

Hancock Harrie Irving

**Dave Darrin on  
the Asiatic Station.  
Or, Winning Lieutenants'...**



**Harrie Hancock**  
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Lieutenants' Commissions  
on the Admiral's Flagship**

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*ISBN <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/41661>*

# Содержание

CHAPTER I – TWO STRANGERS OF MANILA	4
CHAPTER II – THE TRAGEDY OF THE BAY	23
CHAPTER III – MR. PEMBROKE BREAKS IN	35
CHAPTER IV – THE LANDING PARTY AT NU-PING	45
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	48

# H. Irving Hancock

## Dave Darrin on the Asiatic Station / Or, Winning Lieutenants' Commissions on the Admiral's Flagship

### CHAPTER I – TWO STRANGERS OF MANILA

“I am delighted to have had the privilege of meeting you, Miss Chapin,” said Ensign Dave Darrin, lifting his uniform cap and bowing low at the end of the brief conversation. “And my thanks to you, Captain Chapin, for having afforded us the great pleasure.”

Ensign Dan Dalzell, U. S. Navy, delivered himself in similar fashion.

The two young naval officers turned and were about to resume their stroll over the *Punta de España*, or Spanish bridge, which, crossing the Pasig River, separates Old Manila from New.

Just as suddenly, however, the pair checked their progress, to stare across the bridge.

On the opposite side, leaning against the rail, stood a Chinaman in rather rich apparel, with a decidedly sinister cast of countenance.

“Why is Old ‘Burnt-face’ staring so hard after Miss Chapin and her brother?” muttered Dalzell.

“I’m blessed if I know,” returned Dave Darrin. “I’ve a good mind to cross over and put your question to the Chinaman.”

“I’ve a greater mind to throw him into the Pasig,” growled Dalzell. “I’m not strong on race lines or color, but I don’t believe that any yellow man has a right to glare like that at an American girl.”

Dalzell took a step forward, as though to cross the bridge, but Darrin promptly caught his wrist.

“Don’t do anything rash, Danny Grin,” urged Dave. “Throwing a Chinaman into a river isn’t approved by the American government that has been set up in these islands.”

“Then perhaps I’d better not hoist him over the bridge rail and let him drop into the water,” Dan conceded. “But I believe that I will cross over and have a look at him.”

“Not a bad idea, and certainly not against the law,” nodded Ensign Darrin. “Let us follow the Chapins a little way, cross the road, and then come down on the other side so as to meet Mr. Burnt-face face to face.”

The nickname that the American pair had given the yellow man was due to a patch of purple skin, of considerable area, under the yellow man’s right eye. Had that patch been absent,

undoubtedly the Chinaman would not have appeared so sinister.

“Odd that a fine girl like Miss Chapin should want to waste her life serving as a missionary in China, isn’t it?” asked Dan.

“I wouldn’t call it wasting her life,” Darrin returned. “Neither, you may be sure, does Miss Chapin herself so consider it. To her way of thinking, she is devoting her life to one of the noblest ideals that can animate the human mind.”

“I wouldn’t mind so much if she were like the average girl,” Dan rambled on, rather vaguely. “But for a stunner like Miss Chapin – such a dainty little piece of exquisite womanhood – ”

“Oh,” laughed Dave. “Then it isn’t her services that you begrudge the natives of China, but her good looks.”

“Well, anyway,” Danny Grin continued rather testily, “I’ll wager that Chapin doesn’t fully approve of what his sister is doing.”

Captain Chapin was serving in one of the infantry regiments of the Army line at Manila. Being stationed in the city, Chapin had the good fortune to have his family, consisting of his mother, wife and two young children, located in a cottage over in Ermita, just beyond the massive stone walls of Old Manila. Miss Lucy Chapin was visiting her brother on her way to China, where a missionary post awaited her. Knowing Captain Chapin from the stirring days of service in Mexico, the two young naval officers, on meeting him here in Manila, the “Paris of the East,” had been presented to that charming young woman.

Crossing the roadway near the Old Manila end of the bridge,

Dave and Dan strolled back. In the meantime “Burnt-face,” as Dan had named him, had turned and was heading toward the Escolta, the Broadway of New Manila.

Both young officers wore the white service uniform of the tropics. Here and there a soldier or sailor, in passing, brought his hand to his cap in smart salute, a courtesy which both officers, in every instance, returned.

“That’s our fellow,” whispered Darrin, slowing down his step.

“Burnt-face,” a man of somewhere near forty, if it be possible to judge a Chinaman’s age, kept on his way at a pace neither hurried nor slow. Three different times parties of Chinese coolies passed him. On perceiving “Burnt-face” they lowered their eyes to the ground in passing.

Near the end of the bridge two much better dressed Chinamen passed the yellow man whom the young naval officers were now following. This pair made deferential bows, then moved slightly aside in order not to compel “Burnt-face” to step out of his own course.

“Our man is a chap of some importance,” murmured Darrin.

“He may be – to a Chinaman!” grunted Danny Grin.

Reaching the end of the bridge, the Chinaman paused, then started to cross the street as if to go to the famous Café de Paris.

Honk! honk! A touring car, going at about twelve miles an hour, rolled down out of the nearby Escolta, heading for the bridge. With an agile bound “Burnt-face” leaped back to the sidewalk.

“Look at the scowl he’s sending after that car,” whispered Dalzell.

“His lips are moving, too,” returned Darrin, quietly observant. “If it weren’t for the look on his face I should say that our chap was praying.”

“In his case,” muttered Dalzell, “he’s more likely cursing.”

“But say,” Dave went on. “Just observe how ‘Burnt-face’ continues to glare after that car.”

“Can he have anything against the people in the car?” Dan wondered.

“It is more likely that his hatred is directed against the car itself,” Darrin replied.

“But why should he hate a mere assemblage of mechanical units?” Dan demanded.

“I suppose that, being a Chinaman, he regards an automobile as the work of the Evil One,” Dave smiled. “Your real, old-fashioned Chinaman isn’t strong for new-fangled ideas. In some parts of China the appearance of an automobile, even to-day, would rouse a mob to wild fury.”

“Queer old place, China!” uttered Dalzell.

“Since we’re waiting orders to go to China, you’ll soon know,” Dave rejoined.

“I don’t believe I shall like China,” Dan declared prophetically.

