

Neal of the Navy

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "Red Mouse," "Running Fight," "Cats-paw," "Blue Buckle," etc.

Novelized from the Photo Play of the Same Name Produced by the Pathe Exchange, Inc.

SYNOPSIS.

On the day of the eruption of Mount Pelée, Capt. John Hardin of the steamer Princess rescues five-year-old Annette Ilington from an open boat, but is forced to leave behind her father and his companions. Ilington is assisted by Hernandez and Ponto in a vain attempt to get papers which Ilington has managed to send aboard the Princess with his daughter, papers proving his title to and telling the whereabouts of the lost island of Cinnabar. Ilington's father causes his mind to become a blank. Thirteen years elapse. Hernandez, now a female accomplice, and the mindless brute that once was Ilington, come to Seaport, where the widow of Captain Hardin is living with her son Neal and Annette Ilington, and plot to steal the papers left to the widow of Captain Hardin by her father. Neal tries for admission to the Naval academy, but through the treachery of Joey Welcher is defeated by Joey and disgraced. Neal enlists in the navy. He sets a trap for Joey and the conspirators get him in a trap, where a struggle for possession of the map Hernandez, Annette and Neal each secure a portion. Annette sails on the Coronado in search of her father. In Martinique Annette and Neal are captured, but are rescued by a Spanish frigate. Neal is again captured, carried to the Sun and Annette is offered as a sacrifice to the sun god. They are rescued by the crew of the Albany. Landed in Florida, Annette and Neal are captured and exposed to yellow fever infection by Hernandez, but are rescued by the crew of the Albany. Neal is promoted and leads a party of transferred men toward Chamblé, but is taken in a train wreck on the way. Hernandez and Inez present the false identification papers to Brother Annetto at Santa Marta mission. Ponto is caught and killed in his own trap, set for Annette.

TWELFTH INSTALLMENT

"BACKED BY THE U. S. N."

CHAPTER LIII.

A Thorn in the Flesh.

It was late at night when Hernandez and his two companions, Senorita Inez Castro and the brute, crept to the outskirts of the village of Santa Maria, and stealthily approached the ramshackle old hotel. For two days they had kept carefully out of sight. They had left the old dead Ponto to his fate. He had now become a cipher. He was food for the jacksals and they left him to the jacksals.

"Then," said Inez, "it shall be Ponto's share for mine."

Hernandez leered at her. "What does it matter," he returned, "what is mine is yours, fair Inez, mine own."

She crept to him, resting her shoulder against his breast.

"You mean that, Hernandez?" she queried, a jealous note ringing her tone. "There is no one there never shall be one—save Inez?"

Hernandez leered again. "Time and time have I not told you so?" he answered. "We are one—as in the past—so in the present—so in the future."

Hernandez brushed her gently to one side and rose to his feet. "War first—love afterwards," he said. "Business now—and later, happiness. A whirl of happiness—of world-wide happiness. When I am king of a principality—and you are queen. Come, let us on."

Softly he crept to a secluded doorway of the hotel and knocked cautiously upon it. It was opened in due course. The frowled head of a servant thrust itself forth.

"Ah," whispered Hernandez, "my good friend."

He slipped a goodly coin into the hand of his good friend—and the good friend became at once a better friend.

"The Americans?" queried Hernandez. "Have they gone?"

"Gone," returned the servant, "today they went. Enter, señor."

Hernandez, alert but satisfied of temporary safety, beckoned to his two companions and the three crowded into the dingy little closet of the porter.

He turned back to the porter. "Tell us," he commanded, "the best route to San Pedro and Los Angeles. Our way lies north."

Many hours later at Los Angeles, a coterie of Americans sat around a broad table in an unused courtroom in the post office building in Los Angeles.

Spread upon the table were a number of documents—a trinket or two. Among them was a lock of hair. A map and a Spanish grant.

The admiral leaned toward the United States district attorney—the latter had come down from San Francisco to place the seal of his department's approval upon the matter now in hand.

"Are you satisfied?" queried the admiral.

