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THE NAME

By DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY

RAMSAY HENNA heard the ship-owner's answer like a man listening to the voice of Fate.

"Oh, her? She goes to Parahyba and Pernambuco, Aracaju, Caravellas, Espirito Santo, Rio, and down to Paranagna," Paige had said, eyeing the rusty old freighter with a sort of jeering affection. "South America, you know."

Ramsay Henna almost said: "Of course—South America." He knew it would be that. He knew it must be that. It was as though all his life he had been expecting—just this.

His long, narrow, and more than spare figure shook with a tremor which was not altogether due to the sharp illness he had just come through. South America—of course it would be South America.

He stared at the freighter, an old scow of a boat, weather-bitten, blunted and uncouth from ceaseless laborious voyages as a sort of nautical goods-truck. An old scow, surely, but jaunty, wearing its lichen of rust with an air, getting even a note of

romance from the hiss of its many leaking steam-pipes over-tried in much travail, surrounding itself with an odour of adventure, compounded somehow and subtly from its multifarious native stinks of machine-oil and tar, deep-sea salt, stray snuff left over from rich tropic cargoes, the reek of the galley's cooking and what not else. A bluff, dogged, hearty old ship, full of wisdom and strength and the knowledge of many doings and encounters.

Ramsay Henna's eyes, deep blue eyes, curiously clear, full, and bright as though polished—the eyes "that marked the Hennas," according to his Aunt, as far back as man remembered, and before that, too, maybe—studied the ship greedily. It thrilled him. It seemed to him to have a tremendous meaning, an almost mystical significance. This was the ship that had been waiting for him.

"A longish voyage," Paige was saying, "an' not a bad trip, either. Interesting. No, not half a bad trip. And I say, by jimmy"—he swung on Ramsay—"there

you *are*, that's your voyage. A trip to South America, that's what you must do."

"Yes," said Ramsay Henna, his thin and rather well-formed lips moving automatically. "Yes, that's what I must do."

Of course he had to do it—didn't it all lead up to this, his Aunt's death, her legacy, his ill-health, his doctor's orders, and that lifelong desire to go to South America over all?

Paige was taken by one of his uncontrollable enthusiasms; he rushed on, ignoring Ramsay's words: "The absolute, the very thing. A long round trip; tropic seas, balmy air—the very thing. Interesting sights. Your doctor said a long sea voyage in a warm climate—well, there you are."

"He mentioned the West Indies," said Ramsay limply.

"Same thing, nothing to chose between the two. Well, here you are. Here's the ship. She ain't a liner, but she's comfortable, and you will be left alone. She won't feed you de luxe, but the grub's honest and good, and she won't cost you more than your keep. The very thing. An' a very good crowd in the after-guard, let me tell you, not showy, maybe, but *good* chaps. They'll make you homey." He came close to Ramsay Henna, spoke softly and with weight, as though letting him into a priestly secret. "And let me tell you that this is the best way to travel and see the world. Your liner——" He clicked his fingers contemptuously. "Give me an old tramp all the time." He stood back and beamed. "We're in luck. South America, that's the ticket; there's your voyage, Ram, old man."

"Yes, South America," said Ramsay. "Yes—to South America."

He knew it was inevitable. He seemed to feel that something for which he had been born was being fulfilled.

It was curious how this passion, not for South America, but to go to South America had held him all his life. He couldn't recall whether it had been a preoccupation of his childhood, but it had certainly been with him in his youth and from his youth on. He remembered how he had once annoyed his Aunt terribly—somewhere about the time he had started as office-boy in a firm of leather factors—by declaring that his highest ambition was to travel to this outlandish and undoubtedly, in the opinion of his Aunt, iniquitous continent.

Standing there on the quay, facing the *Pride* as she lolloped indolently under the push of Southampton's second tide, his

spare figure curiously fine for all his years at the desk, his narrow, pointed face, under the high, broad forehead, curiously distinguished in spite of his commonplace upbringing, he thought of that detonative occasion.

Why had he suddenly blurted out that hope of one day going to South America? As far as he could remember, South America meant nothing to him. They had all been discussing what they would do if an angel from Park Lane left them a million pounds. Most of the people in his Aunt's parlour had voiced ambitions worthy of the doilies that hemmed them in on every side. For most it would mean investments in house property, gilt-edged securities, or public-houses, with motor-cars and high old times at Margate for the dare-devils. He alone had shattered the solid and sensible atmosphere of convention by his outrageous, not to say unhealthy, desire for exotic travel. "I," he had piped, "I'd take the first bally ship for South America. That's what I would do."