Now that the road was clear, “Burnt-face” crossed the street. He did not go to the Café de Paris, but stepped up in front of a drug store, where he halted and turned around.

In passing, Dave and Dan managed, without staring, to get a good look at the yellow face. In addition to the purple mark under the right eye, “Burnt-face,” with his lips parted, displayed one incisor tooth, the lower end of which had been broken off. At the left side of his chin was a mark such as might have been made by a knife or a bullet.

“He’s an ugly-looking customer,” Dan muttered, when he and his chum had passed a few yards beyond the drug store.

“That face carries a history,” guessed Darrin. “Nor do I believe that it is a very savory history.”

“I believe that the only real pirates left in the world,” observed Dan, “are the Black Flags that every now and then infest Chinese waters. I wonder if ‘Burnt-face’ were ever apprenticed to the Black Flags.”

“Don’t talk about him any more,” murmured Dave, after a backward glance. “The Chinaman is now returning our late courtesies by following *us*.”

Attracted by the window display of a shop that dealt in Hindu curios, the two young naval officers went inside.

“I want to buy something pretty with which to surprise Belle,” Dave explained, as the chums roamed through the shop, inspecting the hundreds of quaint and artistic articles offered for sale.

“You expect her to reach Manila the 26th of the month, don’t you?” Dan asked.

“The 16th,” Darrin corrected his chum.

“Due here in eleven days?” cried Dalzell, sharing his comrade’s pleasure in the thought. “My, Dave, you’re a very lucky young man!”

“It seems ages since I said good-bye to Belle,” Dave went on musingly. “Dan, it almost seems as if I had not seen my wife since she and I were high school sweethearts.”

“I can take my oath that you’ve seen her more recently than that,” laughed Dan. “Yet I know that it must seem a long while between your meetings.”

A Hindu salesman, wearing European clothes, topped by a real Hindu turban, now approached them.

“Something really nice for a lady,” Dave nodded.

“Pardon, excellency,” replied the Hindu, with a low bow. “Is the lady – ah – young?”

“Yes,” assented Ensign Darrin.

“May I – ah – inquire whether the young lady be – ah – wife, sweetheart, or sister?” suggested the Hindu, with a second bow that was lower than the first.

“Why do you need to know that?” demanded Dave, frowning slightly. “She’s the finest girl on earth. Isn’t that enough for you to know?”

“Then,” declared the Hindu imperturbably, “she is your sweetheart, and in that case I am certain that I know exactly what to show you.”

“Oh, you do?” grimaced Ensign Darrin. “Then trot out the best you have.”

“Will your excellency condescend to step this way?” proposed the Hindu, with the lowest bow yet. “I shall exert myself to show you the very finest that we have suitable for distinguished presentation to a sweetheart.”

Down to a vault, at the rear of the shop, the salesman led the way. Opening the vault door he nimbly slipped out two trays of exquisite yet eccentric Hindu jewelry.

“Now, let the excellency gloat over these,” begged the salesman, throwing out a bewildering array of rings, brooches, amulets, bracelets, neck chains and the like, set in a dazzling array of precious and semi-precious gems.

“How much is this chain?” asked Dave, picking up one of beautiful workmanship.

“The price of that, excellency, is twelve hundred dollars, but as a very special favor to an officer in the Service I will allow it to go out of the store at eleven hundred.”

Sighing, Dave laid the chain down.

“It is not fine enough, I know, excellency,” glowed the salesman. “Now, look at this chain. Is it not handsomer?”

“Yes,” Dave admitted.

“This chain, excellency, is a wonderful bargain at fifteen hundred dollars.”

Dave sighed, but declined to examine the chain.

“Even if you had the money with you,” remarked Danny Grin, “your wife would hardly think you displayed good judgment in spending almost a year’s salary to buy her a chain.”

“Oh, it is for your wife?” exclaimed the Hindu, in an almost shocked voice.

“Yes,” Dave assented.

“Oh, in that case, excellency – ”

With incredibly rapid movements the Hindu put the articles back into the two drawers, shoved them into the vault and closed the door.

“Here you are, excellency!” cried the Oriental, springing to a near-by counter. “Here is a chain of considerable beauty, and it costs but six dollars.”

Giving a momentary gasp, Darrin eyed the fellow, then suddenly reached over and took him in a tight collar grip.

“What do you mean, Mr. Insolence?” Darrin demanded sternly. “Do you wish to insinuate that a sweetheart calls for a handsome gift, but that anything is good enough for a wife?”

“Er – ah – in *my* country, excellency, when one buys for a sweetheart it is one thing. When he buys for a wife – ”

“Then thank goodness that my country isn’t your country,” uttered Ensign Darrin disgustedly, while Danny Grin implored:

“Before you let him go, Davy, turn him around this way so that I may register at least one kick!”

But Darrin suddenly released the rather frightened fellow, saying crisply:

“Show me some pieces of jewelry at prices around fifty dollars.”

At first the salesman displayed several pieces for which he

asked from seventy-five to a hundred dollars.

“You’re wasting my time, but I won’t waste yours,” Dave suddenly broke in, turning away.

“Wait a moment, excellency. Do you realize, excellency, that you have not, in any instance, attempted to bargain with me?”

“Do you mean that you expect me to work you down to a lower price?” asked Ensign Dalzell, lowering his voice.

“It is customary to bargain, excellency,” replied the Hindu, with a bow, though not so low as he had displayed at first.

“I’m not going to bargain with you,” Dave declared quietly. “At any price you name for an article I shall either accept the price, and pay it, or else refuse further to consider that article. And don’t waste any more of my time. At the first sign of it I shall quit your store and not enter it again.”

Still the Hindu tried high prices for a while, then suddenly held up a necklace set with small, beautiful bits of jade.

“Eighty dollars,” he exclaimed.

“Mex?” broke in Dan quickly.

“Of course, excellency,” confirmed the Hindu.

“See here, David, little giant,” Danny Grin rattled on, “we’ve been going it a bit blind. We’ve been thinking of gold, or American dollars, while this man has been talking on the basis of the Mexican silver dollar.”

In the Philippine Islands the Mexican dollar is still the basis of currency. As this dollar is worth less than half of that amount in gold, the price charged by the Hindu, translated into American

money, amounted to less than forty dollars.

"I'll take it," Dave announced, after a keen inspection of the necklace.

