

MY LADY OF DOUBT

BY RANDALL PARRISH

A romance of the Revolution with hero and heroine brought together in a series of nerve-straining adventures threaded on a mystery that deepens with every chapter.

approaching. With a cheer of anticipation the soldiers flung aside every article possible to discard, and pressed forward, their horses becoming lame as they were obliged to dismount, and proceed on foot. By 3 o'clock we had passed the British, and were halted in the protection of a considerable wood.

CHAPTER XIX. Between Love and Duty.

WAS left behind at Cayuga's Ferry, for the purpose of hastening forward any supplementary orders from Washington, when Maxwell and the Jersey militiamen pressed forward in an effort to retard the march of the enemy.

The moment this knowledge reached Washington, he acted. In spite of opposition from some of his leading officers, his own purpose remained steadfast, and every preparation had already been carefully made for energetic pursuit.

There was no delay, no hitch in the promptness of advance. The department of the Quartermaster General had every plan worked out in detail, and, within two days, the entire army had crossed the river, and pushed forward to within a few miles of Trenton.

Morgan, with six hundred men, hurried forward to the rear of the foremost of Maxwell, and, relieved from his duties at the ferry, I was permitted to join his column.

It was at midnight, when Morgan led us up the steep bluff, and out upon the sandy road. We advanced silently, and in straggling column through the darkness, passing the remains of camp-fires, for several miles, the recumbent soldier of other commands sleeping on the ground.

My horse was in ill condition, limping sadly, although I could not discover the cause, and I walked with the men, leading the animal, through the smoldering clouds of dust. It was a hot, still night, and Morgan marched us swiftly, and with frequent rest.

By daylight we came up with the New Jersey militia, lying at rest along the bank of the Millstone River, waiting to turn to ford that stream and join Maxwell on the opposite shore. Down the trampled bank we were struggling with a light battery, and suddenly in the press of figures I came upon Maxwell.

"I thought you would be over there with Maxwell," he said, pointing across at the black dots, now clearly distinguishable in the glow of sunlight.

"I was left behind, and came just now with Morgan," I replied. "But I am anxious enough to be with my own fellows. What means that skirmish line, Farrier? I could not see it with Clinton."

"Who?" my throat tightening. "The same you was anxious about a few days back?"

Under the smoke of several batteries, whose shells were rattling upon the hill, the British were advancing in double lines, the sun gleaming on their bayonets, and revealing the uniforms of different corps.

Every man of us had a gun, officers and all. Continues as though we came from the hayfield, the perspiration streaming down our faces, we waited for the rifle bullets to glow brown in the sun, as the keen eyes took careful sight.

They were coming around the end of the morass, charging full tilt upon the right of our line. I saw that end struck by the British, and the British were racing backward, firing as we ran, and stumbling over dead bodies.

Maxwell rallied us beyond the causeway, swearing manfully as he drove us into position behind a low stone wall. Again and again they charged us, the artillery firing and the muskets, the dead under foot, the cries of the wounded, the incessant roar of the guns.

Maxwell's eyes were fixed upon the right of our line. I saw that end struck by the British, and the British were racing backward, firing as we ran, and stumbling over dead bodies.

"This you, Lawrence?" asked a voice I instantly recognized as Hamilton's. "My fellow fellows all look alike to-night. Where is your horse, Major?"

"I have been on foot all day, sir," I answered, saluting. "My horse was need for a horse to-night. Wainwright, turning to the man with the dispatch, this morning of Clinton's position. I remember now, you were not with me when he rode up."

"I have no recollection of ever having met the man, sir. I have written him orders, however; he is a scout attached to General Lee's headquarters."

"Yes; I recall the name. He is the one who brought us our first definite information this morning of Clinton's position. I remember now, you were not with me when he rode up."

"I know the plantation, sir," I said, my interest causing me to interrupt. "It is on the road to the river."

"He understands clearly, sir." He wrote for several minutes steadily, once pausing to consult a map, signed the paper, and enclosed it in another sheet, across which he scratched lines of address.

"You will deliver this to General Arnold in person, Major; do not spare horseflesh. Take ten dragoons as an escort. Hamilton will write you an order. I have told Arnold our victory is practically complete."

Yes, Where? By Jack Callahan



"D'ya mean to tell me ya don't get no vacation, why ya kick, that's how I got mine - you'll never get anything if ya don't ask for it!"

"Kick, you bet your boots I'm goin' kick - an' that ol' slave driver will know it too."

"An' what's more I want a vacation, see?"

"Consider yourself fired - now you can have all the vacation you want!"

"Where do you get that kick stuff?"

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"AND TO THINK, ME BEING HERE SEVEN YEARS, ALWAYS NEARLY AN THE LAST ONE TO LEAVE, DOING AS MUCH WORK AS THE REST OF THE CREW PUT TOGETHER - AND I DON'T GET A VACATION AN' THEY DO -"

"ARE YOU GOIN' TO KICK FOR A VACATION, LUKE?"

"YES, AN' I'M GOIN' TO GET IT TOO!!"

"AN' WHAT'S MORE I WANT A VACATION, SEE?"

