

PART II: THE PERFECT MAN



## CHAPTER I

Once upon a time, in a land called Sinclair, there lived a king and queen who had one child, a beautiful princess, who was the fairest young lady in all the land. Her hair was golden as the sun and every prince in all the land wanted her hand in marriage. But she turned them all down. You see, this princess had heard all of the stories; of Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, and all that lot. Of course, she, who wanted to be the fairest and absolute best princess wanted to be better than them. So she decided to wait until the absolute perfect man showed up at her door. This prince just *had* to be completely perfect, a man who complied with all of the princely qualities: rich, handsome, nice, loving, good, brave, and most of all, he must like her too. Obviously, her parents, King Festus and his queen, Helen, were perfect with this all. I mean, if they had the most famous, the prettiest, and the most well admired daughter in all of Sinclair and the surrounding lands, wouldn't they become pretty famous too? They even went so far as to let their daughter, whose name was Helena-Festina, I should probably mention, travel the cities of their land and the surrounding lands freely. But this turned out to be a big mistake.

You see, not far off from the land of Sinclair was the Sea. This sea was known as the sea of Angledore and was famous for its pirates; especially one named Xavier the Magnificent, a.k.a. Captain Hans Sullivan, who you will hear about later. Now, King Festus and Queen Helen were so looking forward to becoming the most famous rulers that they thought about nothing else.

"Oh, you go right ahead and go, dear" was what they said whenever Helena-Festina asked them if she could go visit some far off land. In fact, that was all they said. They didn't care where she went, as long as it would bring more fame to them. So when Helena (as I will now call her) asked them if she could go to Austintanious, a sea town, (or metropolis, to be exact) to look for her perfect man, her parents agreed, as they always did. So off she went.

Many weeks later, the princess was still in Austintanious, looking for her perfect man. She was getting pretty tired of searching and still had a lot of the city to search. One day she was in a marketplace, looking for Mr. Perfect, when she stopped by a fruit vendor to buy a banana or two, she was looking around at all the people and she saw a man, sitting at the side of the road selling jewelry. She walked over to him, not because she was interested in what he was selling, but because of his face. Even with the dirt that was spread on his face, she knew that he was the most handsome man she had ever seen. Helena now forgot about all the "princely qualities" that she had worried about for so long; all she thought of now was this guy and all he thought of was her.

She was positively the most beautiful lady that he had ever seen, even though she was a princess. Yes, that's right; it was love at first sight.

Helena faked to be interested in what his jewelry, while he faked to be asking her "important business questions". She called her courtiers up to make it seem as if she intended to buy something, even though she didn't. When her men had gathered all around her, she asked the man a question:

"Where do you live, man?"

"I don't live anywhere, your highness. I'm a beggar, you see. It's my life."

"Well then, I fancy I should like to have you as part of my company. Would you like that?" she said, lying through her teeth, as she knew that instead of liking him to be in her company, she would like to marry the man.

"Really, your majesty? Me? Why, absolutely! Anything's better than this beggar's life I have at the present."

So off they went: the princess Helena, her large group of nobles and slaves, and the man whom she loved. They came to a richly decorated and extravagant hotel, which was where the princess was staying, and the man said:

"Is this where we are staying? I have never been in a place this luxurious before. Will they let me in?"

"I hope they do," said the princess, "or else we will have to stay somewhere else!" She then laughed out loud and the beggar thought that it was the prettiest laugh that he had ever heard.

Unfortunately for them, the owners of the hotel let the man in, but not without questioning quietly among themselves why a lady of such richness and fame would even be taking notice of a vagabond such as the one that had just walked through their doors.

