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SERIES



The **DAWN TIDE**

HOWARD

SPEED ADVENTURE STORIES



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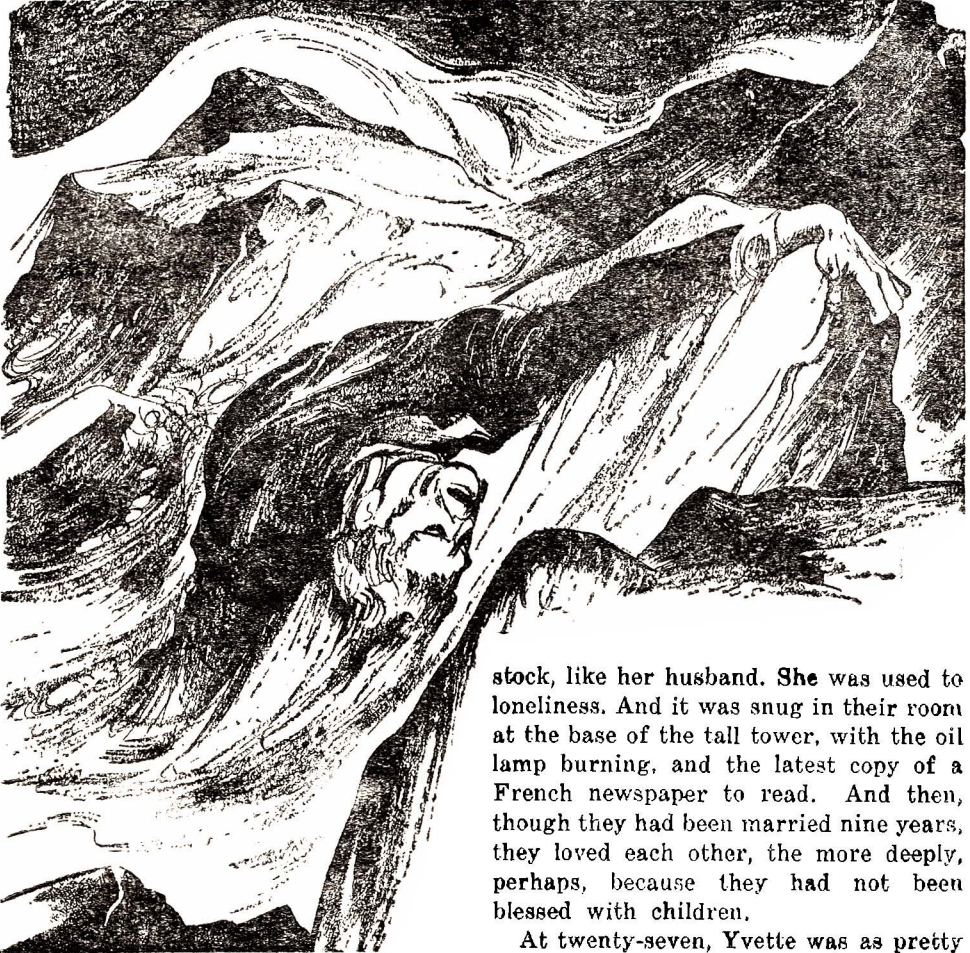
The Dawn Tide

By LEW MERRILL

IT was not the loneliness of the lighthouse that Yvette dreaded, for in calm weather it was an easy row to the village on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and the light was well cared for by her crippled husband, Armand. He had lost the use of his leg in the last war, and the Government had made him lighthouse keeper. He could hobble quite easily up the long, winding stairway, with the aid of his stout crutch, though usually it was Yvette who tended the light atop the towering structure.

It was not the loneliness. It was the constant flight of the sea-birds against the light that distressed Yvette. Great gulls, and many other kinds whose names she did not know, would beat themselves to death against the glass, and fall to the rocks below. Sometimes the sea, which always smashed upon the rocks, would sweep them away, and sometimes it would pile them up on the big, flat rock at the base of the tower, where Yvette would find them in the morning.