Payment was made, and the necklace was placed in a box so small that Ensign Darrin was easily able to drop it into one of his pockets.

From the curb outside a pair of glittering, bead-like eyes had peered into the gloom of the store.

Dave and Dan left the curio shop, the former feeling happier at thought of the pleasant surprise secured for Belle.

Further up the Escolta there now appeared a somewhat Americanized Chinese youth, of perhaps sixteen years, who soon started indolently on the trail of the strolling naval officers.

"Where now?" inquired Danny Grin.

"Have you anything that you wish to do ashore?" Dave asked.

"Nothing."

"Neither have I, so suppose we go down to the office of the Captain of the Port. Our launch should be in soon."

"Suits me," nodded Dan.

These two young officers are the same Dave and Dan whose fortunes our readers have followed through many volumes full of exciting adventures and strange incidents.

Our readers first met them in the pages of the "Grammar School Boys Series," in which Darrin and Dalzell appeared as members of that now famous group of six schoolboys who were collectively known as Dick & Co., taking that name from their

leader, Dick Prescott. Their adventures are further to be found in the High School Boys Series, and in the High School Vacation Series.

At the end of high school days Dick Prescott and Greg Holmes went to the United States Military Academy at West Point. What there befell the two cadets is set forth in the pages of the West Point Series. The professional careers of Tom Reade and Harry Hazelton, once also of Dick & Co., are to be found in the exciting volumes of the Young Engineers Series. Dave Darrin and Dan Dalzell, as all our readers are aware, were appointed midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, and their lives in that famous training school are splendidly depicted in the Annapolis Series.

The present series, as our readers know, depicts the life of Dave and Dan at sea as young officers. The first volume, "Dave Darrin at Vera Cruz," deals with the famous events suggested by the title. In the second volume, "Dave Darrin on Mediterranean Service," is told what befell our young friends in their efforts to frustrate an international plot of possibly grave consequence to this country. The third volume, "Dave Darrin's South American Cruise," which our readers have lately read, deals with the adventures of the two young naval officers in foiling the outrageous plots of a South American ex-dictator, scheming to get back into power. And now, at last, we find Dave and Dan on the Asiatic Station.

Hardly had the naval officers turned out of the Escolta, at the

water front, when Dan noticed that the sidewalk held at least fifty Chinese.

“This is the greatest of American cities, as far as Chinese population goes,” smiled Dave. “Manila never has less than a hundred thousand Chinese residents.”

Out in the road stood a solitary member of the Chinese population. At a signal from the youth behind the naval officers, he said a few words in guttural undertone.

Quickly the Chinese came together, jabbering and crowding the sidewalk.

“Gangway!” cried Danny Grin, as he and Dave found themselves pressing through the yellow throng.

Slowly, rather indifferently, the Chinese made way for the two naval officers to step through the crowd. Had Dave and Dan gone out into the road to get around this crowd it would have been at the expense of their dignity in a city where no white man is supposed to allow coolies to block his way.

“Gangway!” roared Dalzell.

The Americanized Chinese boy was now close beside the naval officers. A small, skinny yellow hand reached out.

“I’m sure Belle will be delighted with that necklace,” Dave murmured to himself.

Alas! That jewel box no longer rested in his pocket, for the yellow boy with the bead-like eyes, at that very instant, had filched the little package. Nor did the picking of the white men’s pockets cease at that point.

Once through the throng, the two young ensigns were not long in reaching the building in which are situated the offices of the Captain of the Port. It is opposite this building, on the bank of the Pasig River, where launches from naval vessels and army transports come in and tie up.

“Launch not in,” announced Danny Grin.

“We’ll have some minutes to wait,” Dave answered. “Let’s go over there and get a soda.”

“Over there” referred to a little white one-story building, in which plain soda and similar beverages were sold.

Dave and Dan stepped inside, calling for soda water and drinking thirstily.

“Tastes good,” muttered Dan. “Let’s have another.”

So the second soda was ordered, and was finished more slowly. Then Darrin reached into one of his pockets. Soon he explored another pocket.

“Why, that’s queer!” muttered Dave, aloud. “I thought my money – ”

“Never mind your money, chum,” interrupted Dan Dalzell. “I’ll pay for – ”

A few seconds later Dan’s expression changed to one of great amazement.

“Why, where *is* my money?” he gasped.

“Don’t look for it,” returned Dave. “I don’t believe you’ll find it. For myself, my pockets have been completely cleaned out. I haven’t even the necklace that I bought for Belle.”

“Look here!” uttered Danny Grin, his lower jaw dropping low, indeed. “Have we been robbed? Have our pockets been gone through just as if we were a pair of rubes?”

“Our pockets have been picked all right,” Darrin assented, with a smile.

“Then it was done while we were in that Chinese sidewalk mob!” said Dan, quivering with rage. “Just wait until I overhaul ’em, and – ”

Dan sprang outside. His good intentions, however, came to naught, for the crowd of Chinese had disappeared.

“It’s a good joke on us,” grinned Dave, though not very mirthfully.

“Oh, is it?” flashed back Danny Grin. “Then enjoy yourself! Laugh as heartily as you can. But I’ve been touched for two hundred and forty dollars. How much did you lose?”

“A hundred and sixty dollars, and the necklace,” confessed Darrin.

“Say,” muttered Ensign Dalzell, another strange look coming into his face as he made another discovery. “I wish I could find those yellow-faced thieves.”

“Why?”

“They overlooked something,” almost exploded Dalzell. “They didn’t get my watch. It seems to me that it would be no more than honest to run after them and hand them that, also.”

Dan held up his gold watch.

“They left my watch in my clothes, too,” nodded Dave.

“I wonder why?” murmured Dalzell.

“Over four hundred dollars, from the two of us,” muttered Dave, staring grimly up the road. “Not a bad two minutes’ work for some one.”

“It would make me feel more kindly to the poor fellow if only he’d come back and take my watch and chain,” declared Danny Grin. “I hate to see a poor thief overlook anything of value.”

“I was wondering,” Dave continued, “whether it would do any good to complain to the police. On second thought, I believe I shall write the chief of police after I go aboard ship. If there’s a regular gang working this part of Manila, then the police ought to know it, but I’ve no idea that the police would be able to get our money back.”

“That money has been under cover for some minutes,” rejoined Dalzell. “If you’ve any loose change you might settle our bill here.”

“I haven’t a cent,” Darrin confessed.

