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A slight change of expression which passed away almost directly showed that Lingard heard the passionate cry wrung from her by the distress of her mind. He made no sign. She perceived clearly the extreme difficulty of her position. The situation was dangerous; not so much the facts of it as the feeling of it. At times it appeared no more actual than a tradition; and she thought of herself as of some woman in a ballad, who has to beg for the lives of innocent captives. To save the lives of Mr. Travers and Mr. d'Alcacer was more than a duty. It was a necessity, it was an imperative need, it was an irresistible mission. Yet she had to reflect upon the horrors of a cruel and obscure death before she could feel for them the pity they deserved. It was when she looked at Lingard that her heart was wrung by an extremity of compassion. The others were pitiful, but he, the victim of his own extravagant impulses, appeared tragic, fascinating, and culpable. Lingard lifted his head. Whispers were heard at the door and Hassim followed by Immada entered the cabin.

Mrs. Travers looked at Lingard, because of all the faces in the cabin his was the only one that was intelligible to her. Hassim began to speak at once, and when he ceased Immada's deep sigh was heard in the sudden silence. Then Lingard looked at Mrs. Travers and said:

"The gentlemen are alive. Rajah Hassim here has seen them less than two hours ago, and so has the girl. They are alive and unharmed, so far. And now. . . ."

He paused. Mrs. Travers, leaning on her elbow, shaded her eyes under the glint of suspended thunderbolts.

"You must hate us," she murmured.

"Hate you," he repeated with, as she fancied, a tinge of disdain in his tone. "No. I hate myself."

"Why yourself?" she asked, very low.

"For not knowing my mind," he answered. "For not knowing my mind. For not knowing what it is that's got hold of me since--since this morning. I was angry then. . . . Nothing but very angry. . . ."

"And now?" she murmured.

"I am . . . unhappy," he said. After a moment of silence which gave to Mrs. Travers the time to wonder how it was that this man had succeeded in penetrating into the very depths of her compassion, he hit the table such a blow that all the heavy muskets seemed to jump a little.

Mrs. Travers heard Hassim pronounce a few words earnestly, and a moan of distress from Immada.

"I believed in you before you . . . before you gave me your confidence," she began. "You could see that. Could you not?"

He looked at her fixedly. "You are not the first that believed in me," he said.

Hassim, lounging with his back against the closed door, kept his eye on him watchfully and Immada's dark and sorrowful eyes rested on the face of the white woman. Mrs. Travers felt as though she were engaged in a contest with them; in a struggle for the possession of that man's strength and of that man's devotion. When she looked up at Lingard she saw on his face--which should have been impassive or exalted, the face of a stern leader or the face of a pitiless dreamer--an expression of utter forgetfulness. He seemed to be tasting the delight of some profound and amazing sensation. And suddenly in the midst of her appeal to his generosity, in the middle of a phrase, Mrs. Travers faltered, becoming aware that she was the object of his contemplation.

"Do not! Do not look at that woman!" cried Immada. "O! Master--look away. . . ." Hassim threw one arm round the girl's neck. Her voice sank. "O! Master--look at us." Hassim, drawing her to himself, covered her lips with his hand. She struggled a little like a snared bird and submitted, hiding her face on his shoulder, very quiet, sobbing without noise.

"What do they say to you?" asked Mrs. Travers with a faint and pained smile. "What can they say? It is intolerable to think that their words which have no meaning for me may go straight to your heart. . . ."

"Look away," whispered Lingard without making the slightest movement.

Mrs. Travers sighed.

"Yes, it is very hard to think that I who want to touch you cannot make myself understood as well as they. And yet I speak the language of your childhood, the language of the man for whom there is no hope but in your generosity."

He shook his head. She gazed at him anxiously for a moment. "In your memories

then," she said and was surprised by the expression of profound sadness that over-spread his attentive face.

"Do you know what I remember?" he said. "Do you want to know?" She listened with slightly parted lips. "I will tell you. Poverty, hard work--and death," he went on, very quietly. "And now I've told you, and you don't know. That's how it is between us. You talk to me--I talk to you--and we don't know."

Her eyelids dropped.

"What can I find to say?" she went on. "What can I do? I mustn't give in. Think! Amongst your memories there must be some face--some voice--some name, if nothing more. I can not believe that there is nothing but bitterness."