"Absolutely," said the district attorney, "the paper title is at present unassailable, and as much to be recognized as though—he bowed to Annette—as though our fair daughter here were a sister republic. It remains for you, sir—his glance bent upon the commander of the battleship Missouri—to find out who may be in possession—and to oust them in favor of this paper title."

"I wonder whom we'll find?" mused Annette, her eyes glancing.

"Probably no one," returned the admiral.

He returned the documentary evidence and the trinkets to his port-folio. "These," he said to the district attorney, "I take with me."

"Exactly," said the other, "we have photographs of all of them. The investigation has been of interest—a curious situation."

The district attorney placed before Annette a bulky document.

"You will be compensated for this Lost Island," he said, "and the government stands ready now to make you a substantial advance of money upon the signing of this paper."

Annette signed—and sighed with relief.

"That's done," she exclaimed.

The admiral bowed. All rose. "You are rendering our country a great service, Miss Ilington," he said, "and your country will do its level best to protect you. Can we do more?"

Neal saluted. "I understand, sir," he said that I am to command the expedition."

"Yes," interposed the commander, "we've arranged all that with the captain of a steamer. He agrees that what you say shall go—and you'll say it, I feel sure."

"I'll say anything and do anything," returned Neal, "for my country and my—Miss Annette Ilington."

He said a good deal to her on the way back to her Los Angeles hotel—and kept on saying it.

"But," he added at parting, "careful now. Don't take risks. This man Hernandez is a wonder. I take my hat off to him. He never knows when he's beaten."

"He's beaten now," returned Annette, "particularly if he knows all that has transpired."

He left her—still gravely worried. He would have been more than worried had he known that within a quarter of a mile of Annette's hostelry, in a secluded cafe, sat Hernandez, with his two companions, the brute and Inez Castro. He would have been more than worried had he known that with them was another individual—Joe Welcher, his own foster brother—and Annette's. Welcher was there—depressed, fearful, nervous—but drinking heavily. And he was still the model, shrinking tool, the cat-in-the-hat.

And what queried Hernandez, "about the battleship Missouri?"

Joe produced an extra—his headlines devoted to the navy and the impending Alamo plan.

"The Missouri," he announced, referring to the paper, "steams away tomorrow."

"Where does she steam?"

"To San Francisco."

"Friend Welcher," went on Hernandez, "does this Neal—does he talk—do you get inside information?"

"There's none to get," said Joe, "if there was any, I'd get it."

Hernandez waved his hand. "When does the Missouri sail?" he queried.

"This afternoon," said Joe.

"When she sails," went on Hernandez, "we'll get this girl. We need her. We want her evidence—but we want her, too—until—until we have no further need of her. What we shall run into at Lost Isle no man knows. I want her with us there. Listen, Welcher. You must arrange it. Our paths must cross this afternoon."

Welcher fumed. "I do all the dirty work," he said, "I'm through."

Hernandez poured him another drink, and handed it to him with a glance that ate into Joe's soul.

The drink had just the wrong effect. Joe became angry—noisy—unmanageable.

"I'll be damned if I do your bidding any more," snarled Joe.

Hernandez darted a glance toward Inez. She returned it.

"Leave him with me," she said.

Hernandez did as he was bid. He left her alone with Joe. And in the next fifteen minutes Inez Castro made love to Joe as she never had before. She overwhelmed him with enchantment.

"Tonight," she whispered to him, "tonight, Americano. But breathe not a word to him—he will kill us both."

Half an hour later Annette swung out of the hotel grounds, mounted on a wiry little pony.

She noted Joe and drew in her steed. She spied that Joe was unduly excited.

"Joe," she exclaimed, "tell mother I'll be safe."

Under certain influences Joe's mind acted with unusual rapidity. Drink and the dark eyes of Inez Castro had set him well on edge. Without a moment's thought he stooped by the roadside and plucked a thorny burr. He straightened up again, with the thorny burr concealed within his hand. He did not answer Annette at first, but approached her and her steed.

"Good cow pony!" he exclaimed. He stroked the horse's nose, its neck, its flanks. And then he did another thing. "Safe as they make 'em," he continued.