But the proprietor of the little shop begged the young gentlemen to forget the little bit of small change that they owed him. This both Dan and Dave refused to do, promising to pay him the next time they came ashore.

No sooner did they step outside than they were confronted by a well-dressed, tall young man under thirty.

“I hope you’ll pardon me,” said this stranger, with a rather decided English accent, “but I couldn’t possibly help overhearing your conversation inside. For that reason I know that you have

had the misfortune to be robbed of your money by Chinese thieves. Now – no offense intended, I assure you – could I be of any manner of use to you? Pembroke is my name, you know; Pembroke of Heathshire, England. I'm on my way around the world. Now, if between one gentlemen and two others, you know, I could be of any – ”

The Englishman paused, as if embarrassed; it was plain that he was trying to offer a loan of money.

“I think I understand you, Mr. Pembroke,” Ensign Darrin replied, with a grateful smile. “It is extremely kind in you, but the robbery has left us embarrassed only for a moment. Both of us have funds deposited with the paymaster on board ship, and after we go aboard it is only a matter of asking for what we need.”

“You're not annoyed, I trust,” murmured Pembroke apologetically.

“No; profoundly glad to find such faith in human nature as you have displayed,” smiled Ensign Darrin.

“Oh, I don't trust the whole blooming human race,” declared Mr. Pembroke gravely. “I'm not such a simpleton as that. But I know that good old Uncle Sam's officers are gentlemen, and between gentlemen, you know, there is and should be a lot of jolly confidence.”

In the easiest way in the world, Mr. Pembroke was now sauntering along with the two young Americans.

“Do you know much about the Chinese?” Dave inquired.

“Not enough to make me like 'em a precious lot,” replied

Pembroke.

“I wish I could understand their lingo,” muttered Dalzell.

“And I’m positively proud that I don’t!” glowed Mr. Pembroke.

They had halted at the water’s edge, now, Dan turning his eyes in the direction of the breakwater to see if he could make out the launch for which he and his chum waited.

“Here comes a fuzzy-fuzzy boat,” announced Dalzell, at last. “But it’s not ours. Just as it happens, the craft is a Frenchman.”

Pembroke cast a glance at the approaching launch, then went on chatting with Darrin.

Presently the launch ran in alongside, a middle-aged French officer stepping up on the jetty not fifty feet from where Dave and his companions stood.

The Frenchman started rather visibly when his gaze rested on Pembroke. Dave noticed that. And Pembroke saw the Frenchman, for one fleeting instant. Then the Englishman turned his back squarely, while the French naval officer, holding himself very erect, and with a frown on his face, returned the courteous salute of the young American officers.

“Do you know that gentleman, Mr. Pembroke?” Dave asked quietly.

“Never saw him before,” declared Mr. Pembroke coldly.

“That’s odd,” reflected Dave. “If faces are books, and if glances may be read, I should have said that the Frenchman didn’t like our very courteous Englishman.”

The French officer was now passing out of sight.

"I see our launch," called out Danny Grin.

"I say, Mr. Darrin, by the way," spoke up the Englishman, "what is your ship?"

"The gunboat 'Castoga'," Darrin answered.

"Then, if you don't mind, I'm going to do myself the honor, some afternoon in the near future, of going out to your ship and calling on you. I find it very dull here in Manila, you know, and I shall be glad to see more of you both."

"We shall undoubtedly meet at one of the clubs ashore," Dave smiled back steadily into the other's eyes. "In that case, I'll try to introduce you to our commanding officer, and I've no doubt that he'll be glad to extend you a cordial invitation to come aboard."

A few moments later the launch from the "Castoga" came gliding in at the jetty. Dave and Dan extended their hands to Mr. Pembroke, then stepped aboard the launch, leaving the Englishman to turn away.

Nor had he more than turned his back when Pembroke allowed a very distinct frown to gather on his face.

In front of the office of the Captain of the Port, Pembroke came face to face with the same French naval officer. The two men regarded each other stolidly and passed on without speaking.

## CHAPTER II – THE TRAGEDY OF THE BAY

“Why did you turn the Englishman down so hard?” asked Danny Grin, as he and Dave sat at the stern of the launch that sped down the river and then out to the naval anchorage in the bay.

“I didn’t,” Darrin replied.

“You shut off his proposal to visit us on board.”

“Dan, didn’t you notice the look that French naval officer gave Pembroke?”

“No.”

“Perhaps you noticed how stiffly the Frenchman stepped away after returning our salutes.”

“I saw that,” said Dan, “and wondered at it.”

“I think the French officer was trying to flag to us an intimation that Pembroke isn’t one who would pass inspection in naval circles.”

“No?” gasped Danny Grin, looking genuinely astonished. “It never struck me that way. He had the appearance and the manners of a gentleman.”

“So has many an international confidence man,” Dave rejoined. “I don’t know a blessed thing against Pembroke, and perhaps the Frenchman doesn’t either. Unless I can find out

something definite about the Englishman, I hardly care to be the one to introduce him to our little wardroom crowd.”

“I see,” nodded Dalzell thoughtfully. “You’re right, Dave. One can’t be too careful about his introductions, nor can one very well receive callers on board ship without making them known to the other wardroom fellows.”

After the three battleships on which our young naval officers had served, the “Castoga” did seem small by comparison, although she was a gunboat of comfortable dimensions, with an ample wardroom for the number of officers carried, and with all the ordinary provisions for comfort afloat.

With a crew of one hundred and thirty sailors supplemented by a detachment of thirty marines; with a large enough crew in the engineer’s department, and with nine officers, including a surgeon and a paymaster’s clerk, in addition to three engineer officers, the “Castoga” carried a businesslike complement.

Lieutenant-Commander Tuthill was the commanding officer, with Lieutenant Warden as executive officer. The four watch officers were all ensigns.

After reporting their return to the officer of the deck, Dave and Dan went promptly to their quarters. Here, after bathing, they dressed for dinner, which was due to be served in less than half an hour.

At table, later, Dave told the tale of the robbery that afternoon. Dan added the tale of their meeting with Pembroke, and of that Englishman’s offer to loan them money.

“What kind of fellow is that Pembroke?” asked Lieutenant Warden.

Dave described the Englishman, adding, questioningly:

“Do you know him, sir, or know of him?”

“No,” replied Mr. Warden.