She was of hardy French Canadian



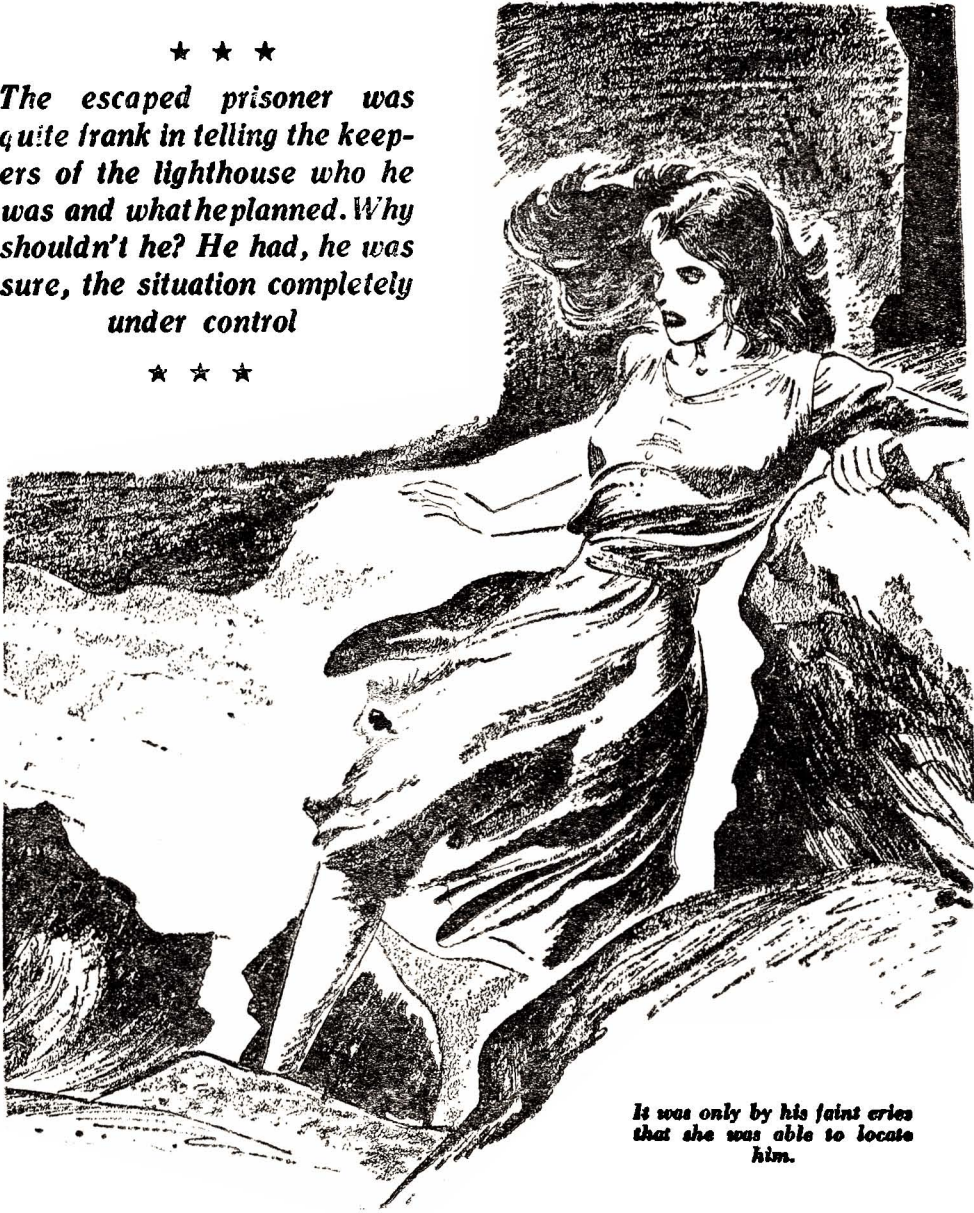
stock, like her husband. She was used to loneliness. And it was snug in their room at the base of the tall tower, with the oil lamp burning, and the latest copy of a French newspaper to read. And then, though they had been married nine years, they loved each other, the more deeply, perhaps, because they had not been blessed with children.

At twenty-seven, Yvette was as pretty a girl as you could have found anywhere

★ ★ ★

The escaped prisoner was quite frank in telling the keepers of the lighthouse who he was and what he planned. Why shouldn't he? He had, he was sure, the situation completely under control

★ ★ ★



It was only by his faint cries that she was able to locate him.

along the North Shore, with her gray eyes, and hair black as the raven, that she wore coiled up on her head in great waves, or sometimes let hang far down below her waist. Armand adored her hair, and for his sake she had never cut it,

Life was uneventful, and therefore happy. Sometimes Yvette felt proud, when she saw the great liners and troopships sweep majestically up and down the St. Lawrence, on their way to and from Quebec. She would think of the boys in uni-

form, and the nurses, going overseas. That was when she felt proud to think that she and her husband had charge of the lives of those young people.

Every day now the ships were coming and going. The returning ones carried many prisoners of war, but still Yvette felt it her duty to guard their lives. It was on account of the sea-birds that she suffered.

The lighthouse stood at the edge of a treacherous sunken ledge on which many

a ship had piled up in the old days. As its lens revolved, it shot forth its insistent message. One long flash, then two shorter ones. A pause—then long, short, short. When the incoming ships sighted those flashes, rounding Pointe à Pic, they veered into the safe mid-channel.

“SO more prisoners are coming,” said Yvette, looking over her husband’s shoulder, as he read *La Soleil*. “Poor boys! They may be Germans, but still it must be terrible for them in this strange land, as prisoners.”

“Oh, they are better off here than if they had to give their lives on the battle-fields,” answered Armand. “And there will probably be many more of them tomorrow, for I heard in the village that the *Princess Elizabeth* is on her way to Quebec.”

“The *Princess Elizabeth*?” exclaimed Yvette.