"CONSIDER YOURSELF FIRED - NOW YOU CAN HAVE ALL THE VACATION YOU WANT!"

"WHERE DO YOU GET THAT KICK STUFF?"

pho-and you?" "We are taking a wounded man home," was the reply, the speaker looking forward. "Are you Continuing?"

"Yes, Major Lawrence, of Maxwell's Brigade." "Oh!" the exclamation was half smothered, the man drawing up his horse quickly. I could distinguish the outline of his form now, the straight, slender figure of a boy, wearing the light jacket of a Dragoon, the face shadowed by a broad hat rim.

"Unless I mistake," I ventured cordially, "you must be Eric Mortimer." "Why do you suppose that?" "Because, while at Gen. Washington's headquarters he mentioned that he had asked permission to take your father—Col. Mortimer's, several horses to his home at Elmhurst. You left, as I understand, an hour or two ahead of us. Am I right?"

"Then we will pass on without detaining you longer, as we ride in haste, I met your father once; may I ask if his wound is serious?" "Serious, but not mortal; he was shot in the right side when Monkton fell. His horse was hit at the same time, and the animal's death struggle nearly killed his rider. The surgeon says he may be lame for life."

"I-I represented myself as Eric," she stammered. "And was it you also who rode into our lines yesterday, telling of Clinton's whereabouts?" "Yes," hesitatingly, her eyes lifting to my face. "Is there an Eric Mortimer?" "There is," she answered, frankly; "my brother. It was for his sake I did all this."

"Your father is aware—" "No, not even my father. He is scarcely conscious of what is going on about him, but he knows, and Tompeah," with a wave of the hand into the dark shadows. "They are with you, then—keeping guard over him?" "Yes; they have known from the beginning; not everything, of course, for that was not necessary. Peter is an old servant, silent and trust-worthy. He would never question any act of mine, while the Indian has reason to be grateful and loyal to me. Whatever indiscretion, Major sympathies have been guilty of, by these two. You will believe that?" "Yes, and whatever else you tell me."

My hand sought hers, and held it against my horse's mane. "Tell it in your own way, dear," I whispered. She flashed on glances into my face, leaving her hand in mine, while our horses took a dozen strides. "It will not take long," she began, in so low a voice that I leaned forward to listen. "You are a man of the character, and can judge their motives. I have been strangely situated since the commencement of this war, only, surely, I am not the only family divided in its loyalty. My father was a King's officer, and felt it his duty to serve the crown. While he has said little, yet I know that down his heart his sympathies have been with the Colonies. Those of my brother were openly from the start, and my father has never attempted to interfere with his actions. They talked it all over together, and Eric chose his own course. Only Alfred Grant made trouble, presuming on what he termed our engagement, and endeavoring to force my brother to join the King's troops. The two quarrelled, bitterly, and Eric, a hot-headed boy, struck him. Grant has never forgiven that blow, nor Eric's influence over me. To the latter he attributes my dislike—yet this was not decided, although you act the part well."

"I hardly understand you." "Do you mean to insist you do not know—have not recognized me?" "What can you mean?" "Merely that I am Claire Mortimer, and lifting the hat, the young officer was revealed in the dim light as my lady. "Surely you knew." "But I did not," I insisted earnestly, receiving from my surprise and leaning forward to look into her face. "Why should I? Gen. Washington told me it was Eric, who came for my father. Why should I suspect in his darkness?"

rel with Capt. Grant was seemingly forgotten. There appeared to be some understanding, some special connection between them. They met once, at least, and I delivered one note between them, which I had forgotten the passage of time, the men riding steadily in advance, constantly increasing their distance, even the possible importance of the despatch within my jacket pocket. There was a sound of hoofs on the dusty road behind us. "The rider barely paused, turning his horse's head even as he spoke hastily. "Capt. Grant is with the ambulance, Mistress Claire," he reported. "He came up alone about five minutes ago."

CHAPTER XXII. Before General Arnold. FELT her hand withdrawn quickly, and the swift intake of her breath, yet there was no sharpness in the voice. "Captain Grant, Peter? What can she want here?" She sat a moment in silence, her head bowed; then looked across into my face. "This arrival must end our conference," Major said soberly. "Grant must not know that you are with me—that would mean fighting."

"Surely you do not wish me to run away." "Yes, this time, for my sake as well as your own. If I could have completed my confession you would realize the necessity. However, the fact that you are the bearer of despatches should be sufficient; your duty to the colonies is more important than any private quarrel. You will go?" "Yes—but you? Are you safe with him?" "Perfectly. I wish I might be clothed in my own proper dress, but with Peter and Tompeah on guard, Capt. Grant alone is not dangerous. Besides I wish to learn his purpose in seeking to join us." She hesitated. "You must not fear for me, but—and I am sure I shall need your help—"

"I'll take Tom with me, and we'll circle the horse herd and come up to the house from the rear. I want you to discover where those fellows are, and what they are up to. See this whistle, sergeant?" "It gives a sharp, shrill blast. If I blow it twice, get your men inside the house instantly. I'll not sound it unless I need you at once. We'll wait here until you get across."