His Aunt, that rigid and irresistible apostle of the humdrum, had been morally winded. She had stared for an inarticulate second. "'Oo arsked you your opinion?" she snapped. "'Ooever heard of anything so wicked an' so unnatural? What do you know about South America, anyhow?"

She was right. He knew nothing at all about South America. In his secret soul he could not understand why he had blurted out this crass desire. And yet, somehow, he had felt that he had had to say it. He felt that some force, either within him or dominating from without, had laid this command on him, and that really, if he had had that million, he, reasonlessly, would have gone straight to South America.

He was to know that strange and curiously intense "call" consistently for the rest of his life. It was really a call. It was not the usual glamorous desire for adventure and wide spaces that youths of his kind had. He felt no particular glamour about the business. He did not dream of velvet blue skies stencilled with swaying palms, of hot silver beaches in a golden sun, of jungle mysteries or adventures with strange men in bright barbaric clothes. None of these things wrung him. He simply felt that he wanted to go to South America, *must* go there. It was almost as though someone, a voice in the heart of that vast continent, was calling to him, ordering him to come.

He felt it at intervals with an almost

physical agony. It was all wrong and, as his Aunt had said, unnatural. A little clerk of his condition had no right to be a prey to these extravagant desires. He was a little clerk, and son of a line of little clerks. His father had been the managing clerk to an accountant, and his grandfather—the Henna who had come to London out of Cornwall—had been a clerk of some sort, too. Even before that his forbears had all held some sort of scrivener's job in offices in their small Cornish home town.

Yet as he worked his way steadily from office-boy to the cashier's desk of his Fore Street firm, Ramsay was afflicted again and again by this unprincipled desire to chuck a solid position and go trapesing off across the sea to this enigmatic South America.

Once again it had caused the extreme fury of Aunt Heppie—about the time when he was breaking into his 'twenties. He was never very strong, and close attention to exacting work in the thick-aired, artificially lighted tomb the leather factor called his counting house had brought about some sort of breakdown. The doctor even then had suggested a sea trip to pull him together. Aunt Heppie, meek before doctors as before no other men, had protested vaguely, and indicated that there were relatives and good air at Ramsgate.

Ramsay had been neutral himself, until Paige came into the business.

Paige at that time was a bright and bustling *employé* in the London office of the shipping firm he ultimately commanded. Paige had been a chum in office-boy days. Paige came to see him, heard the doctor's suggestion, and went off like a rocket in his habitual way.

He had the very thing. He could give Ramsay his sea trip. He could get Ramsay a passage on one of his firm's ships. It would be rough, but comfortable, and would cost practically nothing, for Ramsay could sign on as a supercargo. He was enthusiastic. Almost he carried Aunt Heppie away.

"Where does she go to, this ship?" Ramsay had asked eagerly, because he knew in his heart where she went.

"To South America!" Paige had cried.

"Stuff and nonsense!" Aunt Heppie had rapped decisively.

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He did not go on that trip. He went to Ramsgate. Aunt Heppie prevailed. The mere thought of Ramsay Henna going off to foreign parts had an air of blasphemy.

"The Hennas never have done that sort of thing. They were sober, home-abiding people, careful to have no truck with foreign philanderings. And as long as I have any say in the matter, they never will."

Aunt Heppie, long, upright, holding her head on her neck with a certain fowl-like stiffness, had had her say to good effect. But the Henna tradition had something to do with the matter, too. Yes, he had that as strongly as he had the other thing. Singular how, though their blood and race was of no particular importance, they were all so proud and tenacious of them.

There was even a romantic and melancholy quality about himself because of this. He was the last of them. With him the Hennas might die out. It seemed to Aunt Heppie, even to the Aunt down in Cornwall and his elderly female cousins there, a matter of great importance that the Hennas should not die out.

All this trouble about family and the fear of the dying out of the family was queer. It arose from some fierce and obstinate instinct in their very blood. The Hennas hated the idea that their name and line should vanish, and yet it didn't matter at all to the world if they did. They weren't nobles or any sort of aristocrats even. If their line went back in a way to fill many modern ducal families with envy, it was no more than a yeoman line, a line of countrymen and small farmers, and then of clerks in a small town, when their native obstinacy in the face of modern conditions had made them fail on the land.

They were small people, yes, but their blood was clean and proud. They were all of them so bound up in the family. Aunt Heppie, who was childless, knew all the ramifications of the London Hennas, back to Grandfather Enoch, who had come to Town. It was a misery to her that the fruit of the branches he had left should be so consistently female.

