Mr. Martin Swallows the Anchor

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN OLIVE'S ARDENT ADMIRER AND HER FORMIDABLE AUNT

By Elisabeth Sanxay Holding

OLIVE was weeping quietly, but Miss Torrance, sitting beside her in the dark, was very calm, and even a little scornful. The unmerited sufferings of the hero and heroine on the screen before them didn't trouble her. It was sure to come out all right in the end; and even if it didn't, who cared?

Olive was a sentimental little thing, and yet the strong-minded, prodigiously sensible Miss Torrance could understand, perhaps too well, how she felt. It wasn't the story that made Olive cry. It was the spectacle of that swift, vivid, intense life that so disturbed her; and it disturbed Miss Torrance, too.

Yachts, tropical islands, coral reefs, dark figures in oilskins seen by lightning flashes on storm-swept decks, clear lagoons, palm trees in the moonlight—when you saw all that, and when you thought of getting up six mornings a week at half past seven, and going down to the office, and coming back to the boarding house at twenty minutes past five, and when you were a stern, adventurous spirit, like Miss Torrance, or only twenty-one, like Olive—

Miss Torrance and Olive often talked about traveling. They even got booklets from the steamship companies, and planned routes and figured expenses. Olive took it all very seriously, but Miss Torrance smiled indulgently at such a childish pastime.

Miss Torrance was not the sort of woman to cry for the moon. She often said she wasn't, and she never suspected that she was one of those still more romantic creatures who try to build bridges to reach the moon. Olive longed for impossible things, but Miss Torrance tried to get them.

" Come, my dear!" said she, with just a trace of impatience. "This is where we came in."

"All right!" answered Olive, with a resigned sigh.

They squeezed past a row of people and went up the aisle and out into the lobby.

"Oh, mercy!" cried Olive. " Raining!"

Miss Torrance said nothing, but her brows met in an anxious frown.

The April rain was coming down in a steady torrent, drumming loud on the roof, and spattering on the pavement. The streets shone like deep, black water under the arc lights. Taxis spun by like incredibly swift motor boats. It hadn't at all the appearance of a shower. It was obstinately and definitely a rainy night—chill, too, and windy, so that it was almost impossible to believe that only six days ago, on Saturday, spring had begun, and Miss Torrance and Olive had been irresistibly tempted to buy spring hats.

"We'll take a taxi," said Miss Torrance. " It's cheaper than ruining our new hats."

"All right!" said Olive.

So Miss Torrance advanced to the very limit of the covered entrance, and signaled to the taxis that went by, fleet and careless; but not one of them stopped—no, not one.

"Beasts!" said she.

“Maybe they're all taken," suggested the gentle Olive, but Miss Torrance would have none of that.

She, too, still had in her mind the images of tropical islands and coral reefs and high adventures, and somehow it hurt and angered her, and the taxis that would not stop were like the stream of life itself that hurried past and left her behind.