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Grant's loud enough to be heard clearly. I took my horse slowly forward, keeping at the edge of the road, until assured a sufficient distance separated us. Then I gave the restive animal a sharp touch of the spur sending him swiftly forward the shadow of the orchard. There was no sound of movement anywhere, yet it was not long until daybreak, and any further delay was dangerous. As soon as the morning started, I saw the two words of instruction, and the two of us plunged down the steep slope, feeling our way through the darkness, but moving to the right, toward what I had learned was a picket line. I crossed fifty feet above, gained the top of the bank, and strained down, sheltered from observation, until I was directly above the two guards.

One man was standing up, leaning against the trunk of a small tree, while the other was sitting on the ground, his head bent forward, and his hat drawn low over his eyes. Neither uttered a sound, but as my eyes strained through the darkness I began to perceive details which awakened a new suspicion. The fellow standing up wore a cap and no coat, and his hands were clasped about a short, sawed-off gun. He had none of the appearance of a soldier, but the other man apparently was in uniform, although I could not distinguish its character. What attracted my attention was that his hands were evidently tied behind his back. If this was true then he was a prisoner, and the other had been stationed there to guard him, and not the picket line.

"I caught up with my little squad of plodding horsemen, and with words of command, hurried them into a sharp trot. By two o'clock we were on the banks of the Delaware, and a half-hour later I swung down stiffly from the saddle in front of Arnold's headquarters on High Street. "He was an officer I never greatly liked, with his snapping eyes and arrogant manner, but he was courted enough on this occasion, questioning me after reading the despatch, and offering me a glass of wine. "You look tired, Major, and must rest before you start back, but I have my report ready for you, and will have my report ready by sundown."

"General Arnold," I said, standing respectfully at hand, "I have a favor to ask—before you give me your report by some other messenger and give me a detail for special service." "He looked up in surprise. "What service is it, comrade?" "An attempt to kill or capture Red Fagin, and release a scout whom I believe he holds prisoner. It is a matter of command, Major, and I believe you hope to accomplish all this about the Jersey shore." "With the assistance of the sergeant and ten dragoons who came here with me. They are in camp now on the Jersey shore."

I went over the situation carefully, watching the effect of my words in the man's face. He sat at the table now, leaning forward eagerly. "You need horses, rations and pistol ammunition for twelve men?" "Yes, sir." "Very well, Major, the quartermaster will attend these details. Go and lie down. Washington may not approve, but I'll take the responsibility." He extended his hand across the table, and I felt the firm clasp of his fingers.

CHAPTER XXIII. I Run Across Eric. SLEPT three hours, the dead sleep of sheer exhaustion, but felt refreshed and strong when roughly aroused. With brain clarified by sleep I realized the importance of the work before us, and how imperfect my plans were. I could merely ride forth along the deserted road leading to Elmhurst, hoping to pick up some clue to aid me. As we rode rapidly along the deserted road leading to Elmhurst, hoping to pick up some clue to aid me. As we rode rapidly along the deserted road leading to Elmhurst, hoping to pick up some clue to aid me.

"The boy laughed recklessly, his eyes upon the others. "Well, my name is a short one, Lawrence. I had a fellow in the British service who occasionally gave me information. Word came to me to meet him at a certain spot." "You mean a certain spot?" "He hesitated as though suspicious of me, but finally resumed. "I had no intention of speaking names." "Oh, let that pass. You may think Grant all right, but the rest of us know he is at the bottom of the whole matter. You mean he betrayed me?" "There is no doubt of it. He is in with Fagin."

"The lad drew a long breath. "I had suspected," he said slowly, "only I didn't know possible. Now listen and perhaps together we can make something out of this. I went to the place where we were to meet him, and I talk with Grant—yes, it was Grant all right. He told me some things, but needed a day or two to get other information. While waiting, I came over here to Elmhurst and found Claire. She is the kind of a girl you can tell things to, and I wrote out what I had learned and left some of my papers. Then I went back to Long Tree, and when I got there and I rode right into Fagin and three of his men. They had me before I could lift a hand. "Just wait a minute, Mortimer. I'll break the horse herd and come up to the house from the rear. I want you to discover where those fellows are, and what they are up to. See this whistle, sergeant?" "It gives a sharp, shrill blast. If I blow it twice, get your men inside the house instantly. I'll not sound it unless I need you at once. We'll wait here until you get across."

CHAPTER XX. The Fight at Monmouth. HE next day—Sunday, the twenty-eighth of June, 1778—dawned with cloudless sky, hot, sultry, the warmest day of the year. Before day-break we were aroused by the sentries, and, in the gray dawn, partook of a meagre breakfast. A fresh supply of ammunition was brought up and distributed among the men, and, before sunrise, we were in line, waiting for a hot day's work, eagerly.

I can make no pretense at describing in any detail, or sequence, the memorable action of Monmouth. I can only say that I must content myself with depicting what little I saw on the firing line of Maxwell's brigade. Already to the south echoed a sound of firing where Morgan had uncovered a column of Dragoons. Then a courier from Dickinson dashed along the rear ranks, scattering broadcast the welcome news that Mifflin and his Hessians, the main of the British movement, were

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