Aunt Heppie and the Cornish cousins could go back easily, accurately, and confidently through generations of Hennas, talking so familiarly of grandfathers that it needed an effort to realise that the subjects of discussion were probably Elizabethans.

And all through the story there was the same powerful truth. "They Hennas" had always kept the name going, they had kept themselves to themselves, remained rooted to their homes, and kept the name going. The dour passion for preserving the name animated them all.

Ramsay Henna had it, too, and he knew

Aunt Heppie had it. That was how he had been able to beat back, how he had allowed her to smother his inexplicable desire to go to South America.

When he felt the call coming to him most intensely, when he felt that it would need all his will to resist this strange demand to take ship and go to this unknown land, he remembered he was the last of the Hennas, that he owed a duty to his name, remembered, too, that he must take warning from that gadabout Sebastian Henna, the only one who had ever disgraced the name by giving way to strange whimsies. Sebastian Henna had been one of your mudge-brains. He had got the idea of going off gallivanting in ships, too. And what had happened to him? He had simply been swallowed up by the vast world into which he had so recklessly plunged. His utter disappearance was a lesson to all Hennas. They used him as an admonition, and they spoke of him with a scorn still personal, though he had lived in the time of the second Charles.

Until he was twenty-five Ramsay Henna had gone on like this, hearing the call to South America, and, with Aunt Heppie's help, resisting it, and leading his stoic and humdrum life. He had become head of his firm's counting house; he was, as things went, fairly well-to-do. At home his Aunt spoilt him in her bullying sort of way, and did everything she could to make his life as commonplace as their suburb demanded. Even there were girls in his existence—a string of girls of a singular heavily-stamped sameness, whatever the colour of their hair, their eyes, or their height and figures. Nice girls, undoubtedly, and he would give Aunt Heppie pleasure by marrying any one of them. That was where they seemed to lose their savour—he could have married any one of them, without realising their difference.

And then with each of them, when he had reached the point when he could say, "I could go farther and fare worse," the intolerable South American obsession took hold of him and wiped out her charms by the intensity of its vague and glamorous emotion.

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Then quite suddenly the whole thing had changed. Aunt Heppie had been found dead in a chair from a stroke. Seedy himself at the time, the shock had bowled him over, and, strangely, his chief emotion was that of release. There would be no opposition to his going to South America now.

With that the desire to go came back with a shocking fervour. He was so wrung by it that one night he tramped for hours through the rain under the worry of the thought. He went down with pneumonia next day, and a month or two after his doctor was insisting on his taking a sea voyage. He protested that he could not afford it, and learnt that Aunt Heppie had left him seven hundred pounds. As if all things were massing for one ordained end, Paige came in on him. Paige, who had become a shipowner, who lived at Southampton, and who was still his best friend, had made a point of calling, and, hearing the doctor's command, had said at once: "Of course the doctor's right. We'll fix that. When you can get about, come down to me at Southampton, and I'll see that you get just the sort of voyage that will do you a world of good. You'll go in one of my own ships."

And so it had come about. Ramsay Henna was standing looking at the *Pride*, and Paige was telling him that this was the ship for him, and that he was going to make a voyage in it to South America.

Of course it had to be South America.

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In a few weeks he was off the coast of South America, staring from the deck of the *Pride* at lazy quaysides, and houses painted like Noah's arks, and the tangled, vivid, hungry green of the bush that seemed to be crowding into and between the little flat houses with an almost active voracity. He stared and he wondered why he had come.

He had reached South America, and yet somehow that didn't seem enough. It wasn't the end. He must go on. It was the queerest thing to happen to a man. He had come—why he didn't know—but he seemed to know he hadn't finished travelling. He had yet to go on—must go on.

They coasted slowly down the land. Ramsay spent day after day gazing at the staring, greedy greens, the jewel flash of strange flowers, the fierce sunburnt browns of grass plat and mountain-side. He landed sometimes. He was more disgusted at first than thrilled; the casualness, the laziness and the dirt that marked the little towns offended him. But gradually he came under the spell of this rich, hot tropic place. Its laziness seemed poetic and natural, the rest part of its glamour.

Always when he landed he wondered: Is this the place? Do I get off here? He did not say this, of course, in words, but the emotion was none the less real. But

always he went back to the ship instinctively, and continued that rich, lazy crawl along the exotic coast. He had still to go on—go on into South America—but his stepping-off place was not yet.

It came at Rio. Standing confused on the water-front, his mind bewildered by the hectic Latin bustle and the brazen sharpness, vivacity, and brightness of the place, he at once decided that here he must leave the ship. He knew no reason for this, save that it must be so. The captain of the *Pride* expostulated with him, but to no effect. The something that had commanded him to come to South America commanded him here.