And then he did the trick. His right hand stole gently up across the horse's back, behind Annette—to the saddle.

Swiftly—and unnoticed—he pushed

the thorny burr under the saddle, next to the pony's skin. Then he slouched away in the general direction of the bar.

CHAPTER LIII.

A Dangerous Connection.

There are few drivers of a high-power car who permit themselves restraint upon an open road. But the machine that crept along the avenue in this sparsely settled portion of suburban Los Angeles seemed almost crippled. Everything passed it—even horse-drawn vehicles.

And one horse in particular kept always on ahead. This horse was Annette Ilington's.

There were four people in this car—and three of them were waiting for the inevitable to happen. They crept on and on—always two hundred yards behind.

"Ah!" exclaimed Hernandez finally, "it eats in."

He was quite right. Suddenly the horse ahead swerved sharply to one side, violently shook its head and neck—leaped frantically into the air, and then, with a violent burst of speed, tore down the road like fire.

Hernandez increased his speed to twenty miles—to twenty-five—but the horse tore on before him. Annette was riding like the wind—but she had lost control.

Joe, in the car behind, leaped to his feet and tried to force his way from the car. "Let me out," he cried, struggling; "I got her into this, and I'll get her out."

Hernandez turned to the brute. "Hold him," he commanded. And the brute obeyed.

Inez Castro now was on her feet. "Look—look—look," she cried, "the horse is mad—he'll kill her—look—ah—ah—"

It was all over. In one final burst of frenzy the horse had leaped high in the air, and come down on all fours, not on the solid road, but in the ditch. Annette was flung violently from a steed—and struck the ground with a thud. The horse, freed of his burden, sped on—up the road—sped on.

Hernandez stopped his car. Joe leaped out and ran to Annette.

"She's killed," he said.

Hernandez followed him. "If so, we cannot help it," he returned calmly.

"If she's killed, I did it, you black-guard," cried Joe, remorsefully.

Inez bent over the girl. "She's not dead," she said, "she's very much alive. She's only stunned."

Hernandez motioned to the brute. "Carry her to the car," he commanded.

"Now, slowly," commanded Inez of Hernandez, "until I revive the girl."

They were in open country now—the community was but sparsely settled. Hernandez glanced warily from side to side.

"We must make haste," he mused, taking a grass-grown road to the right.

He stopped the car before a house. It was an ordinary dwelling. There was no sign of life about it. The grass in the dooryard was a foot high. Everything appeared unkempt. But in the parlor window was a sign: To let, furnished. Hernandez stepped into the dooryard and peered into the windows.

"We'll let it furnished—free—for a short time," he said.

He forced the door and entered.

"All the comforts of home," he said, smiling, "fetch in the girl."

Back in the city, Neal, off duty once again, sought Annette at her hotel.

"She's gone again—alone," said Mrs. Hardin, "she would go. She's so restless she couldn't sit still."

Neal smiled. He was not worried. He got a saddle horse and started off in the direction taken by Annette.

friend. We owe him much—much." He turned a sneering smile on Welcher. Annette uttered an exclamation.

"Joe—Joe," she cried, "is it true?"

Joe turned away—his chest heaving, his eyes upon the floor. "Aw, I'm no good," he muttered.

"Never mind, Joe, fair one," said Hernandez, taking from his pocket a legal document already carefully prepared. "We have business at hand. This document—you should really know what it contains. It is in proper shape, I assure you. A bit soiled perhaps, from long disuse in my breast pocket—but well worded. Look—it is complete. It is even acknowledged before a United States consul in Central America—acknowledged by you, fair one."

"It is not," snapped Annette.

"Fair Inez here," went on Hernandez, "signed it Annette Ilington—the consul was quite satisfied that she was you. But—I have erased her signature—she lacks the cleverness called forgery. And your signature may be on record somewhere—who knows. Comparisons are odious. Let us therefore be complete. Take in hand a pen, my pretty. Sign your name, over this erasure—opposite this seal."

"I'll never sign," returned Annette.

"You will sign," said Hernandez evenly, "and you will hand over to us all the evidence you have upon your person. Sign."

"No," said Annette.