As Helena's men were taking her bags and packages (of which she had quite a lot, especially the latter. She always bought a present for each of her parents when she went anywhere, seeing as they didn't get out to much, since they had to rule a kingdom and all) up to her side bedroom (she needed quite a few bedrooms, you see, to hold all of her stuff), Helena took the man she had met upstairs to her main bedroom and locked the door. She told him to take a bath in the side bathroom, so that she could talk to him properly. Unfortunately, the man did not seem to know how to take a bath or even what a bath was. So the princess had to show him how to pump the water into the bathtub and what soap is for and where to put his dirty beggar's clothes, as she had replaced them with quite costly clothing made for a noble or prince. When she was through, she left him in peace, but then found that this was not the end of her troubles. Even though she had made it clear what the man was to do, she did not specify how long his bath should be. So five minutes later, he came striding out of the bathroom looking just as dirty as before. Helena sent him back in and told him to stay in there for a full twenty minutes at least and not to come out until he was completely clean (she even gave him a book to read, as she was herself quite fond of reading while the bathtub). Half an hour after this, the man stepped out of the bathroom, clean, but not without having caused another mess. You see, while the man was in the bathroom, he had gotten bored of sitting in the water. He had already looked at the pictures in the book ten times over and, since he didn't know how to read, he had started to float the book on top of the water. Since books weren't built as strongly back then as they are now, the pages started to come out and sink to the bottom. These pages also got filthy because of the water, which had turned a dirty brown because of the mud that was on the man's body. He didn't like this very much, as he thought that it would stain the walls of the bathtub. So the beggar started to pump more water into the tub, hoping that it would replace the water that was already in it. Now you and I both know what happens when you pump more water into a tub than the amount that it can

hold: it overflows. This is exactly what happened to the unfortunate beggar who now has torn pieces of paper and bars of soap floating in water all over the floor. The man thought that he would not like to disappoint the princess again, so he grabbed a towel to clean the floor with. This was a bad idea which resulted in three things happening at once: firstly, as he stepped out of the bathtub, the poor man slipped on a bar of soap and slipped. Second, when he had stepped out of the tub, the man had knocked over the bathtub (which was really just a wide yet shallow metal bucket, nothing like the nice solid tubs that you are used to that are built into the wall), causing all the water that was in it to spill all over the floor. Thirdly, when he slipped he grabbed onto the towel rack, which soon proved unable to support his weight. It broke, causing him to land face down on the now even wetter floor. The man was able to find some more towels in a cupboard, but in the process, he had found a toothbrush. Wondering what it was for, he started to rub it in his hair. Seeing that that did nothing especially exciting like the earlier parts of his day had been, he threw it in the toilet. He then pulled out a tube of toothpaste, uncapped it and squeezed its contents all over the mirror. After it was completely empty, the man threw the tube into the toilet, which he seemed to think was a wastebasket. He went through various cupboards looking for a towel in this manner until he actually came to the toilet itself. Seeing all of the stuff that he had thrown into it, he tried to dispose of it in the most logical way that readily appeared to him: to flush the toilet. Of course, you and I both know that now and back in those days of knights and kings and princesses and such, when you flush a bunch of stuff down a toilet, it doesn't flush very well. In fact, all the stuff starts to spill out of the toilet bowl. This is what happened to our poor friend in the bathroom, so that the result was an even messier floor.

When he finally found a towel, dried himself off, got dressed, and went out to see Helena, she had to call a number of servants in to clean up the mess that he had made, thus delaying Helena's "talk" with the beggar who now looked like a smashing handsome prince. In the end, it was over an hour since the man had first tried to take a bath that the princess got to talk with him privately.

When they finally did get by themselves, the princess began by questioning the man:

"What is your name?" she asked him.

"Reynelf, your highness. And if I may make so bold as to ask yours also?"

"Helena-Festina, but you can just call me Helena. How long have you been a beggar, Reynelf? In fact, why don't you tell me your whole story, beginning to end."

"Well madam, it started a long while back..."

Reynelf then went into an extremely long and sad story which I have abridged so as not to make this book too long. His story started with him having had an absolutely glorious childhood as a son of a lord of Sinclair. He and his mother and father lived in the country on a huge estate with a large house and a lake and a forest. His life was going perfectly until the week that he turned eight years old, in which his father had fallen sick and had died a week later. Reynelf was too young to really care much, but he did start to in later years. After his father died, the family salary began to decrease, while the expenses increased, or so it seemed. Slowly, bit by bit, his mother was forced to sell off the land that they had until she and her son were left with only the house. Then, three years after his father had died, his mother went to rest next to him in the grave. Reynelf wept for her for a few days until they came. I speak of all the men, the men who took his last possession of worth: his glorious house. From there his life continued to plummet, until he was reduced to the state in which the princess found him. He also told her his age, which was twenty-three.