“They call her Queen of the Seas. She is one of the largest vessels afloat. Yes, they say that she must be bringing prisoners from Europe by the thousand, for I hear that fresh camps are being constructed for them. I got this from La-Rue, whose brother-in-law is engaged in construction work. Of course it is a secret, even though the vessel is safe, once she is in the Gulf.”

“How I should love to see her!” said Yvette. “If she passes, and I am asleep, you must wake me, Armand. It is wonderful to think that we are responsible for those great ships, and for so many lives.”

Armand went on reading his paper. He was a slow-spoken man, and his imagination was not easily aroused. But Yvette had loved the sea and the ships from childhood. Her friends had pitied her, marrying a lighthouse-keeper, but Yvette had never known a moment of regret. Now, her imagination stirred, she began to pace the floor, and at last opened the door and stood outside.

It was a clear night. The only sound was the dashing of the surf against the rocks. From the mainland the lights of the village twinkled, but between the village and the lighthouse was that little strip of treacherous sea.

Their boat lay on the flat rock. If it was calm tomorrow, Yvette was thinking she would row across to the mainland, to buy herself that new frock that old Legrand was offering at a tempting reduction.

Suddenly, above the lash of the waves, she thought she heard the groan of a man.

SHE started, and listened. It came again. A man was lying on the rocks beneath her. She heard a faint call for help.

Frightened as she was, she kept her head, and, kicking off her shoes, she began clambering down the rocks. In the darkness, it was only by the faint cries that she was able to locate the man’s position, and at last she came upon him, lying at the water’s edge, with the spray of the waves dashing over him.

She stooped down, and tried to raise him. He was heavy, but with an effort she succeeded in dislodging one of his knees from a rock in which it had been caught. He managed to get up on his feet. He did not seem to be badly hurt, but he was evidently exhausted, for his breath came in short, gasping sobs, and he leaned heavily upon her for support.

“*Gott sei dank*,” he muttered.

Yvette didn’t know what language that was, but she knew it was neither French nor English.

“You are safe now,” she said. “Try to walk, with my help. See, it is not far.”

Then the light of the oil lamp inside the living-room flashed upon them as Armand opened the door. He had discovered Yvette’s absence, and had gone to look for her. That habit of hers, of going out on the rocks at night, was a dangerous one. He was going to scold her, in his mild way. But his eyes widened when he saw her laboring up the rocks, with the man leaning upon her shoulder.

In the flash of the lamp, Yvette saw the man’s face. It was that of a youth, but it was an evil face, sullen and masklike, and the swift, appreciative glance of his eyes, as he looked at her, made her shudder.

In another moment Armand was beside them, and together they got the man inside the lighthouse.

WRAPPED in blankets, in the bedroom above the living-room and kitchen, and aided by liberal potions of the brandy that the lighthouse-keeper kept for emergencies, the rescued man soon showed signs of recovery from his exposure. Armand had ascertained that neither limbs nor ribs were broken.

Now he had fallen into a doze, and, in the room below, the lighthouse-keeper and his wife were conferring together.

"He is not a Canaven, that is sure," said Armand. "His hair is the color of coarse flax. He might be an Englishman—but how would an Englishman come to be lying on the rocks? He must have swum the channel in the darkness. It is a wonder he is alive."

"He is not an Englishman," answered Yvette. "I heard him speak some words in a language that I have never heard before. Do you think," she queried, "that he might be one of the German war prisoners, escaped from the camp? He might have traveled through the bush."

"I have thought that from the beginning," answered Armand.

"But what shall we do?" queried his wife.

"I have not thought about that. If he is a war prisoner, it is our duty to surrender him to the Government."

"Poor boy," said Yvette, sighing. "It would be hard for him to have to go back. Perhaps he has a mother in his own country."

"He is better off here than back in the war again. Besides, that is not for us to judge."

"But how could you hand him over to the Government, Armand? Besides, he has come to us for help and shelter. No, Armand, we could not do that. It may be," she went on sagely, "that, if we do not question him, he will tell us nothing, and then we shall have no responsibility in the matter."

Armand, slow-spoken and deliberate, said nothing. Yvette looked into his face, and tried to read his thoughts. At last, feeling her scrutiny, he turned his eyes toward hers.

"If he is a prisoner of war, we must give him up," he said. "How it could be

done, I don't know. But I am a servant of the Government, and my duty is clear."

Silence fell again. They were so absorbed in their thoughts that they were unaware of the presence of the stranger, until they looked up, to see him standing before them.

He was dressed in Armand's Sunday suit, and he held the bottle of brandy, which was half full. He made them a mocking bow.

"**M**Y name is Volksmann," he said, in guttural French. "I overheard the discussion. Yes, it is quite true. I was a prisoner of war. I escaped from the camp three days ago, and made my way to the coast through the bush. I was a good swimmer in Germany, and it was easy for me to swim that little strip of water. I obtained a good meal from a housewife, who was, I think, a little alarmed at my appearance. I admit all this because—what are you going to do about it?"

Armand shrugged his shoulders. "It is my duty to hand you over to the Government," he answered. "But I am neither a soldier nor a guard. I am a lighthouse-keeper. If you choose to disappear the way you came, you can solve your own problem, my friend."