"There's no bitterness," he murmured.

"O! Brother, my heart is faint with fear," whispered Immada. Lingard turned swiftly to that whisper.

"Then, they are to be saved," exclaimed Mrs. Travers. "Ah, I knew. . . ."

"Bear thy fear in patience," said Hassim, rapidly, to his sister.

"They are to be saved. You have said it," Lingard pronounced aloud, suddenly. He felt like a swimmer who, in the midst of superhuman efforts to reach the shore, perceives that the undertow is taking him to sea. He would go with the mysterious current; he would go swiftly--and see the end, the fulfilment both blissful and terrible.

With this state of exaltation in which he saw himself in some incomprehensible way always victorious, whatever might befall, there was mingled a tenacity of purpose. He could not sacrifice his intention, the intention of years, the intention of his life; he could no more part with it and exist than he could cut out his heart and live. The adventurer held fast to his adventure which made him in his own sight exactly what he was.

He considered the problem with cool audacity, backed by a belief in his own power. It was not these two men he had to save; he had to save himself! And looked upon in this way the situation appeared familiar.

Hassim had told him the two white men had been taken by their captors to Daman's camp. The young Rajah, leaving his sister in the canoe, had landed on the sand and had crept to the very edge of light thrown by the fires by which the

Illanuns were cooking. Daman was sitting apart by a larger blaze. Two praus rode in shallow water near the sandbank; on the ridge, a sentry walked watching the lights of the brig; the camp was full of quiet whispers. Hassim returned to his canoe, then he and his sister, paddling cautiously round the anchored praus, in which women's voices could be heard, approached the other end of the camp. The light of the big blaze there fell on the water and the canoe skirted it without a splash, keeping in the night. Hassim, landing for the second time, crept again close to the fires. Each prau had, according to the customs of the Illanun rovers when on a raiding expedition, a smaller war-boat and these being light and manageable were hauled up on the sand not far from the big blaze; they sat high on the shelving shore throwing heavy shadows. Hassim crept up toward the largest of them and then standing on tiptoe could look at the camp across the gunwales. The confused talking of the men was like the buzz of insects in a forest. A child wailed on board one of the praus and a woman hailed the shore shrilly. Hassim unsheathed his kris and held it in his hand.

Very soon--he said--he saw the two white men walking amongst the fires. They waved their arms and talked together, stopping from time to time; they approached Daman; and the short man with the hair on his face addressed him earnestly and at great length. Daman sat cross-legged upon a little carpet with an open Koran on his knees and chanted the versets swaying to and fro with his eyes shut.

The Illanun chiefs reclining wrapped in cloaks on the ground raised themselves on their elbows to look at the whites. When the short white man finished speaking he gazed down at them for a while, then stamped his foot. He looked angry because no one understood him. Then suddenly he looked very sad; he covered his face with his hands; the tall man put his hand on the short man's shoulder and whispered into his ear. The dry wood of the fires crackled, the Illanuns slept, cooked, talked, but with their weapons at hand. An armed man or two came up to stare at the prisoners and then returned to their fire. The two whites sank down in the sand in front of Daman. Their clothes were soiled, there was sand in their hair. The tall man had lost his hat; the glass in the eye of the short man glittered very much; his back was muddy and one sleeve of his coat torn up to the elbow.

All this Hassim saw and then retreated undetected to that part of the shore where Immada waited for him, keeping the canoe afloat. The Illanuns, trusting to the sea, kept very bad watch on their prisoners, and had he been able to speak with them Hassim thought an escape could have been effected. But they could not have understood his signs and still less his words. He consulted with his sister. Immada murmured sadly; at their feet the ripple broke with a mournful sound no louder than their voices.