"Why so am I!" Helena exclaimed. "We're the exact same age. Now, Reynelf, I have something to tell you and one more thing to ask."

From there she told him of her searches over the last couple of years and of never being able to find the perfect man and then of her meeting him. She then asked Reynelf the question which she had been longing to ask ever since she saw him:

“Do you love me too?”

“Well, I, well...” Reynelf stammered. “I, um, well to tell the truth, yes. I loved you the moment I laid eyes on you. Not because of your riches or high position, but because of your beauty and goodness could I tell from that first moment that you were the woman that I had always looked for. Now I have a question for you: over the last few weeks, I have saved a lot of money up, or what seemed to me like a lot of money at the time. I will now use that money and I ask you, will you go out to dinner with me, now that I am, um, shall we say suitable?”

They both laughed long and hard until the princess answered him with a strong “yes”.

“Then we must leave at once.” said Reynelf, after which they went out the door and down to the front of the hotel. Helena told her courtiers that she would no longer need them that night, for she was “sure that her valiant knight would protect her”.

Reynelf took Helena to a seaside restaurant which looked over the whole bay. He said that he had gone there frequently when he was a child. Helena had never been to this specific restaurant and enjoyed it very much. While they were laughing over a joke that Reynelf had told, eight huge men walked into the restaurant and started to come toward the two of them. Reynelf and Helena did not notice them until they were quite close. Reynelf looked up when they approached and said:

“Hello, my fine men. What would you be wanting from us on this fine evening?”

One of the men looked at the others and nodded toward Helena at the same time as he grunted. Four of them grabbed Helena, who immediately started to kick and scream. Reynelf jumped up and unsheathed the sword which one of Helena’s body-guards had given him. He pointed at one of the men with the art of a true swordsman. You see, for four years until he had died, Reynelf’s father had trained him in the art of the sword and Reynelf had kept up his strength using sticks, branches, bones, whatever he could find. The man turned toward him and grunted. He swung his arm toward Reynelf, but Reynelf ducked under him and then ran him through with his sword. He turned toward the door just in time to see Helena dragged off, screaming all the way, but the other men crowded in front of him and blocked his vision. Though he fought bravely and wounded the men many times, Reynelf was eventually struck down by one of their fists. As he fell to the floor, he heard one of them, who appeared to be the leader, yell:

“To the ship men! Our work here is done.” Then everything went black.

## CHAPTER II

As soon as she was taken out of the building, a dirty cloth was shoved into Helena's mouth so that she could no longer scream. She was half-pushed, half-dragged into an alley behind a building not far from the restaurant. Someone covered her eyes with a rag and tied it tight behind her head. She then felt a piece of cloth containing the ashes of burnt grass and herbs pressed against her nose. Helena struggled, but the overpowering scent of the compress was too strong to fight against. Dark mists rolled in front of her eyes as her body slumped limply against the filthy body of one of the huge men.

When she awoke, Helena had a throbbing headache. She strained her eyes to get a glimpse of her surroundings. Helena couldn't tell whether it was because of her dizziness or if it was real, but the floor seemed to be rolling up and down under her. She tried to stand, but started to fall back to the floor. She reached out for something to brace herself with when a man's arm caught hers. He pulled her up and turned her around. Forcing her to look up at him, the rough-looking man said:

"The captain wants a word with you. Follow me."

"Please," Helena said feebly, "I can't stand. I'm too groggy. Please, could you hold me up?"

"The captain wants to talk to you!" the man said angrily, as he let her go. "Walk yourself!"