“I thought that Pembroke must be known to a French naval officer who passed us,” continued Darrin, and related that incident, too.

“The Frenchman’s shrug was nothing against the Englishman,” remarked Lieutenant Warden. “It might have been merely instinctive aversion, or it might mean merely that the Frenchman and the Englishman had a dispute in the past, at this or some other port. Otherwise it would be odd indeed to see a Frenchman turn the cold shoulder on an Englishman when their countrymen are standing shoulder to shoulder on the long battle lines in Europe.”

“Surely, if the French officer knew Pembroke to be a gentleman, he would have rushed up and gripped Pembroke’s hand just out of a sentimental feeling for the strong bonds of friendship between France and England in these dark days in Europe,” nodded Dan understandingly.

“Pembroke wanted to come on board, sir,” Ensign Darrin went on, “but I couldn’t help feeling that, before inviting him, I would like to know more about him.”

“Caution of that sort is never amiss,” nodded the executive officer thoughtfully. “By the way, you don’t imagine that there

could have been any connection between the thieving Chinese and Mr. Pembroke, do you?”

“Why, I hadn’t thought of it in that way,” Ensign Darrin confessed. “There isn’t usually, is there, much connection between a thief who robs you and a man who offers to lend you a little money?”

“There might be easily,” said Mr. Warden.

“Our last half hour on shore was a puzzle altogether,” Dave went on, after a short pause. “First, we followed that burnt-face Chinaman. Then we ran into a crowd of Chinese who cleaned out our pockets of everything but our watches. And then we met Pembroke, at whom the French officer turned up his nose. I am now actually beginning to wonder if ‘Burnt-face,’ the thieves and Pembroke may not all be links in a chain of mystery.”

“At least Pembroke doesn’t speak or understand the Chinese language,” Dalzell broke in.

“He *said* he didn’t,” Dave returned. “However, if Pembroke is not a gentleman and a straightforward fellow, it is as easy to believe that he lied as that he spoke the truth.”

“Don’t bother any more about it,” advised Ensign Hale bluffly. “The money is gone. As to the rest of the story, it isn’t worth puzzling your heads over. Your adventure was all grossly material. No such things as mysteries or romances are left in the world – nothing but work.”

“Nevertheless,” smiled Ensign Darrin seriously, “I shall continue to admit myself puzzled until I have succeeded in

gathering certain information that I really wish.”

“What kind of information?” asked Hale.

“For instance, I want to know if ‘Burnt-face’ has any connection with the yellow boys who went through our pockets.”

“I think that at least half likely,” replied Ensign Hale gravely.

“And then, next, I want to know,” Darrin went on, “if there is any connection between ‘Burnt-face’ and Pembroke.”

“That is much less likely,” answered Hale.

“Last of all, if Pembroke is in the least shady, I’d like to know something definite about him,” wound up Ensign Dave.

“Go to the Frenchman for that,” advised Hale.

“Thank you; I believe I shall.”

“But what does it matter, Darrin,” asked Lieutenant Warden, “whether Pembroke is all right, or not? You turned him aside from visiting this craft, so what does it matter whether the fellow is a gentleman or the reverse?”

“Because,” replied Dave Darrin, so solemnly that some of his brother officers stared, “I have a premonition that I’m going to meet Pembroke again, and under conditions where I shall be glad to know something definite about the fellow.”

At eight bells in the evening Ensign Dalzell went on duty as officer of the deck. Darrin, aroused in season from a nap, took over the watch at midnight.

“Any orders?” asked Darrin of his chum.

“None, save the usual orders for the safety and security of the ship,” Dalzell replied. Salutes were exchanged, and the former

officer of the deck hurried to his quarters.

A marine sentry paced aft, another forward. Six sailormen, including two petty officers, occupied their posts about the deck and on the bridge. Two or three of the engine-room crew were on watch below. The others on board slept, for the night was clear and the gunboat at anchorage half a mile out from the mouth of the Pasig River.

After the first tour of inspection to see that all was snug, Ensign Darrin leaned against the quarter rail, looking out over the water. By this time the sky had clouded somewhat, though the barometer remained stationary, showing that no atmospheric disturbances were to be looked for at present.

The night was so still that nothing but the discipline of trained habit prevented Ensign Darrin from nodding, then falling asleep.

Even as it was, his eyelids drooped almost to the closing point as he leaned there over the rail. But he was not asleep.

After some minutes Dave opened his eyes wider, straightened up and glanced out sharply over the water, on which objects were not now so clearly visible as they had been at midnight.

“That sounded like a paddle,” Darrin told himself, then added, in a low voice:

“Sentry!”

“Aye, aye, sir,” replied the marine, in a low voice, at the same time giving the rifle salute.

“I thought I heard a boat approaching yonder. Keep your eye open for any kind of craft coming near.”

“Aye, aye, sir!”

It was Ensign Darrin who discovered a small, outrigger canoe stealing forward in the night. Two seconds later the marine also reported it. Calling the nearest sailor to him, Dave gave him brief, whispered instructions which sent the young man slipping noiselessly forward.

“Shall I hail that craft, sir?” whispered the sentry, standing stiffly beside the young officer.

“Not yet,” Dave rejoined. Both stood there, watching keenly. Few landsmen, on such a night, would have been able to make out so small a craft at such a distance. Those who follow the sea are trained to cat-like vision.

“Sentry,” whispered Dave, “do you make out a second craft, following the first?”

“Just barely sir,” replied the sentry, after a sharp look.

Unless the two small craft changed their courses speedily Darrin knew that he would have to hail them and warn them off. In these piping times of peace in the Philippines, there was nothing very suspicious in two boats coming close to a war vessel at anchor. Still, the two canoes could not be permitted to come up alongside without the occupants first giving an account of themselves.

“It looks like a race,” Dave told himself, as he continued to watch intently. “Jove, I am tempted to believe that the second canoe is trying to overtake the leader. What can it – ”

In the act of bawling an order forward, Ensign Dave Darrin

felt his tongue hit the roof of his mouth. For, at this instant, the pursuing canoe ranged up alongside the first.

There was a dim flash of something, accompanied by a yell of unearthly terror.

“Light!” shouted Dave Darrin huskily.

“Aye, aye, sir.”

In a twinkling, the narrow, dazzling beam of one of the forward searchlights shot over the water.

Within three seconds it had picked up the smaller of the canoes. To the watchers from the deck of the gunboat this canoe appeared to be empty.