"Well and good," went on Hernandez in honeyed accents. "Beast—hold her firm. Disobey and the lash for yours." Hernandez took from his coat pocket a piece of cord. He tied the ends together.

Despite her struggles he fitted this noose-like cord over Annette's head and thrust into it a piece of wood. Then he began to twist.

"Tell me when you've had enough," he said.

Like a stone from a catapult Joe Welcher hurled himself across the room and was upon Hernandez in a flash. Under the assault Hernandez retreated violently to the wall, striking his head against the mantel.

"Are you crazy, you—worm?" cried Hernandez with a snarl.

"I've—turned," snarled Joe in return.

Without waiting for breath he flung himself once more at Hernandez.

"Help!" cried Hernandez. "Inez—tackle this mosquito."

Inez was a valuable ally. She attacked Joe from the rear, and her assault was effectual. Her onslaught was so severe that it caused Joe to retreat. He did retreat until he faced them both.

"Now," said Hernandez, "and both descended upon him. Joe was ready for them. He seized a chair and whirled it about his head—frenzy lending him violence and strength.

"Come on!" he cried, "all three of you at once!"

With one wild final swing he brought the chair crashing down on Hernandez's head. No, not on Hernandez's head. It fell short of that, but crashed on something else—the chandelier above Hernandez's head.

There was a ripping, tearing, cracking sound—and then a crash. Down came the chandelier! It tangled heap upon the floor.

For one instant there was a cessation of hostilities. The shades were down—the lights extinguished—the room plunged into semi-darkness—Annette watched in a fright. Suddenly a strange, familiar odor assailed her nostrils.

"Stop—stop!" she cried.

But none heeded her. The brute still held her fast. And Joe, in his new and ungovernable frenzy, was once more at it with the chair, clearing a



"Up—Up," He Cried, Tugging at Her.

killed her—he must bring her to life again.

With her in his arms he started up the lane—whither he knew not.

Suddenly, in the distance, he saw Neal—on horseback. Welcher broke into a run toward his foster brother.

"She—she lives," said Joe thickly, "at any rate—you can tell her—tell mother—tell yourself—that I brought her back—to life. That pays up—pays up—for—"

He fell prone upon the ground.

Neal knelt by his side. "Gone," he said, taking off his hat, "gone, Annette."

"We'll forget everything," she answered sobbing, "except that he saved me—that he died a hero—a real hero—at the last!"

"Lock the woman in a cabin," commanded Neal, "and keep guard upon her day and night."

All night he lay, chained heavily, solitary, in the lazarette, working out his own salvation—not eternal, but material. And he always came to one conclusion—"I'll beat them yet."

All night the pilot puzzled his head over his compass.

As dawn broke, in the crow's nest aloft, the lookout shaded his eyes with his hand—then with the same hand shaded his mouth.

"Land ho!" he cried, "land ho!"

Neal heard him and hurried to the pilot's side. "Can't be Lost Isle," he exclaimed.

"Must be," said the pilot, "we're headed straight for her—straight as the crow flies, sir. But I can't understand it, either—blest if I—"

The sentence was unfinished. With a terrific shock the vessel crashed into an unseen reef—an unknown reef, for they had ventured into uncharted seas. Neal understood the danger. The shock was too terrific to be ignored. It meant a wreck—it would be a matter of minutes only before she filled.

"Man the boats," he cried, "order all on deck. Make haste."

He rushed in person to Annette's door and threw it open. In person he lifted Annette and her mother into the first boat. Inez also was included. It was lowered safely. Neal turned to his crew. "Get the lazarette prisoner," he commanded, "drag him into this boat here. Be about it now."

Hernandez, in a frenzy of fear, had been beating with his chains upon the barred door of the lazarette. They dragged him forth, his face working with fear and rage, and bundled him into the second boat. The brute leaping in behind. Half way down the side something happened—the gear broke. The boat dropped—its one end still held to the tackle—and plunged its human burden into the sea beneath.

Hernandez, heavy with his irons, clung to the brute. The brute was still a paragon of strength. With both Hernandez's hands upon his brawny shoulders—with the dragging weight of Hernandez's irons upon him, he swam, with even, steady strokes, toward the shore—swam for an hour, tirelessly, like some huge dog.