"Why, that is an excellent solution," answered Volksmann. "You have a fine large boat, which will take me across the Gulf. On the south shore, I can make my way to the United States. There was difficulty in obtaining a boat in that dirty little village on the mainland. In fact, a pack of your mangy French Canadians chased me, after the housewife screamed.

"But I knew there must be a boat at the lighthouse, and so I swam here. Doubtless those French idiots think I drowned. So there is the solution. But I am not going to risk my life among those rocks at night, nor chance capture by day. So tomorrow night, after sundown, you shall row me across. Meanwhile I shall remain your guest."

"But I cannot take you in the lighthouse boat," said Armand. "That is Government property. Besides, I may not leave my post—"



He groaned and went back at the impact of the crutch.

Volksmann lurched forward, and now the mask had fallen from his face, revealing the evil in the man's soul. "I asked what you are going to do about it, cripple?" he sneered.

Armand got up nimbly, with the aid of his crutch. He poised himself against the table, and held the crutch slantwise. There was no need of an answer.

His menacing attitude seemed to cow the bully, who drew back.

"I am an officer in the Nazi army," he said. "I do not listen to threats. But there is no reason why we should not talk this over amicably." He tilted the bottle to his lips, and took a long gulp. "Poor stuff," he said, "but one can't expect good German liquor here."

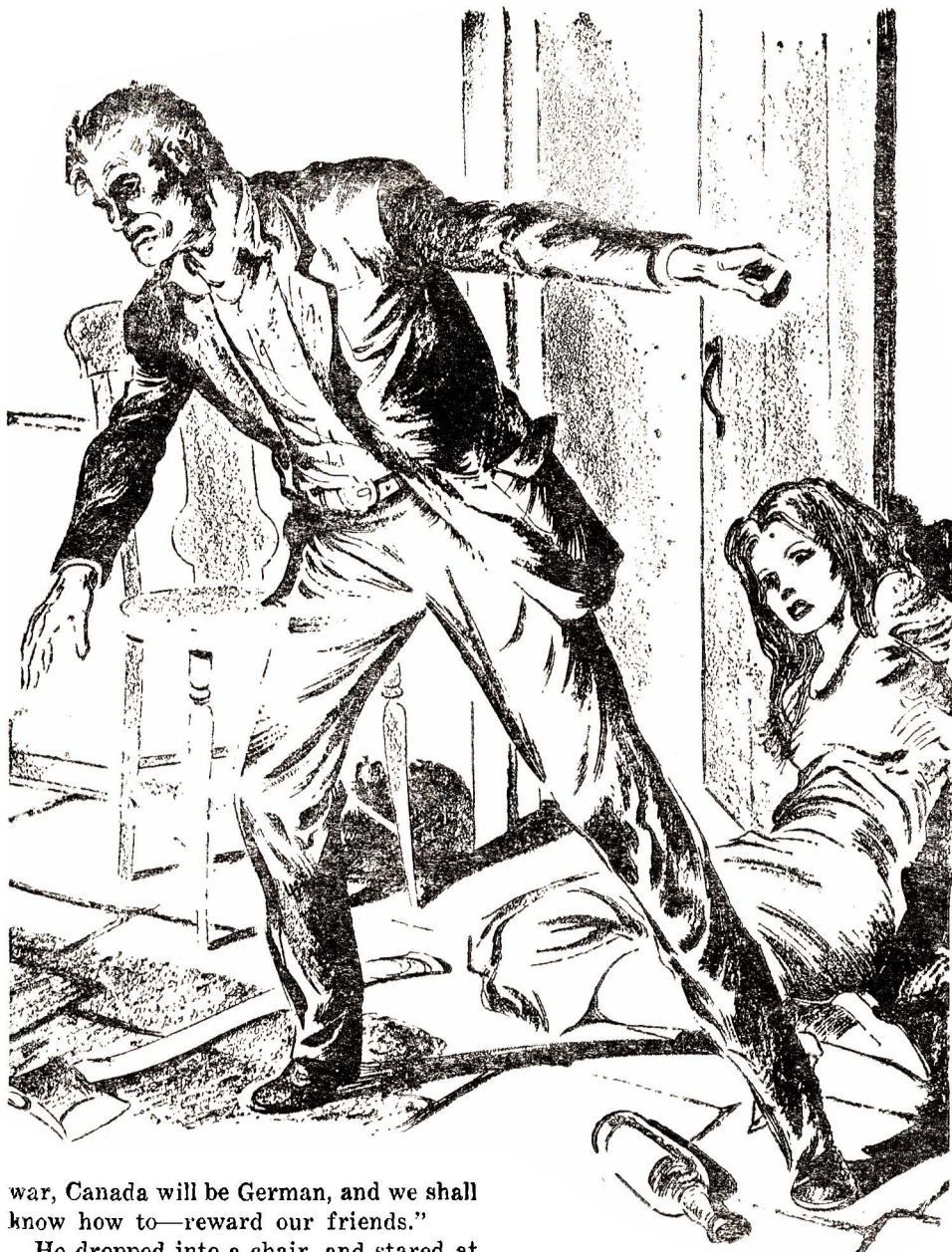
Armand and Yvette had drawn close together at the end of the table near the door. Volksmann laughed boisterously.