Then the light shifted enough to pick up the second, larger canoe, now darting shoreward under the impetus of two powerful paddlers.

“Ahoy, there, shorebound boat!” yelled Ensign Darrin lustily. “Lay to and give an account of yourselves!”

The challenged canoe moved on so rapidly as to call for the constant shifting of the searchlight’s beam.

“Lay to, there, or we fire!” bellowed Ensign Darrin over the rippling waters of Manila Bay.

But the canoe made no sign of halting.

“Sentry!”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

“Take aim and hold it!”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

Then again Dave challenged.

“Shorebound boat, third challenge! Lay to, instantly!”

No attention being paid by the two paddlers, Ensign Darrin now gave the sharp order:

“Fire!”

That bullet must have whistled uncomfortably close to the fleeing craft, for on the instant both paddlers rose in the canoe.

“Fire!” commanded Ensign Dave, the second time.

At the sound of the marine’s shot both poised figures sprang overboard from the canoe.

“Shall I fire again, sir?” asked the marine, as the beam of the searchlight continued to play upon the waters where the divers had vanished.

“Not unless you see those men that jumped overboard from that canoe,” replied Ensign Darrin.

Though the searchlight continued to flash further across the water, nothing was seen of the men from the canoe. Indeed, at the distance, the rippling waves might easily conceal a swimmer.

“Pass the word for the boatswain’s mate!” Darrin ordered.

As that petty officer appeared, Darrin ordered him to turn out a boat crew and put one of the boats over the side.

“First investigate the nearer canoe, then the second. Bring them both in alongside. If you see any swimmers in the water, pursue and pick them up.”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

Still the searchlight continued to play over the waters. The “Castoga’s” small boat ranged alongside the smaller outrigger

canoe, and soon had it in tow with a line astern. A minute or two after the second canoe was picked up. A short search was made for swimmers, after which, on signal, the boatswain's mate turned and headed for the gunboat.

"Ship's boat ahoy!" Dave called, as the boat and its tows came near.

"Ahoy the deck, sir!"

"Are both canoes empty?" Darrin inquired.

"The first one isn't, sir," replied the boatswain's mate. "There's a dead Chinaman in it. Head almost cut off; sword work, I should say, sir."

"Bring both tows alongside," Dave ordered, with a shiver. "I will communicate with the police."

After ordering a wireless operator turned out, Ensign Darrin went over the side, down a sea-ladder, to the smaller of the outrigger canoes.

Huddled in a heap in the canoe, was a Chinaman who did not seem to be more than thirty years of age. His head, nearly severed from his body, had fallen forward until it hung close to the dead man's chest. It was only by turning the head that Ensign Darrin was able to see the face, on which there still lingered a look of terror.

"A Chinese tong-fight or a gang murder," Dave told himself, in keen disgust.

Then climbing up over the side he sent an orderly to summon the executive officer.

Less than three minutes later Lieutenant Warden, fully dressed, and wearing his sword, walked briskly out upon the quarter-deck.

The executive officer listened intently while Ensign Darrin made his report with conciseness.

"I'll take a look at the body," said Mr. Warden, and went down over the side. He came up again, horror written in every line of his face.

"A cowardly killing, Ensign Darrin," declared the executive officer. "Notify the Manila police by wireless."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Call me again, if I am needed."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The instant Darrin had saluted and Mr. Warden had turned on his heel, Dave, under a light just inside the superstructure, wrote a few words which he signed in his official capacity as officer of the deck. This was sent forward to the waiting wireless operator, who sent the message to a military station on shore, whence the message was telephoned to police headquarters.

Within three minutes the wireless operator, ran aft, saluting, and reported:

"A police launch will put off immediately, and come out, sir."

Fifteen minutes later a motor launch, flying the police ensign, ranged up alongside the "Castoga." An American official, accompanied by four Filipino policemen, came on board.

Dave at once narrated what had happened, after which the

American police official inspected both canoes and looked at the huddled yellow body.

“This will require investigation, sir,” declared the police official. “I shall tow both canoes ashore, and then the force will get busy.”

“Don’t you wish to send a wireless ashore, urging the police to look out for two swimmers who are likely to attempt to land?” suggested Dave.

“An excellent idea,” replied the police official, and wrote out a despatch which Ensign Darrin sent to the wireless operator forward.

After that the launch chugged away with the two canoes in tow.

Twenty minutes later a wireless message was received aboard the “Castoga,” and immediately the operator brought it aft.

“Native Policeman Rafeta,” Ensign Darrin read, “reports that a Chinese swimmer was observed, by him, to land. The Chinaman reported that his skiff had upset. Native policeman, not being suspicious, reports that he allowed swimmer to proceed on his way. Swimmer is to be identified by a fire-mark on the right cheek under eye.”

“Burnt-face!” gasped Ensign Dave, recoiling slightly. “Then it seems that I was not quit of that fellow when I turned my back on him on the Escolta this afternoon. In what fiendish business can ‘Burnt-face’ be engaged?”

## CHAPTER III – MR. PEMBROKE BREAKS IN

On the next day the Manilla police had little of interest to add to the account of the night tragedy on Manilla Bay.

Searching the city, and especially the Chinese quarters, the police had been unable to find any yellow man answering to the description of “Burnt-face.”

Very likely many of the Chinese residents of the city knew the man who was sought, but Chinamen habitually mind their own business, even to the extent of withholding important information from the police. So within two or three days the chase was all but forgotten. The Chinese “tongs” are secret societies that commit killings in all parts of the globe where their people are to be found, and the death of an unknown Chinaman does not provoke the police anywhere to any great zeal in finding the slayer.

Then the “Castoga,” which, for reasons known only to the higher naval authorities, had been anchored half a mile from the mouth of the Pasig, was ordered to new anchorage off the naval station at Cavite.

On board, the officers had ceased to speak of the strange Chinese tragedy of the night; Dave and Dan had well-nigh ceased to think about it.

One afternoon the French gunboat "Revanche" received visitors. Ensigns Darrin, Dalzell and Hale were requested to represent the "Castoga" and did so, going over in the launch.

On board the French boat they found a sprinkling of English and Japanese naval officers. There were also a few officers from the United States Army.

