

ESCAPE

She was far away from Rolande- -Rolande, who was out of her heart forever, plucked nut like a weed from the sod. A weed can tear the earth. And so with Marne's heart.

But now the Mediterranean waved up to meet the cerulean sky. The great movement of the ship seemed restless to ramie, as if it moved to troubled music. There was not much to think about now that Rolande was gone,- only the water and the sky. But thoughts burst upon her fitfully, thoughts of eyes and a slight scar over the temple, the scar on which her lips had rested - -"so many times--so many!" she whispered to herself; and then she would try to imagine his tears. She had never seen him cry. God! What agony--to know him so little that his tears were unknown. And she, hungering for their now, hungering for him wholly!

But in Spain it would all be different. It was an old world that knew no Rolande. Spain, with its caves of scarlet flowers, its towering yucas, long white deserts of cacti, its women, sullen and beautiful. These would be so new, so hind in their novelty.

Cadiz was a shadow at Marne's first glance. Up before dawn she stood on the deck alone, wrapped in a shawl. Dimly the outlines of the Spanish city broke through the early morning vapor, broke so delicately, as if they were made of eggshell. White domes, walls of pearl, ivory gates,

whiteness--whiteness as gleaming as a flash of light now. To Marne all this came as the greatest wonder, the greatest miracle. She felt as if her body had just died. Her fleshly life was extinct and now at last was the time for her soul to spring. Her soul--that was the only true Marne. It is beauty that makes people know this, And Cadiz was wavering like a carven pearl, loose in the sea, as sea weed would wave. History and romance, men, centuries ago seeking new lives. And Cadiz, wavering, holding them in her bosom, letting them finally slip away into the stream--away--.

"Oh, Columbus: Columbus:" Marne spoke and for a moment the picture flashed across her mind. But it was borne away to the illimitable sky and her lips moved as if to whisper "Rolande," All the time, it seemed, it had been Rolande.

There were hours to be passed in the railway station, years before the train to Seville would come. Marne stood on the dirty platform. Fine dust blew about her. There were only strange voices and strange bodies on the earth now. But no one else mattered. Grayness covered the palm at the entrance gate; the sharp divided fingers trembled flatly, like old paper, When a local carriage rattled by and stopped, Marne watched. Paces there would he, at least.

Over the open window of a third class carriage leaned a Padre, very old but singularly religious. His bony fingers passed lightly over the dirty sill; they might have been caressing the softest velvet. A thin face, brilliant black eyes set deeply, a positive air of the highest holiness about him. And Marne saw him gazing at her. He drew his fingers over his chin - That gesture was - "Dear God!" whispered Marne to herself, "so like Rolande It cut her, a little stab in the heart. "And that is all," she thought, "only a gesture! I'm lost!"

Suddenly she felt the intense heat of Spain for the first time. It stayed with her all day and slowly crushed her. The train she was in swept over the glaring countryside, spread over with the whitest sand in the world. The blaze of the day was almost too much to bear. She wondered about the Spanish people, the poor lonely souls who carried these softly curved water jugs on their shoulders. Rolande had told her once that these people were happy, that they were yes, Rolande had been the one who had told her all this. She remembered the day, that greenwood day, and he had spoken of the glamour of Spain.

The compartment door opened and a woman with a child stepped in. For a long while Marne lay with her head back on the cushion, her eyes closed. Scenes were passing vividly through her mind. Unnoticed, the Spanish woman slid into the seat by the window. She was swarthy with long tapering fingers. There was a restlessness in her eyes, and that same sullenness so characteristic of the beautiful Spaniards. She sat watching Marne, whose lids were slightly aquiver. She watched how her bosom rose and fell.

"She does not sleep," thought the woman to herself, "she is not tranquil."

Marne was trying to blot out a picture. It was a picture of Rolande, hanging over the bridge rail, throwing his capful of violets down to her. She had caught them in her arms and the violets had all tumbled through the air and to the ground. But the cap--Marne had pressed it to her face, to her radiant face, and then had dropped it. Her fingers had crept up to her hair and had wound themselves in the warm locks, That was when she understood how much she loved him. Rolande's voice had called and she could not move, Rolande's voice was calling--. The picture of it swam into her consciousness and out again.

When she awoke the dusk lay heavily upon the land. In the shadowy corner of the compartment she saw the figure of the woman, holding the boy child in her arms. She was singing a Spanish lullaby and her voice hummed above the train's, "Am outlines of lonely houses sprang palely past. The color of the oleanders faded and cactus plants stood sharp and still.

Marne felt a pang in her breast. She knew that she had not escaped.