"You good people have no cause to be afraid of me," he said. "I am a kindly man. Moreover, listen to this: there is an

organization in New York that pays good money to all who assist soldiers of the Fatherland to escape. What would you good folks think of a thousand dollars? More money than you have ever seen in your lives, I'll bet. I can promise you that—one thousand dollars in American money.

"And, as for the boat, why I will chance the voyage alone, if you will direct me where the reefs are. But the boat I must have."

Volksmann laughed again, and drained the bottle. "Yes, you will be richly rewarded," he hiccoughed, "for, after the



war, Canada will be German, and we shall know how to—reward our friends.”

He dropped into a chair, and stared at them with a vacuous leer. “How about it?” he asked thickly.

Armand said nothing, and Volksmann’s eyes closed. He opened them again. “How about it?” he repeated. “You take me—in boat—much money for you—soon as I get—New York—”

Volksmann began to snore, and still Yvette and Armand faced him in silence, she with her hand upon her husband’s arm. The snores stopped, Volksmann mut-

tered disjointedly, and then began to snore again.

“What are we going to do?” whispered Yvette. “He is a devil. I am so frightened.”

“I cannot leave my post to summon aid, particularly since the *Princess Elizabeth* might pass up the channel tonight. And I cannot let you row to the mainland alone, among the rocks—”

"But I know every rock between here and the shore, Armand," said Yvette.

"But not at night. No, that is impossible."

"Yes," she agreed, "it is impossible. I will not leave you here alone with that devil."

Volksmann's eyes opened once more, and the look in them was so malevolent that the girl could hardly suppress a cry. Her grip tightened on her husband's arm.

THE light in the room seemed to have dimmed. There was an emanation of evil from the hunched up, snoring form in the chair. The shadows of Yvette and Armand, on the walls, looked like motionless black giants, waiting tensely. And the lighthouse beams shot out incessantly, throwing their reflections into the little room—long, short, short; long, short short.

Yvette crept from her husband's side and went into the little kitchen. In the dark she found what she was looking for—the meat-knife, sharp as a razor, which she had used to prepare the meal that night. Her hand closed upon it, and she went back. She held it out to Armand, and her eyes were black pools in the lamp-light.

"Yvette, you are mad!" he whispered. "We cannot kill a sleeping man."

"It has got to be done," Yvette whispered back. "We cannot be punished for protecting our lives, and the property of the Government. Take it, if you are a man, Armand."

A stertorious snore from Volksmann resounded through the room. Armand shook his head. "No," he said, "that is impossible."

"Then I shall do it!" She clutched at the handle of the knife. Never, in the nine years of their married life, had there been any physical combat between them, but now she wrestled desperately with him for possession of the implement. Armand was struggling to keep Yvette from cutting her fingers. She didn't know that one of his was cut to the bone. . . . At last he succeeded in wrenching the knife away. Her hands dropped limply to her sides.

"That is not the answer," said Armand. "Still, it would be well to remove temptation from us—and him."

He opened the door and sent the knife clattering upon the rocks. He closed it again. Yvette had uttered a faint cry, but now she relapsed into silence, and they both watched the sleeper, whose face looked still more vicious as he snored in the chair. After a while, Yvette said: "I'll go up and look at the light."

THE mantle of the light, on the railed platform at the top of the tower, was lit by incandescent kerosene oil vapor, fed by a pipe that ran down to the storage tank in the basement. The float containing the rotating apparatus was immersed in an annular trough of mercury. There was also a diaphone siren working by means of compressed air which could be started instantly. Thus everything functioned automatically, but the rules required inspection at regular periods, night and day.

On this night the Gulf was singularly clear. Standing on the wind-whipped platform, Yvette uttered a prayer that God would protect them in their extremity. She was too dazed with terror to be able to form any plan. She was afraid that Armand, in his stubbornness, would refuse to let the German have the boat. She looked forward with terror to the man's presence in the tower all the next day. What could she do? She almost regretted that Armand had not used the knife.

From the platform she could see lights twinkling far across the Gulf, on the south shore. In front of her was the gray stretch of the great river. And overhead the sea-birds were wheeling constantly, and crying, as they always did when the light was lit. Always, in the end, one of the creatures would dash itself against the glass, and fall to its death upon the rocks below. The superstitious said that they were the souls of mariners lost at sea, but Yvette knew this was not true; nevertheless there was something almost human in the pathos of the gulls, flying around and around the light, as if they sought its warmth and illumination.

*He went over the rail as if flung from
a catapult.*



But here was peace, and the irruption of the German into the tower was something not to be borne. Yvette was making her decision now. She could not tolerate him in the lighthouse any more. He had swum from the mainland; the night was calm, and he could swim back again. She was going to get that knife. Her terror increased her resolution, and she went slowly down the steps again.