Our American friends were introduced to all present whom they had not previously known. Half an hour later Darrin was inspecting the "Revanche's" lifeboat equipment under the escort of Lieutenant Brun, of the French Navy, when a superior officer appeared on deck. It was the same officer who had appeared, on shore, to exhibit such marked disapproval of Mr. Pembroke.

"There's an officer over there to whom I wish you would introduce me," Dave said to the lieutenant.

"With great pleasure," replied Brun, "as soon as our turn comes. That is Commander Bertrand, commanding the 'Revanche.' All the gentlemen present will be introduced to him now."

"If you don't mind," Dave added, quickly, in French, "I shall be glad to wait until the last, as I should like to have a few words with your commander."

A group had gathered around Commander Bertrand, who, all smiles and good will, played the host to perfection.

At last Lieutenant Brun led Dave over to be introduced. The introduction accomplished, Brun moved away a short distance.

After the first few polite exchanges had been made on both

sides, Dave asked:

“Would you object, sir, to telling me whether you know a Mr. Pembroke, an Englishman?”

“I know that it is a well-known English name,” replied Commander Bertrand, “but personally I know no Englishman of that name.”

“Do you remember seeing Mr. Dalzell and myself with a man in front of the office of the Captain of the Port a few days ago?”

“I recall having passed you,” replied the Frenchman readily.

“That was Mr. Pembroke with whom we were talking.”

“Was it?” inquired the Frenchman politely, as he raised his eyebrows. “Then perhaps I was in error. I felt that I had seen the man before, but at that time his name was Rogers.”

“May I inquire, sir, if you know this man Rogers?”

Commander Bertrand shrugged his shoulders slightly as he asked:

“Is he a friend of yours, Monsieur Darrin?”

“No; but he had presented himself to Mr. Dalzell and me, and then had offered to do us a service.”

“I do not believe that I would trust him,” replied the Frenchman. “I cannot say, positively, that Monsieur Rogers and Monsieur Pembroke are one and the same man, but this I can assure you – that Monsieur Rogers is far from being an honest man.”

Further than that the French officer seemed disinclined to discuss the subject. After a brief chat on other topics Dave

thanked the French Commander courteously and moved away. In less than two minutes, however, Dave found a chance to impart this information briefly to Danny Grin.

“Pembroke looks like a good one to dodge,” declared Ensign Dalzell.

“I don’t know,” returned Dave Darrin. “It all hinges on whether he is really the chap who once called himself Rogers. Commander Bertrand declined to be positive that they are one and the same, though for himself, he seems to believe it. However, we are not likely to see Pembroke again. He has made no effort to force himself upon us.”

Not long after that the launch called, and the “Castoga’s” visiting officers started to return to their own craft.

“There is some one waving to us,” declared Dave, staring across the water at the occupants of a small motor boat.

“Why, it looks like Captain Chapin,” returned Dalzell.

“It *is* Chapin, and that is his sister with him,” returned Dave. “See, she is standing up in the bow to wave her handkerchief to us.”

“Chapin ought not to allow her to stand up in the bow of such a narrow craft,” said Danny Grin. “It’s a risky pose for any one but a veteran sailor. It’s dangerous. She – ”

“By Jove!” burst from Darrin. “There she goes – overboard!”

For a rolling wave, catching the small motor boat under the bow, had rocked the little craft.

Miss Chapin was seen to stagger wildly and then plunge

overboard.

“They’ve stopped!” cried Dan. “She doesn’t come up, either!”

“Boatswain’s mate!” rang out Ensign Darrin’s voice sharply to the naval launch alongside. “Put over there at once. Run astern of the motor boat’s position.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” and the naval launch swung briskly around.

“I beg your pardon, Hale, for forgetting that you are ranking officer here,” Dave apologized, keeping his gaze out over the water.

“There’s no apology needed,” returned Ensign Hale. “Our only need is to reach the spot as quickly as possible.”

The motor boat had stopped. Captain Chapin at the first realization of the incident, had leaped up, and now stood scanning the water for the first glimpse of his sister when she would rise to the surface.

So great was the excitement on the naval launch that neither Dave nor Dan really noticed it when another man aboard the motor boat rose more slowly, showing his head for the first time above the gunwale.

As the motor boat put about on her course both Captain Chapin and this other man dived overboard.

“I wonder if they see Miss Chapin yet?” muttered Dave, as the naval launch raced to the scene.

It was speedily apparent that Miss Chapin had not yet been found, for both hatless swimmers swam about uncertainly, going down head first, from time to time, as though to explore the water

near the surface.

Then the naval launch plunged into the scene. From it dived three ensigns and two sailors aboard who were not engaged with the handling of the craft.

With seven expert swimmers now in the water, Miss Lucy Chapin stood an excellent chance of being found.

Hardly had the Navy men dived when Captain Chapin's male companion swam with long overhand strokes away from the rest.

"I see her!" shouted this swimmer, and dived.

"He has her!" panted Dalzell. "Hooray!"

Instantly six swimmers turned and swam toward the rescuer, who now appeared on the surface supporting a woman's head on his shoulder.

"Good work! Fine!" cheered Dave.

Captain Chapin was the first to reach his sister's rescuer.

"Is Lucy dead?" cried Chapin anxiously, when he beheld his sister's white face.

"Stunned," replied the rescuer. "I think she must have been struck on the head by the boat as it passed her."

Silently the other swimmers turned in behind the young woman, her rescuer and brother.

"Better bring Miss Chapin to the 'Castoga's' boat, Captain," Dave called. "It's larger. We'll take her directly to the gunboat and have the surgeon attend her."

The boatswain's mate ran the naval launch up within easy distance, and Miss Chapin was lifted aboard.

On one of the cushions Miss Chapin was laid, while all gathered about her anxiously.

“Make the ‘Castoga’ with all speed,” ordered Ensign Hale. “The young lady must have prompt attention.”

On the way to the “Castoga” Captain Chapin did everything he could think of to revive his sister. The others stood about, ready to help.

Then it was that Dave happened, for the first time, to face the rescuer.

“Pembroke!” he called in astonishment.

“Howdy do?” asked the Englishman, with a smile holding out his hand.

Though Dave felt himself chilling with suspicion of the pleasant stranger, he could not withhold his hand.

“I was on my way out to visit your ship,” smiled Pembroke, as he released Dave’s hand after a warm grip. “Captain Chapin was good enough to say that he would present me on board.”