Helena collapsed on the floor. She had half a mind to stay there and fall back asleep, but she knew that she must make herself walk. Slowly, she picked herself up and tried to steady herself against a desk that was fixed to the wall. She could see a little better now and thought that she could make out the shape of a table. She stumbled towards it and groped her way along it as she tried to follow the man as quickly as she could. As she followed after the man, she saw that he was leading her down a long hallway, on either side of which there were cannons, barrels, large spools of rope, and other things which are rather hard to explain and if I did explain them, it would make this book longer than it needs to be. The man led Helena down this hall for a few minutes before ordering her to climb a ladder that was set in the center of the hallway. When she popped her head through the square-shaped hole which the ladder came out of, a few things happened at once: firstly, a stout pair of hands grabbed her and pulled her roughly out of the hole; second, a man in a big hat and coat who had a cutlass at his side swung down on a rope directly in

front of her; and thirdly, the hands that had seized her then forced her to kneel in respect of the man who had just dropped. After about two seconds of this, the man reached over Helena, grabbed the hands that held her down, and pulled them and their unfortunate owners to him. He then said in a sharp voice:

“You’ll not be treating our guest this way, boys. You got that?”

With the last three words he twisted their arms quickly and painfully, then threw the men away from him. After this, he reached down and gently pulled the weeping Helena up from the floor of the ship that she was on (when she had first looked up out of the hole, she could tell from the surroundings that she was on a ship, which explained why she had thought that the floor was moving so much. It was the ship rocking). The man half-carried, half-helped Helena along the ship’s deck to a set of double doors, which a man then opened and the man carrying Helena took her inside. Seating her in a chair at a table, he walked over to the other end of it and sat down. Helena buried her head in her arms and continued to cry. After a while, the man got up, opened a cupboard and pulled out a bottle and two glasses, one of which he set in front of Helena. He opened the bottle and filled the goblets with wine. As he was doing this, he asked Helena a question:

“I hope my men haven’t treated you too poorly?”

Helena looked up at him and said:

“You’re joking, right? Ever since they took me, I’ve been pushed around and yelled at. I’m a princess for Pete’s sake! Have they no respect?”

“No. They don’t respect me either, nor do they obey me. I ordered them to treat you kind...”

“Well they didn’t!” Helena interrupted him. “They just shoved and bullied and... and...” Helena didn’t finish what she was going to say, she just started to cry again. She fell against the man’s chest and he put his hand, which, unlike the other men’s, was clean, on her head. Helena continued to cry for a few minutes until she looked up into the man’s face and asked him:

“Where am I and who are you?”

“You, princess, are aboard the ship which I captain, the mighty *Primrose*. I am the captain of this ship, Hans Sullivan. But I think that you need more of an explanation as to why I kidnapped you. Well it’s like this...”

“Ten years ago, my men and I had just finished some raiding in the Caribbean, when we came upon a man who had been shipwrecked. He appeared to have been at sea for quite a while and when we got him aboard ship, he was only able to utter four words before he died: ‘pocket...map...gods...curse’. Well, we searched all over him before we found in his inside coat pocket a well protected piece of paper that had been carefully folded. After opening it, I found that it was the map to an island which no one had ever been able to find, but for which so many had sought: The Secret Island of Atlantis, an island so old and secret that it was thought unreal. It was in the middle of the Helian Sea. A great civilization grew there, under the rule of great kings, kings who knew a great deal about magic; not card tricks or disappearing coins, but *magic*, real magic. Now for a while, the Island survived and was a fertile, thriving civilization. That is, until other countries heard of the great power of the people of Atlantis and wanted some of it for themselves. So now the people of Atlantis found many ships landing at their harbors, trying to steal their magic. Some got away with it, too, but they only managed to steal minor tricks, such as is used by street magicians today. This whole thing made the lords of Atlantis angry. So the chief magicians all met together one day to discuss what they should do. Some suggested making war on the other lands, others to burn the ships as they approached the Island, and yet others to leave the Island. But it was a young magician who had been newly elected to the Alchemists’ Council (the highest

