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## Cutlass Empire.

By F. Van Wyck Mason

**Synopsis:** Things happen fast in the life of Harry Morgan, pirate to be. Escaping with his life from a frustrated Royalist rebellion against Cromwell in Bristol Town, he is shipwrecked and comes ashore on a West Indian Island along with Enoch Jackman, a girl named Kate Fyne and others. They are joined by ragged hunters, then set up by Spaniards who say "all but Morgan and Jackman. Now go on with the story—

### CHAPTER SIX

ON A TORRID afternoon of late April, 1659, the little land-locked harbor of Cayona was sheltering but a handful of ships. Only a few uncommonly energetic persons had remained sufficiently awake to observe the appearance of a small, sturdy vessel standing straight in toward that narrow channel affording access to Cayona harbor.

Presently the stranger, a ketch by her rig, hoisted a yellow and green flag as, from her starboard beam sprouted a soft blossom of grayish smoke. A second gun, it sounded like a heavy culverin, then sent its report reverberating across Cayona's wide yellow beach, beyond a triple row of palm thatch huts, and on among the vivid green hills beyond.

Upon a crag dominating Cayona—town and harbor alike—stood a fort built by the Englishman Elias Watts, and his 150 hard-bitten followers. Within its battlements an untroubled activity manifested itself.

They were in no vast hurry in acknowledging the Free Gruitt's salute; she was too well known about Cayona in particular, and Tortuga in general.

"Well," grunted the gun captain, "if this ain't a surprise. 'Tis a hardened and his jaw went out.

"Aye, we won a victory of a sort, I suppose."

"—Of a sort?" You failed of making Santiago?" The Deputy-Governor's voice quivered.

"No. We carried out our purpose after a fashion, but 'twas the most slovenly conceived affair."

"You won some treasure? Some slaves?"

"Aye, but less than half of what we should have fetched easily."

"ARUNDEL said sharply, "Well, sir, what happened? Give me a strict account, understand?"

Morgan first grinned impudently to assert his independence, then in measured but brisk tones described the buccaneer expedition against Santiago de Hispaniola. Beside Morgan the officer had been Captain Coon Darbraune, Captain Humphrey Dobble, and Captain Jonas Reekes.

"Damme! I know all about the start of your cruise," Arundel broke in impatiently. "Get to the main point. How far from the sea does St Jago lie?"

"Above 15 leagues, or 45 miles if you prefer it that way."

"I presume you stripped the town?"

"To the very bone, your Excellency. But despite my every effort the other captains would not keep their men in hand; by consequence they caroused like utter fools."

"Sink me! Had I commanded in full at Santiago I'd have handled matters differently. We would have taken the town and got away in three days' time instead of a week."

"And what will be Governor Watts' share?"

Morgan laughed harshly. "Exactly 5,000 pieces-of-eight."

A mestizo slave, half white and half Indian, appeared, stopped half to pass the guard room door because of the small and carefully corded bale carried on one shoulder.

"What's this?" Arundel got up, pulled the sweat-soaked fabric of his pantaloons free.

"A few trinkets I've fetched back for Henrietta, your lovely wife and her sisters."

Arundel's watery eyes glistened. Loot for Henrietta eventually meant loot for him; on Tortuga, as almost everywhere else in the world of 1659, no woman was eligible to hold property in her own right. "Hold hard, you!" he directed, once the mestizo had commenced to untie the rawhide lashings. "Harry, why not convey gifts to a cooler spot? Besides, the ladies will enjoy a viewing of their unwrapping!"

"DAUGHTERS OF ELIAS WATT

IN NO great hurry Susan moved over to the bed, mechanically inspected the garments laid out upon its light green counterpane.

So it was Harry Morgan's vessel that had cast its anchor in the harbor this afternoon? La! And her brother-in-law, Chamlett Arundel, said Harry had been

"Odds blood, Governor!" Morgan paused a moment, his chunky frame quite filling the low stone doorway. "I am cur'd glad and honored to greet you. A week ago I'd have deemed such a privilege most unlikely."

Arundel extended a liberally bejeweled hand. The Deputy-Governor's pale green eyes flickered over this sturdy, bandy-legged young fellow who must be nearing the twenty-fifth year of his life.