“And glad indeed I am that I undertook to do so,” exclaimed Chapin. “If it hadn’t been for you, Pembroke, I am afraid my sister would have been lost.”

Pembroke was now engaged in shaking hands with Dalzell, who felt obliged to present him to Ensign Hale.

“A splendid rescue, that,” said Hale warmly.

The gunboat’s launch was now speedily alongside the “Castoga,” the motor boat, a small craft that carried passengers on the bay for hire, following at slower speed.

“We’ve a half-drowned young lady on board, who needs the surgeon’s attention,” called Hale, between his hands, just before the launch ran alongside.

Miss Chapin was immediately taken on board, and carried to the quarters of the executive officer, where she was laid in a bunk. Only her brother and the surgeon remained with her.

Dave felt obliged to introduce Pembroke to his brother officers. The Englishman proceeded to make their acquaintance with evident delight.

Five minutes later the executive officer recovered his presence of mind sufficiently to send ashore to Cavite for dry garments of a size suitable for Miss Chapin’s use. In an hour or two that young lady, revived and attired in dry clothing, was brought on deck on her brother’s arm. She was weak, but out of danger.

“We came out in order to make a call aboard,” Captain Chapin explained to the officers under the quarter-deck awning, “but we had no idea we were going to make such a sensational visit.”

“I fancy that women are always nuisances aboard naval craft,” smiled Miss Chapin, whereupon the assembled officers promptly assured her that women were nothing of the sort.

In the meantime the three officers who had leaped over into the bay had had time to change their clothing. It became a merry party on deck.

Up to Mr. Warden stepped a messenger, saluting.

“The Lieutenant Commander’s compliments, sir, and will the executive officer report to the Lieutenant Commander at once?”

“Immediately,” replied Lieutenant Warden, returning the salute, taking his brief adieu by merely raising his uniform cap before he left the party.

Ten minutes later Lieutenant Warden stepped briskly on deck. He paused long enough to say something in an undertone to the officer of the deck, who smartly passed the word for a messenger.

“I am sorry to announce,” said the executive officer, approaching the group of officers who surrounded Miss Chapin, “that our pleasant days in Manila are ended for the present.”

“I should say so,” cried Captain Chapin. “There goes your recall flag to the mast-head.”

“Right!” replied Mr. Warden crisply. “Our sailing orders have just been wirelessed from shore. We sail at seven this evening, if our few men on shore leave can be recalled in that time. Mr. Hale, you are to take the launch and go ashore after the leave men.”

“Very good, sir,” replied that ensign, saluting, next raising his cap to Miss Chapin and hastening away.

“Leaving, are you?” asked Pembroke, in a tone of regret. “And what is your destination?”

“China,” rejoined Lieutenant Warden tersely.

The Englishman’s face changed expression.

“Not – ” he stammered. “Not the – ”

“For the Nung-kiang River,” replied the executive officer.

Dave Darrin and Dan Dalzell were the only ones present who caught the strange, fleeting look that passed over the face of Pembroke.

“Why can this Englishman object to our going to the Nungkiang River?” Ensign Darrin wondered. “What interest can he take in any mission of ours there?”

## CHAPTER IV – THE LANDING PARTY AT NU-PING

“That ought to hold the pirates for a little while,” declared Danny Grin, his good-natured face looking unusually grim.

“I think it will,” replied Dave, halting before his cabin door. “Dan Dalzell, if my face is as dirty as yours I shouldn’t care to walk up Main Street in my native town.”

“Go in and look at *yourself*,” scoffed Dalzell.

“It’s fully as dirty,” called Dave, from the interior of his cabin, surveying himself in the glass.

But it was as honorable dirt as any man may have on his face – the grime of powder-smoke as it blew back when the gunboat’s five-inch guns had been swung open at the breech.

For the “Castoga,” intercepted by wireless on the way to the Nung-kiang, had been sent to Hong Kong by an official order from Washington. The threatened troubles along the Nung-kiang had quieted down to such an extent that cautious officials in Washington dreaded lest Chinese sensibilities should be wounded by the sending of a gunboat up the river.

So, day after day, the “Castoga” had lain in the mountain-bordered harbor at Hong Kong.

Then came the word one day that the Chinese rebels in the district around the city of Nu-ping, on the Nung-kiang River,

had again become troublesome, and that the American mission buildings at Nu-ping were threatened. The "Castoga" had been ordered to proceed at full speed, she being the nearest craft of a draft light enough to ascend the river.

During the last hours of darkness the gunboat had steamed up the river, all eyes on board turned toward the sinister red glow that lighted the sky above the Chinese city, capital of a province.

Just before daylight the gunboat dropped anchor with every man and officer at quarters.

From shore came the sound of rifle shots, a wild pandemonium of yells, as thousands of raging Chinese surged upon the mission buildings, to which fire had already been set, and from which the American missionaries and their families, aided by the white residents of Nu-ping, were making the only resistance that lay within their power.

The first note of cheer that came to the missionaries and their friends was the whistle of the gunboat, sounding clearly when still two miles distant. Then the lights of the fighting craft came into sight.

For a few minutes after coming to anchor, the commander of the "Castoga" was forced to wait for sufficient daylight to enable him to distinguish accurately between friend and foe.

At the side of the gunboat a launch and four cutters waited, to carry a landing party, if the sending ashore of men should prove to be necessary. Anxiously, using his night glasses every minute, the American commander paced the deck and listened.

Then, when there was barely enough light, word was telephoned to the division officers to begin action.

Boom! spoke the first gun from the gunboat. Other shots followed rapidly.

In the compound before the burning mission buildings was a mass of yellow fiends, crowding, yelling and shooting. From the windows of such portions of the burning buildings as were still tenable American rifle fire was poured into the mob.

That first shell, landing among the yellow fiends, killed more than twenty Mongols, wounded others, and drove the attackers out of the compound.

Boom! Bang! Other shells flew through the air, clearing away the rabble further back.

From the mission buildings, a quarter of a mile away, went up a wild cheer of hope.

But the attacking rabble, despite the first shell fire, came back, inviting further punishment.

Again the gunboat's five-inch guns roared out. There was now sufficient light to enable the American gunners to make out the locations of the mob.

At least thirty shells were fired ere the rebels beat a retreat beyond the confines of Nu-ping.

It was time to stop firing, for some of the American shells had set fire to Chinese dwellings and business buildings.

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