves from



Placed Their Hands Upon the Spy's Shoulders.

the crowd of officers, and the next instant Holton, Miss La Tossa, and perhaps thirty of the Cubans, were surrounded by a ring of scowling men with revolvers leveled ominously.

Not a word was spoken.

Then from Cesnola there came laughter.

"Men," he cried, "it was understood that a fusillade of shots here would be the signal for the attack on the Americans. In thirty seconds that fusillade will be heard, and the bullets will go where you are standing. Those who wish to engage in the attack upon the Americans will step out of that group, join our circle, and present their revolvers as we now present them."

For a moment there was silence. Cesnola took out his watch. One Cuban left Holton's side and joined the circle, two followed him, then three, then six. Finally Holton and the girl stood alone.

Cesnola put his watch in his pocket and advanced to the couple. He beckoned to two men.

"Take her away from this man. He must stand alone," he said.

CHAPTER XV.

A Sweet Parting.

The girl screamed and threw her arms about Holton's neck. There was no mistaking the intentions of Cesnola, and neither was there any possibility of misunderstanding the hold which the spy had gained over these men.

Holton, pale but determined, sought to disengage the girl's hands, while the men dragged gently at her arms. At this juncture a stern voice arose above the confusion.

"Men, put up your weapons. What is this?"

General Garcia, accompanied by several of his staff, broke through the group of Cubans and stopped near the little knot about Holton and the girl. "Garcia!" A cheer arose, but the general stilled it with his hand.

"Men," he said, "I have been a witness of your deliberations. I can assure you that your fusillade will be unnecessary, because it will not be needed. Your plot, I beg to assure you, has failed, Señor Cesnola."

He beckoned two of his staff, who advanced and placed their hands upon the spy's shoulders. He was trembling now, and words failed his parched tongue.

The general waved his hand imperiously.

"You gentlemen will return to your commands. Every one of you, Mr. Holton, you will go back to your camp—I am glad to have been of service to you. Miss La Tossa will return to her estate—and remain there. As for you"—he faced Cesnola—"I shall deal with you tomorrow. Take him to my headquarters and let him be closely confined."

Several soldiers stepped forward and hastily bound the spy's arms. Miss La Tossa ran up and kissed the general on the cheek. He patted her shoulder with paternal affection.

Then, calling two of his men, he directed them to escort the girl through the secret trail to her father's estate.

When Holton awoke Garcia had left the tent, but he soon returned, and with a smile asked his guest how he had slept. Holton thanked him, and assured him his slumber had been sound.

As they talked thus an officer appeared, and, saluting, addressed Garcia formally.

"The prisoner has no complaint to make of your decision, but asks your leniency in one respect."

"In what respect?" asked the general.

"He asks that he may be shot instead of hanged."

Garcia reflected a moment. Then he made a little gesture.

"Very well," he decided at length.

The officer saluted and walked hastily away.

"Who was the prisoner?" asked Holton.

"Jose Cesnola," was the reply.

Hardly had he spoken when the whiplike report of several rifles broke the silence of this beautiful sunlit morning. Garcia lowered his head. Holton looked vacantly into space.

And so, he thought, has passed the winter of the New Willard.

Holton's return to the American trenches was signalized by an honor that brought adequate reward, with interest, for all that he had gone through. This was a dispatch for him from the secretary of the navy announcing his advancement ten numbers for meritorious service at Tampa, and containing also information that congress had voted him the congressional medal of honor for gallantry in notifying the North Atlantic squadron of the intentions of Cervera's squadron.

An event of the next day was the return of Hobson from Santiago, in company with six sailors who had been captured with him. Holton pressed forward and joined in the cheers of the regulars as this quiet-faced young man rode through their ranks on the way to Siboney after an imprisonment of more than five weeks.

He had performed a deed of signal gallantry, a deed which will live as long as the annals of the American navy live, and as the years go, will grow only the brighter.

The days went on. It now seemed assured that the surrender was but a matter of short time, and Holton spent the period in enjoying a well-earned rest.

At length, on July 16, General Toral and his staff rode out to San Juan to where General Shafter and General Miles and their staffs awaited him under the famous tree. The meeting was very picturesque, and dignity marked the demeanor of all concerned.

After a long discussion General Toral and his officers turned and rode toward the city, and the American

troops returned to their lines. The surrender of Santiago was assured.

The men were jubilant, but many were beginning to succumb to the physical effects of their life in the wet trenches.