Suddenly his feet touched sand. . . . Neal and Annette stood upon a strip of beach, staring all about them.

"This," said Annette, "must be Lost Isle—the admiral was right—it is deserted. Unless we find a Robinson Crusoe here—possibly—my father."

Neal shook his head. "I'm not sure it's Lost Isle," he commented, "and I'm not sure it's deserted. See that turn in the short line—let's round the corner and have a better look."

Around the corner, some three-quarters of a mile away, a group of naked natives clustered greedily about a fire. Above the fire something—horribly gruesome—turned and turned upon a slowly-revolving spit. Scattered about upon the ground, were human skulls.

One of the natives held up his arms, uttering guttural sounds and pointed off the shore. The whole crowd broke into a run—reached the shore and waited.

Two men staggered from the water toward the beach.

The group of natives set up a yell of triumph . . . here, then, were two more human skulls—two more gruesome forms to be turned upon a spit over a hot fire. Yes, Mariners were quite right. These were indeed, uncharted seas—Hernandez and the brute were pioneers.

The brute looked straight ahead. He placed his arm about his master's quivering shoulders and stepped up out of the sea, straight into that diabolical group of twentieth-century anthropophag. The brute knew no fear. The black brutes reached forth clutching hands and touched him—seized Hernandez. The brute stretched forth a hand, seized a savage by the neck, and whirled him round and round about his head, striking the black men right and left. . . .

Then he tossed his captive into the sea, leaving him to struggle out as best he might.

There was a wild cry among the natives—then suddenly, they prostrated themselves before the brute.

"He has a white face—white beard," they told each other, "down down, on your faces. He is a god—our god."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"103" and "105" Oats for Iowa.

Ames, Feb. 3.—When seventy farmers of Iowa each sow an acre of "Iowa 103" and "105" seed varieties of oats sent out by the Iowa agricultural experiment station, with an average gain in yield over old varieties of 4.92 bushels per acre, it is almost proof positive that the new varieties "have something on" their competitors.

This was not a happen-so-gain. In 1914, in fifty-eight trials across "103" led its competitors by 4.65 bushels per acre and "105" by 4.78 bushels. In 1913, "Iowa 103" in forty-four tests, outyielded its competitors by an average gain of 3.76 bushels per acre, this in a season of drought.

The new-oats are not the ordinary commercial varieties generally grown in the state. The breeding stock was selected after studying and testing several thousand plants for stiffness of straw and yield of grain.

The new varieties are quite different in character. "Iowa 103" is an early white oat, well adapted to ordinary upland soils, while "105" is an early yellow variety about three inches shorter than the Klerson and bred to stand up on very rich soils where other oats lodge. Farmers who expect to plant "105" should remember that it is too short for thin hilltops. Both varieties give a comparatively light yield of straw, a ton of bundles usually thrashing out over 1,200 pounds of grain.

The seed at the Ames station this year is somewhat discolored, due to wet weather last harvest. Tests have proven it of strong vitality, however. The Ames station is selling it for planting this spring at cost, at these prices: Lots of fifty bushels and over, \$1.00; twenty-five to fifty bushels, \$1.10; ten to twenty-five bushels, \$1.25. Those interested should write L. C. Burnett, Iowa agricultural experiment station.

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Notice in Probate.

State of Iowa, Crawford County, ss.—In Probate.

In the matter of the estate of Jeanette O. Wright, late of Crawford County, deceased.

Notice of Appointment of Administrator.

To Whom It May Concern:

You are hereby notified that on the 4th day of February, 1916, the undersigned was duly appointed administrator of the above entitled estate, and all creditors of said estate are notified to file their claims in the office of the clerk of the district court, in and for Crawford county, Iowa, within one year from the date of this notice, according to law, and have the same allowed and ordered paid by the said court, or stand forever barred therefrom.

Dated this 5th day of February, 1916

J. P. JONES, Conner & Powers, Attorneys, 6-31



He Seized a Chair and Whirled It About His Head.