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SERIAL STORY

K. O. CAVALIER

BY JERRY BRONDFIELD

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VAL DOUGLAS—girl sports writer, shipped on a freighter to find excitement.

EDDIE CAVALIER—a prize fighter headed for the title, has a score to settle with Val.

CAPTAIN STEVE HANSEN—skipper of the Northern Belle.

DUFFY KELSO—Cavalier's manager.

YESTERDAY: In a tavern in Prince Rupert, Val overhears a man report that the Northern Belle is in port. She senses trouble and when the man leaves with two companions she and Eddie follow. They are suddenly halted when someone behind them commands them to stop, backs his order up with a gun.

CHAPTER XVIII

The man with the gun waved Val and Eddie forward. "Okay, keep going just the way you're headed. I'm gonna stick this gat back in my pocket now, but my finger'll be on the trigger all the time . . . if you get what I mean."

He whistled one shrill note and the four men ahead stopped and turned around.

"Look what I found trailing you guys," their captor said. He motioned his prisoners against the wall of a warehouse. One of the others snapped a flashlight beam in their faces for a moment.

"Who are they?"

"Ain't knowing but I think they got ideas they shouldn't be having," he said significantly.

The man with the flashlight, evidently the leader, nodded.

"People with ideas got to be watched. Get 'em inside here, Joe, and see they don't get into mischief. No rough stuff—boss' orders—but keep 'em tame. Meet us at 12. You know where."

The man named Joe nodded.

"Lucky I came up just when I did. But you sure you won't need me?"

"Positive. They only got six mebbe eight, men on board and"

Suddenly he stopped short and looked at Val in the dim light of the abandoned warehouse. "This dame here," he said slowly, "I know who she is. She's the reporter who shipped on with that outfit in Frisco. Her picture was in a lot of the papers this past week. That gives me an idea."

Val held her breath, wondering what his idea was.

"We get Johnny here to take a message to Steve Hansen that she's been hurt, an' for him to send a couple of men to get her back on the ship. That makes it just that much easier for us."

"Quick," he said. "We gotta move fast." He sent one of his men away after brief instructions. Johnny was back in 15 minutes. "Hansen swallowed the whole story," he reported.

a couple—maybe three—men into town. That would leave a bare handful on board. Taken by surprise they wouldn't have a chance. For a moment she blamed Steve for allowing anyone to have shore leave that night, but it was too late now.

But it mustn't be too late, she told herself fiercely. They had to do something.

Yet, the dread thought came to her. Why should Eddie Cavalier get himself involved in anything that might endanger his future, his very life. It would be awfully easy to get himself shot, or even break a bone in his hand, or something like that.

Eddie Cavalier at the moment, however, sat looking up at a stack of empty barrels piled high next

to him. A fantastic hope grew with leaps and bounds when he noticed that the bottom barrel was resting on a big piece of burlap. Eddie found that merely by letting his hand dangle at his side he could clutch that burlap firmly.

As casually as possible he took hold. Suddenly he gave a mighty jerk, with all his strength.

With a crash, the whole pile of barrels came tumbling down as Eddie pulled the bottom one from underneath.

Their captor leaped up with a startled oath. For one brief second he was off guard. That was all Eddie needed. He catapulted himself forward, grabbed the gunman's wrist with one hand and swung a terrific right to the chin with the other. Joe dropped without a sound.

It had happened so fast that Val could hardly follow it. One minute there had been the crashing roar of empty barrels tumbling about them. The next instant Eddie Cavalier had the gun in his own hand.

"We've got to tie this guy," she cried.

"No time," Eddie said. "He won't be waking up for quite a while, anyway. Let's go."

They dashed out and ran down toward where the Northern Belle lay tied to her pier.

"How about a policeman?" she panted.

"No time for that, either."

It was almost a half hour since the other men had started out. Her heart pumping wildly, Val hoped and prayed they wouldn't be too late.

It was dark and quiet when they reached the ship. Eddie stopped. "You stay here," he said curtly. "Or better still, you can go for that cop you were talking about."

Her answer was to grab his hand and hurry up the gangplank. They pattered along deck and almost tripped over a pair of legs that projected alongside a hatch cover.

It was Mike Kelly securely tied and gagged. "They got Captain Hansen," he gasped as Eddie released him. "Just a couple of minutes ago. Someone sent word you had busted a leg or somethin'. Hansen sent a couple of guys into town, and bang, first thing we knew the joint was raided."

They scrambled down the companionway toward the hold. "Take it easy," Mike whispered. "Here, gimme that gun. I know how to use 'em," he said to Eddie. Eddie passed it over.

They skirted the engine room.

(Continued on Page Four)

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