But when she heard voices, on reaching the bedroom, on the second story, she paused for an instant to gather courage. Then she went down the last flight.

"I HAVE no more brandy," Armand was saying. "You had the only bottle that is here."

"You're lying," shouted the other. "You've got plenty more hidden away. Trust a Frenchman for that. Bring out another bottle, and then we'll talk business."

"I have no more brandy," repeated Armand stubbornly.

And then Yvette saw them. Armand was leaning against the door, his crutch in his hand, and Volkmann was standing in the middle of the room. He turned quickly at the sound of her light step on the stone floor.

His laugh was bestial. "I want brandy," he shouted. "If you had given me no brandy, maybe I could do without it now. But I have what you call the overhang. I must have brandy. Come, you know where it is kept."

"But my husband speaks the truth—there is no more brandy," said Yvette. "We had only one bottle, for emergencies. You have drunk it all. Now go and lie down, and I will make you some coffee."

Volkmann roared. "Well, then, there is no brandy," he cried. "But there are other things. You are lovely, madame, too lovely for that miserable cripple."

He ambled drunkenly toward her and snatched at her arm. Yvette screamed, and darted past him into the little kitchen. Into her mind had come the thought of the long-handled axe, which she and Armand used to cut up the driftwood which they burned in the stove. She found it

and snatched it up, just as Volkmann was upon her.

He drew back, snarling at her—snarling like a wild cat, like the lynx that Armand had trapped the winter before. Stained yellow teeth showed between his lips. He was crouching for a spring. Yvette swung the axe frantically.

He ducked, and the blow spent itself in the air, the force of it twisting the axe out of the girl's hands. Next instant the cripple's crutch had dropped upon the German's shoulder, and with a yell of fury Volkmann turned upon Armand, and dealt him a blow that sent him stumbling to the floor.

Volkmann snatched the crutch out of the lighthouse-keeper's hand, and struck him with the heavy armpiece. Armand groaned and collapsed. A little trickle of blood began to thread his temple.

THE axe! The axe! Yvette stooped and grasped at it. It was in her hand again when Volkmann turned on her. She wrestled with him for it, but all her desperate strength was puny in comparison to his. He had it now, poised it to swing. Yvette stood stock-still, bending her head to receive the blow. Nothing mattered any more.

But Volkmann was laughing. "No, no, I am no executioner. I don't behead pretty women," he shouted. "You and me will have a good time together. Only bring out the brandy," he added, in a wheedling voice.

She knew the man was insane now. He stood there, grinning at her, while Armand lay dying at his feet. She broke past him, and bent over her husband. Armand was still alive. He was stunned and partly unconscious, but his lips were moving. Volkmann caught the girl by the arm and swung her around.

"Brandy, I said!" he shouted.

"There is no more," she screamed. "What harm have we done to you, except to take you in and help you, when you were freezing to death out on the rocks?"

"Madame, I mean no harm," said Volkmann, almost in a whine. "If you say there is no more brandy, I must do without it. Your husband attacked me, and I

had to defend myself. You do not understand us Germans. We are a peaceful and affectionate people. Now let us come to an understanding. This fellow will recover by morning, and meanwhile you and I will have the lighthouse to ourselves. And tomorrow we shall arrange about the boat. Maybe, if you are nice to me, I take you with me to New York. So?"

He caught her in his arms, and pressed his lips to hers. A wave of nausea ran through her; she shivered, and for a moment felt helpless. Then, with a supreme effort, she tore herself from his grasp, and began to run up the winding steps of the lighthouse tower.

She didn't know what impulse possessed her; she knew that there was no escape that way. There was neither key nor lock to the bedroom. Somehow that beacon of light, streaming out across the black Gulf seemed in some manner a refuge for her.

She heard Volksmann shouting, and blundering up the steps behind her. Always behind her, through the eternity of a nightmare, stumbling, shouting, cursing as he followed in pursuit of her.

NOW Yvette was upon the railed platform at the top, with the sea-birds swooping around her, crouching, desperate, at bay. And then she almost forgot her own terrors as she saw the lights of a vessel out in the Gulf.

A white light, and a green one, lower down. That green light was a starboard light, and meant that the vessel was inward-bound toward Quebec. It had seen the flashes from the lighthouse, of course, but in a few minutes it would be behind the headland of Pointe à Pic, where they would no longer be visible.

And then, emerging from behind the cape, it would see the flashes again, and veer away from the treacherous ledges into mid-channel. Even the most experienced pilots had driven their ships ashore in the old days, before the lighthouse was established.

And now already the vessel was approaching Pointe à Pic. The white and green lights seemed to draw closer to each other, the green dropped and the white climbed; through the clear night

Yvette could see the huge great mass of the headland, jutting out into the Gulf.

And then Volksmann emerged upon the platform, and in his hand was the axe. He came reeling toward her, bellowing, with arms extended:

"Yvette, my little one, I love you. You are too beautiful to live in this place. You shall show me the way across the reef, and I row you to the south shore, from where we go to New York together. *Gott*, little one, how I love you!"