On the 17th of July, General Shafter, his staff, brigade commander, and a goodly body of troops left the trenches and, with bands playing and flags flying, marched up the trail leading into Santiago, where the surrender took place before the two armies. Then the march continued into the city.

The Spanish soldiers, some twenty thousand men (Holton had underestimated their number), were to be shipped to Spain, and nothing remained to be done but to assume the reins of military government and set things in order. One of the first acts of the Americans was to release political prisoners from confinement, and then as evening fell the lights were lighted, the bands played in the plaza of the palace, the Venus restaurant overflowed with American officers, the streets were crowded with men, women and children.

Meanwhile what were the Cubans doing? Many of them had their homes in Santiago and naturally they were anxious to return to them, and had fully expected to do so. Now by official mandate of the Americans they were barred from the gates.

Holton knew enough of the fiery temper of these men to realize that Garcia and the other commanding officers must sway great authority over their soldiers if they were to hold them in leash under such a situation as this.

He, of course, had no fears that Shafter would be unable to quell an outbreak, but at the same time if one occurred it would involve a complication not to be desired.

That the Cubans in the camps of Garcia and Castillo were openly talking of an uprising was known to everyone, and not even Garcia's assurances that he could keep them in hand quieted the fears of the more thoughtful among the officers. Yet there was no inclination to allow them to enter the city, the fear that they would turn loose upon the unarmed Spaniards still being potent.

In the absence of direct orders, Holton hardly knew what to do. His anxiety as to the outcome of the present predicament he kept to himself, not wishing to alarm the army and won the love and the friendship of General Garcia. All these things were your duty. But all this did not satisfy you. No. In addition, you set out to win my love."

She buried her face in her hands and a dry sob escaped her.

"You tried to win my love—She glanced up at him with fearless eyes. "And you did win my love. You won it unreservedly. It was yours to take. But now I know that it was all the part of mockery; that the love you pretended to offer was unreal; that it was but part and parcel of the game you were playing."

Holton, who had been silent, thinking it better that he should hear all before replying, could stand no more. He raised his hand.

"Stop!" he cried with a voice of thunder. "Do you know what you are saying?"

"Yes, I do." She leaned on Pierre's arm. "Take me away, Pierre."

"One minute, Pierre." Holton's voice was low and tense. "Before you go, Miss La Tossa, I wish to tell you something. Anything I have said to you in the past I stand by. The Americans are going to relinquish this country to the Cubans—but that is a matter neither here nor there. Your manner is insulting and unfair, Miss La Tossa. I came here today with gladness in my heart."

"With deceit—with more lies!" she interrupted dramatically. "As a spy, I bowed to you. You are very clever."

Holton straightened, his face white and drawn. He looked at her for a moment, searching her every feature. Something in his expression quieted her, and she pointed her hand at him.

"Listen," she said. "Last night my brother went into Santiago with a letter to you from me. He arrived at your quarters. Then he was seized and thrown out of the city for violating the order of your general that Cubans remain at a distance. Perhaps you can explain why."

"I cannot. I never received the letter."

She shook her head.

"All that is very little matter," she continued. "That letter contained what I have now said to you. And it said this besides: That the enemies of my country are my enemies, and that it is clear that no greater enemy to Cuba than the United States ever existed."

She bowed and turned away.

Holton stood for a moment watching her, and then, without a word, faced abruptly about and walked toward his horse.

She looked at him with cold, inquir-

ing eyes, and Holton stopped short.

"Why—why—" His voice failed him.

As the girl still regarded him with cold, vacuous eyes, Holton flushed angrily.

He drew himself up very stiffly.

"I beg pardon," he said. "I fear I came here under some sort of a misapprehension."

A gleam of an expression crossed the girl's face. "Pierre," she remarked to her attendant, who stood rigidly at her side, "this is the gentleman we met near Sevilla, is it not?"

Pierre glanced at Holton, his face filled with an expression of savage hatred.

"It is, señorita," he replied.

"Yes, we met this gentleman at Sevilla, Pierre, and he said several things. Did he not, Pierre?"

"Yes, señorita."

"And, Pierre, what did he say?"

"He said that the Americans were to remain faithful to their promise, and that Cuba, after Santiago was captured, was to be placed in the control of the Cuban army."

Meanwhile what were the Cubans doing? Many of them had their homes in Santiago and naturally they were anxious to return to them, and had fully expected to do so. Now by official mandate of the Americans they were barred from the gates.

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