"SORE THROAT

DUE TO COLDS  
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relief, rub on... VICKS  
VAPORUB

selected a captain—quite an honor for so young a man.

If only Dick Hurlburt were possessed of more ambition. But he wasn't. Dick was just a lovable, lusty, well-built soldier fit only to breed more soldiers before getting himself killed in battle.

Still lost in thought, Elias Watts' tall second daughter stepped first into a bottom petticoat of very fine white lawn, then tied on a pale pink satin one decorated by two deep flounces.

"A plague on Harry Morgan!" she muttered softly.

A quick rap at the door announced Lucy's appearance as a smaller and blond replica of herself. Both girls had inherited Elias Watts' wide mouth, firm chin and long straight nose.

"Get a hurry on you, valn baggage," Lucy pleaded, fidgeting with an elaborate tortoise shell and lace fan. Mr. Jackman was fetched back from his last cruise.

There was no doubt, Susan was deciding, that the lanky new Englishman had fallen desperately in love with little Lucy just about as quickly as he had clapped eyes on her.

By the time the young ladies descended to a minute courtyard enclosed by the Governor's residence dusk was falling.

Susan smiled on recognizing the seated figure of her father. Already readying the cool of the evening breeze were Colonel Arundel, Captain Morgan and Jackman; all three seated in chairs of woven cane.

DESPITE a demurely downcast gaze, Susan sensed Morgan's eyes upon her and flushed at the strong, almost impudent intensity of his regard.

"'Tis not much," Morgan belittled, once Fernando's knife commenced to flash through the cords and wrappings. "We're a rich, well-protected rendezvous for the Brethren; for another, Spanish power is weakest over yonder at the western end of Hispaniola. Still more important—"

"Elias Watts' completely hairless head inclined several times. 'You've put yer finger to it, Captain; nothing less than a powerful fleet coming from Europe would dare attempt these straits."

THE GOLDEN ROSE

IT WAS nearing one of the morning when, once more, coral sand yielded under Harry Morgan's feet.

Aye, 'twould be a rarely romantic gesture—that of tossing this little golden rose through Susan's window.

Panting, hooking fingers and toes into a series of minute fissures and ledges, he worked his way up, up, until the dim froth of the sea below appeared immeasurably distant.

Long since he had ascertained that Susan's window lay the last in a row of three identical openings let into the seaward face of Elias Watts' sturdy stone强hold.

Immensely pleased, Morgan said, "And now, Mistress Lucy, your turn."

Lucy shook her head and dimpled at the same time. "My thanks, Captain Morgan. What with Henrietta's presents and Su-

san's you have already proved over-generous to our family. Besides . . ."

Jackman simply beamed as he opened his little coffee. While his offerings were by no means on a par with Morgan's yet a fine necklace of seed pearls seemed designed by nature to adorn Lucy's small straight neck.

Morgan, turning aside, conducted Susan to the far end of the court. She smiled up through the gathering darkness.

"You were ever in my thoughts," he declared earnestly. "I tried to—er—come across that which might please you."

FOLLOWING a slight supper of stewed kid and roast beef, the Governor invited Morgan into his cabinet.

"Here on Tortuga how greatly do the French outnumber us?"

"By between three and five to one," the Governor returned slowly.

Morgan set down his brandy glass and devoted to Watts his whole attention. "What's the key to the problem?"

"If only I can circumvent the Court of France, and di Rausset, 'til our power in Jamaica is more firmly established, then there's a chance we English can cling to Tortuga—which is well worth hanging onto. Know why?"

"Why, for one thing," he returned, his large dark eyes intent. "It is a rich, well-protected rendezvous for the Brethren; for another, Spanish power is weakest over yonder at the western end of Hispaniola. Still more important—"

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Taking a firm grip on the window bars, Morgan set his shoulders and very slowly and cautiously, hoisted his body upward until he could see into the little chamber and smell a faint but definite suggestion of perfume. To his astonishment the bed, a

"In God's name, be quiet, Dick, and go quickly. Susan sounded really alarmed. "If Papa should find us—Oh, get you gone, my love."

Without any conscious effort on his part, Morgan's fingers relaxed and he dropped back a short distance onto the dew-drenched flooring of the parapet—but his soul was plunging into far greater depths.

(To Be Continued)  
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