She ran from him, around and around the platform, while he stumbled after her. She screamed in terror of him, and the wild cries of the sea-birds seemed to answer her. It was like a grotesque fantastic dream: fleet of foot than the gross German, she could evade him as long as she kept on running, but she would have to run for ever, like a tortured soul in the pit. There was no escape, save over the railing, onto the rocks beneath.

Volksmann was bellowing with laughter. Once he all but tripped her, with a sudden reversal of movement, and an out-thrust foot. Dexterously she managed to evade him. At last he came to a stop, and she faced him, panting, on the other side of the light. Volksmann was panting, too; at first a bubbling sound came from his throat, in place of words.

THEN his eyes strayed from her face out to the Gulf. The incoming vessel was still visible, but in another minute or two she would be swallowed up behind the cape. Volksmann extended the axe, and shrilled like a hyena.

He looked back at the light, and it was impossible for Yvette to mistake the significance of that expression. He was evidently a seaman, for he seemed to take in the whole mechanism of the light in a single comprehensive glance.

"So," he said, "if the light goes out, she destroys herself on these rocks. Yes, my father was a pilot in the Baltic, and I know all about it. So many of your brave English soldiers, who are returning with slight wounds, and the pretty nurses, all will drown."

"There are prisoners on board—Ger-
(Continued on page 71)

The Dawn Tide

(Continued from page 29)

man prisoners," screamed Yvette. "You'd send them to their death, too."

"Bah, what do I care for them? Cowards who surrendered instead of giving their lives for their country. If I had not been wounded, I should never have been taken. Come now, be sensible. Let us be friends, you and me, and tomorrow we shall cross the Gulf together—"

"No! No! Never, never!" she screamed. "You can't be such a coward as to send innocent men and women to their death. And your own countrymen. You are mad. Listen to me! I will take you across the Gulf at daybreak, if you will cease to be a madman, if you will stay quietly in the bedroom, while I attend to my husband—"

Volksmann raised his axe. "They shall all drown," he roared. "The time for friendship is past. And you shall be mine!"

She leaped at him, but he had already swung with unerring accuracy—not at the light, but at the slender feed-pipe that conveyed the kerosene oil vapor from the storage tank in the basement of the tower.

He dropped the axe and turned on Yvette as she stood beside him, transfixed with horror. He caught her in his arms. This time there was no escaping him.

She fought with all her strength, fought madly, battering his face with her clenched fists. The vessel had already disappeared from sight; it was only a matter of minutes now before those lights would appear again behind Pointe à Pic. Yvette tried to free one hand, to start the foghorn, but Volksmann understood, and grabbed her arm again.

"No, no, they shall all die," he shouted triumphantly. "And so you will be punished—you and that fool will be sent to jail for life, for your negligence. Nobody will believe your story that it was me. So you will come with me, to escape your punishment!"

She was still fighting him, as he tried to drag her from the platform toward the stairs. And now the beams of light had lost their power. Only three little flickers came from the lens—long, short, short—long, short, short—then nothing at all. The lightless mechanism revolved in the trough of mercury.

OVERHEAD the sea-birds were whirling, and uttering wilder cries. It was as if the extinction of the light had dazed them. The great feathered forms were swooping within a foot of Yvette's face as she fought her desperate battle with the madman.

He was trying to drag her down the stairs, and she clung with all her might to the low, waist-high railing. She had ceased to scream, in that tense, silent struggle. But the sky was whirling around her, and the circling sea-birds seemed a single enormous loop about her head.

And then, over Volksmann's shoulder, she saw the figure of her husband, standing at the head of the stairway, with his crutch under his arm, as always, and she screamed:

"Armand! Armand! Help me!"

Volksmann half released her, swung about, and saw the lighthouse-keeper.

"So you've come back from the dead, old fellow?" he bellowed, half-releasing Yvette. And for an instant he stood there undecided.

Armand shuffled a step forward, swinging upon his crutch. His purpose was plain. If he could gain stance against the pillar of the light, he could bring his crutch to bear upon Volksmann.

Yvette tore herself free from Volksmann's grip and started toward her husband. Volksmann swayed under the recoil—and then a swooping mass of feathers and flesh and bone, hurled at a speed of fifty miles an hour, caught the German in the face.

He reeled, toppled, ~~clutched at the air,~~

and went over the low railing as if flung from a catapult. His last cry of terror mingled with the wails of the gulls.

YVETTE ran to the railing and looked over. Nothing was visible below but the splashing of the waves. She ran to the stairs, and began hurrying down, hearing the tapping of her husband's crutch behind her.

He was as agile as she; they reached the ground floor together, and ran out into the night. Nothing was visible; the lights of the south shore were shrouded in a thin night mist that had begun to drift along the river. Yvette ran out on the flat rock, but Volksmann's body was not there.

She kicked off her shoes and plunged forward over the slippery ledge. It was at the edge of the waves she found what she was looking for—and it was as if the events of the night had only been a dream, and now, for the first time, she was finding Volksmann—not alive, but dead.