magicians referred to themselves as Alchemists, and this particular one's name was Hallifore) who came up with a way to get rid of the intruders. His idea was to cloak the Island, so as to erase it from all of time and memory. The rest of the Council agreed that this was the best idea and together the Alchemists cloaked their Island exactly as Hallifore had said. But what the Council did not know was that Hallifore had thrown in a curse with the spells which they cast; a curse so evil that we soon wished that we had thrown the man who we found the map with overboard. Any ship that uncloaked the Island, then sailed into the Island's one harbor immediately became under the power of a man who is now so evil that hell itself turned him away: the Great Lord Hallifore. Whatever his wish was, the captain of the ship would have to do it, whether it was pirating or spying or warring, anything. Now after a while, you'll understand that this got pretty tiring for a pirate, a man who's worked all of his life to be free from the rule of other men. So we set about working to find how we could remove this curse. And that's how we found an inscription on the side of the Pillar..."

"But I don't get the point!" said Helena, who thought the whole thing was a joke, "What does it all have to do with me? What Pillar are you talking about? And how *did* you find out that you were under the service of Hallifore anyway?"

"Oh, I must have failed to mention the Pillars: they were two pillars of stone that were erected in the middle of the harbor by the Alchemists that generated the cloaking device. And you, Miss Festina, have a big part to play in all of this. You must remove the curse for us. Let me explain: the Pillars both have half of a message encrypted on them an ancient text of strange fashion. For, you see, if anyone person stares at the strange runes for a few seconds, no matter where he is from or if he does not know the text, although the letters never alters their shape, he will find he is able to read it. And this is what it says:

*A woman who by all is called fair  
Who seeks to find true love,  
She must destroy the pillars and die  
And thus remove  
The Curse placed by those above.*

Is it not true that all call you fair? And that for these past five years, you have searched for the man who loves you most? Oh, you see, you've caused your fame to spread so far and wide that everyone knows for what you seek. And it was only a mere trifle for us to find the proper woman. And it was only a bit more for us to capture you. So then, seeing that you are a perfect fit for our poem, when once we reach the Isle de Bermuda, you must die. And also, you ask why how we knew that we were under the service of the lord Hallifore? If you want to have your question answered, then come with me."

Helena followed him back to the doors, quite shocked by what she had just heard. When they reached them, Hans grabbed them and flung them open. He pushed her out of them and began to slowly follow her, saying as he did so:

"You see, Helena, when first we set out from that island, we were thrown into a terrible storm, quite near a hurricane, it was. And when we came out of that gale, we found ourselves on the beach of Ankthmar..."

"But Ankthmar is near two-thousand miles from the Caribbean!"

"I know. It was the heathen gods in whose name the Curse was put it that forced us to that god-forsaken land. And once we'd reached it, bit by bit, we came to meet Hallifore, who knew about the Curse and immediately put us under his control. I receive all my orders from him, though I don't know how; I just know what he wants me to do. And, you see, the Curse doesn't end with us; anyone who captains this ship has the Curse thrown upon them for the rest of their life, at the end of which the worst thing ever will happen: we will be sent to Davy Jones' Locker, to spend all of eternity there in immortal solitude."

“But there’s no such thing as Davy Jones’ Locker! Everyone knows it and Davy Jones are just myths.” Helena said.

“Oh yes, Davy Jones is as real as you and me. But perhaps you know him by another name: Hallifore, or, as he often goes by, Reynelf.”

“What?” Helena said in utter shock, “That’s not true! Reynelf is not Davy Jones!”

“Oh, so you do know him? Well, let me describe him a little better than that so as to make myself absolutely clear: he pretends to be a beggar who sells jewelry, pretends to be stupid and not know anything, he woos the women he wants to kill, he has this completely sad and heart-breaking story about his parents, who owned a rather large estate, both dying, a story which is not completely false, seeing as his parents did own a big estate before he killed them both... is this convincing enough or need I go further?”

Helena and Hans were both outside now with the rain (it had started raining) falling heavily on them. Helena was glad of this so that the men would not see her hot tears of anger streaming down her cheeks. She yelled out in anger at Hans:

“You lie! Not a word of your story is true!”