Only when the ship had left, and he sat at the window of his hotel half-way up Santa Theresa, and saw before him the amazing panorama of Rio's harbour and hills, did he tell himself he was an ass. Grown men, civilised men, did not act in this idiotic fashion. It was utterly absurd that he should have flung himself at South America like this, and then marooned himself in the heart of it—all for a whim. He tried to analyse that whim. He felt that he was more practical now, for the voyage out had made him stronger and healthier than he had ever been. He could make nothing of the whim save that it was absurd. "I'll sit here and wait until the *Pride* returns from Paranagna," he told himself decisively. "Then I'll go home and act like a rational man." He knew within himself that to act like a rational man would be to settle down.



"They walked across that room to the man and stood before him, Dom Miranda saying nothing, but smiling."

His curious passion for perpetuating his name was stronger. He smiled at the view in satisfaction at his decision. He was certain of himself. He would cure himself, go straight home.

In a week's time he was getting out of a train at a town which he had never heard of in his life, and making his wants known in the faltering but daring Portuguese which he was now steadily acquiring.

Why he had come to this town he did not know. He had just come. He had seemed to get suddenly bored with Rio after a day or two, and at the same time to have become fascinated by the name of this unimaginable town on a notice in his hotel. He must have stared at this poster several times a day since his arrival in Rio, but on this day the name had leapt out at him, and, curiously, it was the one day of the week when a through train ran from Rio to this distant and isolated place. This seemed to clinch the thing in his mind. He had booked a sleeper on the train and come.

And here he was, wondering why the devil he had done it, but all the time, underneath, thrilled by a consciousness that he had done right.

Yes, more and more now he was feeling that he was right. South America, with its indolent fatalism, its deep and brooding mysticism, seemed to have got hold of him. Strange things could happen naturally in this spacious, immense, and enigmatic continent. There was about everything a large, simple air of faith that made wonders seem easy and familiar.

So he landed in the town without rebellion, sat in its little scorched plaza, wandered through its pinched streets, heard the guitars of lovers underneath the barred windows in the moonlight—and he waited. He seemed to wait for something he knew was bound to come.

It came. One day a little old man, in the baggy costume of a dweller on the *campos*, came and sat at his table. Ramsay almost expected him to do this. The little man had sat at a table on the pavement, staring at him during two days. Now, when he came across, he said with exquisite courtesy: "They tell me your name is Yehenna, senhor."

"It is Henna," said Ramsay, smiling, offering him a chair. The little man stared even as he sat.

"It is true," he murmured, as if to himself. "It could not be anything else."

"What could not, senhor?" asked Ramsay, in his stumbling Portuguese.

"The name, Yehenna. But it is strange. You are not of this province at all, not of Brazil, perhaps."

"No," Ramsay laughed. "I am just travelling. I am from England." He told the little man, as best he could, where he had come from and how he had come.

"Why did you come here, of all places, senhor?" asked the little man, whose wonder seemed to have grown. Ramsay, the Englishman, blushed and felt confused.

"I don't really know," he said. "I had nothing to do back in Rio, I just came along—it was something to do."

"I see," said the little man quite simply, as if miracles were every day. "It was ordained." He sat staring at Ramsay. "You will then come with me to-morrow?"

"Eh?" cried Ramsay.

"Well, yes, of course." He seemed to realise that there was something not quite Latin in Ramsay. "It is this, senhor: I will take you riding to see something strange, that is it. You say you are here on holiday—well, it will be something 'to make time,' and it will interest you. Yes, it will do that, senhor."

And so, on the next day, Ramsay Henna rode out with Dom Miranda, who owned a big estate near by, across the rolling *campos*. He rode all morning, and in the early afternoon came upon a great *rocimhar*, which, from its size and shape and its warren of outbuildings, the flock of peons lazing about it, spoke of a rich and almost ducal affluence.

As he walked into that house, Ramsay Henna began to thrill. He knew that it meant something tremendous. He knew that it was the meaning of his coming to South America. He followed Dom Miranda, feeling curiously exalted and disembodied. They went into a long *sala*, where, by a big fire of scented logs, a tall, lean old man sat, and on a golden skin, at his knee, a slim, tall woman.

They walked across that room to the man and stood before him, Dom Miranda saying nothing, but smiling, looking as though he were an impresario satisfied with a play he had just staged.

The old man and the woman—she must have been about Ramsay's age—looked up at them. Then quite suddenly both stood, both made a half-step towards Ramsay, staring in surprise.