The body was hideously battered and mangled by the fall, but the face—that leering face that Yvette dreaded—was mercifully hidden by the waves. The body of Volksmann hung with head and shoulders submerged, at the extreme edge of the reef.

Yvette heard the tap of Armand's crutch on the flat rock. That was as far as he could go in safety, in the night.

"He's here," she called. "His head's under the waves. Armand, you must help me. We can't leave his body here. We've got to get him inside."

"Not inside," said Armand—and Yvette was silent.

"We can't leave him here. His shoulders are wedged between two rocks."

Armand leaned forward, planting his crutch firmly on the edge of the flat rock. He stretched out his hand, and Yvette went toward him and grasped it.

"It never happened," said Armand. "If there is anything down there, the tide will carry it away."

A white star gleamed around Pointe à Pic, and Yvette uttered a cry:

"The ship, Armand, the ship! Perhaps

it's the *Princess Elizabeth*! We've got to start the foghorn. It may warn her!"

THEY ran into the lighthouse, and raced up the stairs again. Yvette felt her heart beating madly as she gasped and struggled upward in advance of her husband. She darted to the foghorn and started the diaphone. A blast rang out, startling the sea-birds that were still thronging around the pillar where the light should have blazed. Another blast—and now they followed one another in steady rhythm. But now, around Pointe à Pic, Yvette could see the great ship outlined against the deep gray of the night.

And the green light seemed almost directly beneath the white. That meant that the ship was heading inward. She was steering straight toward the sunken ledges, not knowing that Pointe à Pic was cleared, and expecting every moment to see the light flash out again, to signal her to change her course.

Armand came limping onto the platform, and Yvette ran to him and grasped his arm, and pointed. She tried to speak, but no words would come.

She had never seen so great a ship as the *St. Lawrence*. Silhouetted against the vast gray pall of the heavens, she seemed larger than she was—an enormous, graceful mass of metal, crowded with men and women, almost at their journey's end, and moving straight to doom.

She didn't change her course for the foghorn, whose booming sound, diffused by the air currents, gave little indication of her course. Now, on the port side, the red light came for one instant into view. The *Princess Elizabeth* was heading straight for the ledges. She had perhaps three minutes in which to change her course or perish.

Yvette clung to her husband in mute, desperate appeal. Her masses of coiled hair, which had come unpinned in the struggle with the German, tumbled below her waist, and quivered in the sharp sea breeze that was beginning to spring up. Suddenly Armand seized her in his arms. He propped himself against the unlit pillar, and drew a clasp-knife from his pocket.

"What is it?" cried Yvette, startled by the action.

"Your hair, Yvette! Your hair for a light!"

She thought he had gone mad, and cried out in terror as Armand caught her by the throat, and proceeded to hack through the heavy strands. And then she understood and ceased to resist him.

HE had it in his hands, a great mass of black hair, that wove itself about him as if it were a living thing. He caught it up in his hands and began hastily plaiting it into a thick rope, while Yvette watched, not daring to speak. But she could see the oncoming vessel, looming up more and more plainly through the night, with her white and green lights casting two rippling tracks across the waves.

Those tracks were extending. Now they had reached the edge of the rocks, two tracks of death. . . .

Armand had the rope in his hands, thick as a ship's cable, and as long as the reach of his extended arms. He looked about him, saw the axe that Volksmann had dropped, lying beside the severed pipe, and snatching it up, began weaving strands of hair about the metal head.

Then he held the axe up and shouted, and the wind whipped the hair into a long streamer that floated out on the breeze. Overhead the sea-gulls mewed, and circled about the dark pillar.

"Quick! Oh, be quick!" screamed Yvette. "Look at her! *Mon dieu*, in another minute she will be on the rocks!"

Armand pulled out his matchbox and struck a light. It flared, and went out instantly. Another, between his cupped hands, and another, and still another—

The great hulk of the oncoming vessel seemed to tower out of the grayness, as if it meant to ram the lighthouse. Yvette, cowering and shuddering, hid her face in her hands. And then suddenly the hair rope caught fire.

There was a fizz and a splutter, a line of fire ran along it, and was ablaze from end to end. Armand, holding the axe at arm's length, swung the blazing beacon about his head in a wide circle, then right and left, left and right, trying to spell out "Danger" in the International Code.

And still the ship was coming on. The fiery rope parted. One half of it flew in a shower of blazing shreds among the sea-gulls; the other, now only a dull-red remnant, dropped from the axe.

Armand stood still and helpless, watching.

But suddenly the green and white lights drew apart. A surge of water lashed the rocks. Armand shouted, then bent and gripped Yvette, and pulled her to her feet.

"She is turning!" he shouted. "See, she is turning!"

Breathlessly, they watched. The ship was very near the ledge. It seemed touch and go whether she could make the passage into deep water.

And, after she had made that passage and was only a white star far up the Gulf, they two stood still, with locked hands. The foghorn was still droning, and overhead the gulls still flew.

"Come," said Armand. "I must row to the mainland to send word about the light. You will not be afraid alone?"

"No," said Yvette, "not with the dawn tide—which carries everything away."