She then pushed past him, ran back into the cabin, and crouched in a corner where she wept bitter tears of rage.

Outside, Hans slammed the doors behind her then, he and his crew laughed heartily before Hans turned to them all and said:

“What are you all standing about for? Back to work, you sniveling dogs!”

## CHAPTER III

On earlier occasions when Helena had been visiting other countries and cities, she stayed away from home for about three or four months at a time before returning to her parents' castle in Sinclair. So, whenever she went somewhere, her parents presumed that she would be gone for quite a while. Knowing this, when Helena went to Austintanious, King Festus and Queen Helen went about their business of ruling the kingdom without worrying about her for longer than usual, as they both knew that Austintanious was a rather large city. After quite a few months, Queen Helen started to get concerned that her daughter had been away so long. She asked the king if he thought anything of it, but he reassured her by telling her that Helena had probably found the man of her dreams and that he had taken her to his castle where he lived and that she had been so swept up in it all that she had forgotten to send word about her doings, but that she probably would soon. This convinced the queen to stop her worrying and she settled back down to her normal business of ruling the kingdom of Sinclair and going to royal balls and dance parties and basically doing all the other things that a queen does that most girls think would be absolutely marvelous until they try it and find out what a rather boring life queens' have.

After several more weeks, King Festus (who, I should probably mention, was descended from the great race of the Romans) was beginning to come into his wife's frame of mind. So when he thought that his daughter had been gone quite long enough, he sent out messengers to Austintanious and the surrounding cities and villages to see if he could get word of his daughter's whereabouts. When they returned, most of his messengers could not give him a very good report, but two or three related the various details which the hotel owners and people who had been in the market that fateful day had given them.

From all of this, Festus (who was a very smart man), figured that the dirty street beggar had kidnapped his daughter and was holding her prisoner until he could get a good ransom for her. So Festus sent out search parties which were made up of some of the most valiant knights in all of Sinclair. On their return, only a few of them could give him any information: the name of the restaurant which she had dined in before she was kidnapped, what they men who kidnapped her were like, the fact that it was not the beggar who kidnapped Helena, but a bunch of pirates, and other assorted pieces of news of their daughter.

When he heard that it was pirates who had captured Helena, Queen Helen and King Festus sent out a bunch of gallant ships that went out in all directions in search of their daughter. But since these ships were looking for the Isle de Bermuda which is an island that cannot be

found unless you have the map which leads to it or know where it is, they were soon hopelessly lost.

After a few weeks of the ships' searching, King Festus sent out more ships to call the ones that he had previously sent out back to Sinclair. This took a few more days and by the time that the ships had all returned to Sinclair, a full six months had elapsed since Helena had been kidnapped. King Festus and Queen Helen gave their daughter up for lost and cried for many days. Helena was now on her own.

## CHAPTER IV

All this time that her parents had been looking for her, Helena had been on the *Primrose*, heading to the Isle de Bermuda, or, you may say, her doom. The reason it took so many months (three, I think) for the *Primrose* to finally get to its destination is this: back in those days of pirates, princesses, true love (we only have the fake kind of love now that is over quite quickly, nothing like *real* love), and all that stuff, they did not have the gallant and extravagant ships that they have now. Oh no, ships back then were rather slow, so that it took a few weeks to cross the ocean. Also, while they had been on their voyage, the pirates had been doing what all pirates do: raiding other ships and ports, taking treasure and captives, and having a jolly good time, knowing that their bondage under Hallifore was soon coming to an end. The captives that they had taken they meant to sell into slavery, just like they always had, excepting that Hallifore had just taken the slaves without paying Hans or his crew a dime.

Among these prisoners, there were only two that Helena remembered: she had come up on deck on a day after the pirates had been looting a ship and the pirates had lined all the slaves up on deck so that they could see which ones they would use and which ones they should throw overboard. Helena had walked up and down the line and looked at them all. When she came nearly to the end, she found two people whom she would remember for the rest of her life: first, a man who was strongly built, muscular, and handsome; then further down the line, an African woman whom Helena thought was more beautiful than even she was. She appeared to be not of royal race, but someone who for all her life had been trained in physical labor or had traveled the world over. Helena wondered why this woman had been on a merchant ship that was now sunken beneath the waves. She then turned and went back below deck, thinking of what she had just seen.