He could not wonder at that. Both of them, father and daughter, were remarkably

alike. Both had a long slim spareness, both had narrow, pointed faces under high, broad brows, both had eyes of a curious blueness—eyes that he knew so well, because they were his own, as their features and their figures were his own.

Dom Miranda said with a chuckle, "This is His Excellency Dom Sebastiano Yehenna," and to the pair, "And this is another Dom Yehenna."

The old man smiled and said, "Yes. Welcome, cousin," as though the thing was as simple as an afternoon tea call. And the girl came to him, caught his hand, looked into his eyes, cried: "There *was* another—I felt it! I knew it! The name is not finished!"

Cousins, there was no doubt of it. The old man, splendidly courteous, admirable in his delight, explained it all to him before the fire of sweet-smelling logs.

"You spell it H-E-N-N-A, but so did my great-grandfather."

"He was Sebastian Henna?"

"It is true. You have heard of him?"

"He is the bad example of the family. He went gallivanting across the sea, broke the Henna tradition."

"Ah, yes, I see that; we are a tenacious people," smiled the old man. "Well, he founded our family, too. He came out here, after much wandering. This was a small republic, then, not too well peopled. He settled, and took land and did well. Do you know that he became a President?"

"No," said Ramsay. "I couldn't even have dreamed of that."

"Perhaps it surprises you a little. A Henna a President. But he was a good President—dour, honest, conservative, like all of us."

"Like all of us—yes," agreed Henna.

"He died here and left a big family. He had a curious, strong family feeling. Have the English Hennas that feeling?"

"They have, very much indeed," agreed Ramsay.

"I know," said the old man, with a sigh. "It has plagued me also. I have it strongly. And my girl there, Inez. Those of us who have the looks of the Hennas, they have it. But the others—no. That is how the family dwindled. In a land like this, where thin, hot blood is prone to adventures—well, it is easy to thin out a family. We are all gone, the Yehennas, save us. We are the last of that name here."

"I am the last of the name in Britain," said Ramsay.

Dom Sebastiano sat staring at him in astonishment. "So," he murmured. "Then it is truly wonderful."

But the girl looked up, and she smiled, and Ramsay Henna, somehow, did not seem to think it so wonderful. In fact, he said deliberately, looking at her: "Somehow, I think that is why I had to come."

The girl smiled again, as though she understood entirely.

He stayed on. They did not want him to go—indeed, it seemed as though they recognised that this must be his home. And he was content. It was the place to which he had had to come. It was natural for him to be here.

He took it to his heart, too. It was spacious, fine. There was work worth doing on this great estate, work that he loved doing, work that only a man of his name could justly do. And, above all, there was Inez. He had felt in his heart her beauty from the first moment of seeing her, but he felt that he had known her, loved her before that, long before that.

There came the time when he could speak of this, when he held her tight in his arms.

"You knew I was coming?" he whispered to her.

"I felt it," she answered softly. "And you?"

"I felt something, someone calling. It was you who called?"

"I tried to call; I wanted someone of our name to know that we were here."

"But you seemed to know I would come. When I first saw you, you seemed to be expecting me?"

"Yes. I felt that someone had heard—knew."

"I don't understand it."

"No," she answered, "no, I don't understand it altogether, either. But it has happened. I just wanted one of our name to come, wanted and wanted. I seemed to send my want out—oh, with such ardour!—across the world to that place from which we sprang. Then, after a time, it seemed to me that someone in that place heard me."

"Yes, it must have been you I heard. But 'after a time'—what does that mean?"

"I began calling when I was about fourteen, began hoping, and sending out my desire. But it was six months before I felt that someone heard."

"Yes," said Ramsay slowly. "That is it. That would be the time when I first said I would like to go to South America. It was an unexpected thing to say. My

Aunt was very angry. I was surprised at the desire myself. Now I see. It was you. But it was not me particularly you wanted?"

"Not you particularly—*then*," she whispered, and she crept closer. "Just one of our name."

"Because your name was ending here?"

"Yes. You know my father. You know him because what is in his blood is in yours. You know how he would feel about the name going out. His queer, strong, stubborn pride in our name—it is in your blood, too. It was a torment and a sorrow to him that

the last of us should be a girl—with no more Yehennas after her marriage. I saw the pain he felt, I knew what it meant to him. I feel his every feeling with my own pain, so I called and called, girl-like, perhaps——"

"But wonderfully," he smiled. "But I know what he felt. I feel that way, too. And you?"

"It is in me, too." She laughed softly and pulled his head down to her lips. "I, too, am a Yehenna, and my blood called."

"And my blood heard, and I came," said Ramsay. And, smiling, he took all that her lips gave.