Hassim's loyalty was unshaken, but now it led him on not in the bright light of hopes but in the deepened shadow of doubt. He wanted to obtain information for his friend who was so powerful and who perhaps would know how to be constant. When followed by Immada he approached the camp again--this time openly--their appearance did not excite much surprise. It was well known to the Chiefs of the Illanuns that the Rajah for whom they were to fight--if God so willed--was upon the shoals looking out for the coming of the white man who had much wealth and a store of weapons and who was his servant. Daman, who alone understood the exact relation, welcomed them with impenetrable gravity. Hassim took his seat on the carpet at his right hand. A consultation was being held half-aloud in short and apparently careless sentences, with long intervals of silence between. Immada, nestling close to her brother, leaned one arm on his shoulder and listened with serious attention and with outward calm as became a princess of Wajo accustomed to consort with warriors and statesmen in moments of danger and in the hours of deliberation. Her heart was beating rapidly, and facing her the silent white men stared at these two known faces, as if across a gulf. Four Illanun chiefs sat in a row. Their ample cloaks fell from their shoulders, and lay behind them on the sand in which their four long lances were planted upright, each supporting a small oblong shield of wood, carved on the edges and stained a dull purple. Daman stretched out his arm and pointed at the prisoners. The faces of the white men were very quiet. Daman looked at them mutely and ardently, as if consumed by an unspeakable longing.

The Koran, in a silk cover, hung on his breast by a crimson cord. It rested over his heart and, just below, the plain buffalo-horn handle of a kris, stuck into the twist of his sarong, protruded ready to his hand. The clouds thickening over the camp made the darkness press heavily on the glow of scattered fires. "There is blood between me and the whites," he pronounced, violently. The Illanun chiefs remained impassive. There was blood between them and all mankind. Hassim remarked dispassionately that there was one white man with whom it would be wise to remain friendly; and besides, was not Daman his friend already? Daman smiled with half-closed eyes. He was that white man's friend, not his slave. The Illanuns playing with their sword-handles grunted assent. Why, asked Daman, did these strange whites travel so far from their country? The great white man whom they all knew did not want them. No one wanted them. Evil would follow in their footsteps. They were such men as are sent by rulers to examine the aspects of far-off countries and talk of peace and make treaties. Such is the beginning of great sorrows. The Illanuns were far from their country, where no white man dared to come, and therefore they were free to seek their enemies upon the open waters. They had found these two who had come to see. He asked what they had come to see? Was there nothing to look at in their own country?

He talked in an ironic and subdued tone. The scattered heaps of embers glowed a deeper red; the big blaze of the chief's fire sank low and grew dim before he ceased. Straight-limbed figures rose, sank, moved, whispered on the beach. Here and there a spear-blade caught a red gleam above the black shape of a head.

"The Illanuns seek booty on the sea," cried Daman. "Their fathers and the fathers of their fathers have done the same, being fearless like those who embrace death closely."

A low laugh was heard. "We strike and go," said an exulting voice. "We live and die with our weapons in our hands." The Illanuns leaped to their feet. They stamped on the sand, flourishing naked blades over the heads of their prisoners. A tumult arose.

When it subsided Daman stood up in a cloak that wrapped him to his feet and spoke again giving advice.

The white men sat on the sand and turned their eyes from face to face as if trying to understand. It was agreed to send the prisoners into the lagoon where their fate would be decided by the ruler of the land. The Illanuns only wanted to plunder the ship. They did not care what became of the men. "But Daman cares," remarked Hassim to Lingard, when relating what took place. "He cares, O Tuan!"

Hassim had learned also that the Settlement was in a state of unrest as if on the eve of war. Belarab with his followers was encamped by his father's tomb in the hollow beyond the cultivated fields. His stockade was shut up and no one appeared on the verandahs of the houses within. You could tell there were people inside only by the smoke of the cooking fires. Tengga's followers meantime swaggered about the Settlement behaving tyrannically to those who were peaceable. A great madness had descended upon the people, a madness strong as the madness of love, the madness of battle, the desire to spill blood. A strange fear also had made them wild. The big smoke seen that morning above the forests of the coast was some agreed signal from Tengga to Daman but what it meant Hassim had been unable to find out. He feared for Jorgenson's safety. He said that while one of the war-boats was being made ready to take the captives into the lagoon, he and his sister left the camp quietly and got away in their canoe. The flares of the brig, reflected in a faint loom upon the clouds, enabled them to make straight for the vessel across the banks. Before they had gone half way these flames went out and the darkness seemed denser than any he had known before. But it was no greater than the darkness of his mind--he added. He had looked upon the white men sitting unmoved and silent under the edge of swords; he had looked at Daman, he had heard bitter words spoken; he was looking now at his white friend--and the issue of events he could not see. One can see men's

faces but their fate, which is written on their foreheads, one cannot see. He had no more to say, and what he had spoken was true in every word.