A few days later (or I should say *nights* later, for it was night when Helena's next adventure came upon her), Helena was sleeping in the bed which Hans Sullivan had given her, when someone shook her awake. She yawned, lifted herself up on her elbow, and then strained her eyes to see who the stranger was. She made out that it was the man that she had noticed in the slave line, the strong, handsome one. He whispered in her ear:

*"I've come to rescue you. Come with me and we'll escape this infernal prison together."*

Helena sat up. *Who was this guy, that he wanted to save her?* she thought. She thought a little while longer before she said in a soft voice:

"Why do you want to save me?"

"Because of your beauty." the man said, "Now will you come with me or won't you?"

"Sure I'll come; I'll do anything to escape this boat. But let me warn you, the last time I trusted a man who said he loved me, it turned out against me. So if I see you doing anything that will betray me, I'll come right back to this ship. I'd rather die than have love torn from me by a cruel man who only wants me for my money. I'll come, but let me get dressed first."

"Okay. Meet me at the top of the ladder that leads to the deck."

Helena got dressed into the only clothing that she had then walked quietly over to the ladder which she had first climbed weeks ago. She thought of her parents, King Festus and Queen Helen, and a tear slipped down her cheek because she knew that she would probably never see them again. Wiping the tear away, she climbed hastily up the steps and out onto the deck. There she found the man and asked him a question, although it was no longer whispered:

"What's your name?"

"Francis. And yours?"

"Helena. Now, what do you want me to do?"

"We'll go over to that landing boat there. I'll try to unfasten it as quietly as possible then we'll make our escape. You just follow me and do what I tell you."

"Alright, um, anyway I can..."

Helena stopped short because right as she was speaking, a bright light shone on both her and Francis from the back of the ship.

"And what would ye two be doing on this fine night?" it was the voice that neither of them wanted to hear: the voice of Hans Sullivan.

"Um, nothing really. Just, uh, taking a stroll on the deck. It gets rather cold down below, you know." Francis tried to come up with a good excuse.

"Uh huh." Hans said sarcastically. "Take 'em, men!" he then yelled.

Six of the huge men that made up Hans' crew swung down from the dark mists that were above them. Helena bolted, but soon found a pair of hands grabbing her. They were the hands of the Captain, who turned her toward him and said:

"No slave escapes the *Primrose*, lass. Now you will see what happens to those who try to do so."

He turned Helena back around towards the place that she had just run from. She saw that Francis had fought hard and had knocked down two of his attackers. But the others had grabbed him and turned him toward Hans, who said:

"So, slave, you thought that you could get away by mere acting quiet and sneaky. Well, as you well know now, no slave escapes the *Primrose* or its captain, me, Hans Sullivan. And no captive who tries to escape their fate as a slave doesn't pay for it."

While he had been saying this, he had pulled a gun from his belt and pointed it at Francis. When he was finished, he pulled the trigger.

“No!” Helena yelled as she ran forward. The bullet, which had already been shot, grazed her arm and cut her, but kept moving in its deadly direction. Helena, seeing that there was nothing she could do, closed her eyes and slumped to the floor. Less than a second later, she heard Francis give a weak cry before his body fell to the deck. She stood up just as she heard Hans say:

“Throw the man’s body overboard and then get on with our voyage.”

Helena turned toward Hans, a fire burning in her eyes.

“You murderous fiend! You killed an innocent man for no reason. You, you... I hate you!” she screamed at him.

“As I told you, missy, no slave escapes the *Primrose* and anyone who does, pays for it sooner or later. Take her below deck!”

Hans then turned and went into his cabin, slamming the doors behind him. Two of the men came up behind and grabbed the weeping Helena. They took her down to her room and locked the door. Helena ran to the bed and cried herself to sleep, knowing that she now had no hope to escape death.

