

MAY

He told us about her! But it was not Captain Andrews you kidnapped. It was his twin brother, Frederic.

CAPT. TARRAGON

Was it? Heavens! I have always had trouble telling twins apart. I once told a man in my acquaintance that I could never tell him apart from his twin brother. He told me he had no brother, he just liked changing clothes several times a day. Well, well, what a mortifying blunder! We must remedy this situation.

MAY

I am sure the misunderstanding will be cleared up in no time.

CAPT. TARRAGON

I see their ship is alongside ours. Why don't we invite your friends onboard? We can all go down to the dungeon together.

(Exit CAPT. TARRAGON, BEATRIX, and MAY)

(The scene changes to the beautifully furnished "dungeon." FREDERIC is seated at a banquet table)

(Enter CAPT. TARRAGON and CAPT. ANDREWS)

CAPT. TARRAGON

Greetings, my friend! How are we this evening?

FREDERIC

Tarragon, your book collection is second to none ... (catches sight of CAPT. ANDREWS) Good heavens, Fitzwilliam! (Rises)

CAPT. ANDREWS

Frederic! (Embraces FREDERIC)

FREDERIC

I have missed you ... in the moments I have thought of you, but it is very merry here.

CAPT. ANDREWS

I have been trying for days to rescue you. Frederic, why didn't you tell him you weren't me?

FREDERIC

And willingly give up my status as prisoner? No, thank you!

CAPT. TARRAGON

Allow me to fetch the rest of our party. I will leave you to catch up. (Exits)

FREDERIC

Tell me all, brother. What has happened in the past few days?

CAPT. ANDREWS

We rescued two uncommonly lovely young ladies from an island. They are writers who publish under the pseudonym *Enola Byrne*.

FREDERIC

(Excited)

Fitzwilliam, you don't mean that! And they are here?

CAPT. ANDREWS

Yes, indeed. But don't mention a thing to them.

(Enter CAPT. TARRAGON, MAY and BEATRIX)

CAPT. ANDREWS

Ladies, allow me to introduce my brother, Mr. Frederic Andrews. Frederic, this is Miss May and Miss Beatrix.

FREDERIC

(Bowing)

I am delighted to meet you both.

CAPT. TARRAGON

Why don't we all sit down?

FREDERIC

Yes, please make yourselves at home in my prison cell.

(All sit, save for CAPT. TARRAGON)

MAY

Captain Andrews, we learned something highly disturbing earlier. You won't believe who ordered Captain Tarragon to kidnap you.

CAPT. ANDREWS

Who?

MAY

That duchess, the one who is madly in love with you.

CAPT. ANDREWS

Indeed! Perhaps she resents me for not loving her.

CAPT. TARRAGON

Why don't you love her? I cannot see any reason in the world why a man would not love her.

CAPT. ANDREWS

My heart had been captured long ago by a young lady whose sharp wit and keen mind was showcased through her adept writing.

(MAY sighs)

BEATRIX

We must find the duchess and speak with her seriously on this matter. Tarragon, do you know where she is now?

CAPT. TARRAGON

She told me she would be retiring to her estate. It is just outside Derbyshire. We can get there in a week's time.

FREDERIC

Do you mean that I have to spend another week in the dungeon?

CAPT. TARRAGON

I'm afraid so.

FREDERIC

Fantastic! I was beginning to fear that if I were rescued, I wouldn't get to be a prisoner any longer. This calls for a celebration. We've got wine and books.

BEATRIX

I call that a party.

FREDERIC

Let me give you a tour of the bookshelves, mademoiselle.

(FREDERIC and BEATRIX rise and approach the bookshelf)

CAPT. TARRAGON

(To Capt. Andrews)

I apologize once more for the misunderstanding.

CAPT. ANDREWS

Let bygones be bygones. I am sorry the duchess roped you in.

CAPT. TARRAGON

I would do anything for her. Now, let me summon our crews.

(Exit CAPT. TARRAGON)

MAY

Do you suppose Capt. Tarragon is in love with the duchess?

CAPT. ANDREWS

I hope so. I have just learned how lifechanging love can be.

(FREDERIC and BEATRIX retire to the couch with a book. MAY and CAPT. ANDREWS remain at the table. The scene goes dark)

Scene 3

(BEATRIX AND FREDERIC are playing cards at the table. MAY and CAPT. ANDREWS are reading on the couch)

(Enter CAPT. TARRAGON)

CAPT. TARRAGON

We are here. We are docked.

(Rise BEATRIX, MAY, CAPT. ANDREWS, and FREDERIC)

CAPT. ANDREWS

Frederic and I should lose no time in going to her manor.

MAY

Just a moment! Fitzwilliam and Frederic are going on their own?

CAPT. ANDREWS

That is our plan.

BEATRIX

I don't think men are fit to solve problems. I think you ought to leave the peacemaking to the expert hands of women.

MAY

I concur. Beatrix and I shall speak to the duchess instead.

CAPT. ANDREWS

That is amiable, but I really don't think—

MAY

Fitzwilliam, I am quite determined.

BEATRIX

As am I, Frederic.

FREDERIC

Never fret, I wasn't about to argue.

CAPT. ANDREWS

Let us accompany you to the duchess's house, at least.

MAY

Very well. And, Captain Tarragon, you ought to come with us.

CAPT. TARRAGON

Ought I?

FREDERIC

We can wait in the foyer while Beatrix and May sort everything.

MAY

The ship is docking. I propose we make haste!

(Exit EVERYONE)

(The dungeon becomes the duchess's study. Enter DUCHESS, holding a teacup. She sits on a chair)

(Enter FOOTMAN)

FOOTMAN

Two young ladies to see you, ma'am.

DUCHESS

Send them in.

(Exit FOOTMAN. Enter MAY and BEATRIX. They curtsey)

DUCHESS

Ladies, about what have you come to see me?

BEATRIX

(Whispering to MAY)

What should we say?

MAY

We ought to lay the facts before her plainly and bluntly.

BEATRIX

What facts?

MAY

I don't know, but I am sure we can think of some! (To DUCHESS)
We wish to speak with you on a serious matter.

BEATRIX

We are friends of the Andrews brothers, and we think it is terribly unfair that you asked Captain Tarragon to abduct them.

(The DUCHESS sets down her teacup)

MAY

I am sorry that Fitzwilliam Andrews is not in love with you, but you ought not take revenge on him.

DUCHESS:

(averting her face, sighing)

Oh! It is not Captain Andrews with whom I am in love!

MAY/BEATRIX

It isn't?!

DUCHESS

I was in love with him, and when he did not allow me aboard his ship, I was furious. I sought solace in a bookstore down the street. I stepped inside, and who should I see leaning against the clerk's desk, but Capt. Tarragon ...

BEATRIX

You're in luck, because Captain Tarragon is in love with you.

DUCHESS

(Rising)

How do you know? I'm sure he doesn't even know I exist!

BEATRIX

He stares out the window day and night, refusing all food and drink – save for the chocolates, the cheeses, the Madeira wine, the fruit, and French bread.

DUCHESS

Oh! (Pacing back and forth) How do I know I can trust you? How do I know you are of sound mind?

MAY

How does anyone prove they are of sound mind?

DUCHESS

Show me you are well-educated women. Recite a poem for me.

BEATRIX

Would the first lines of "The Lotos-Eaters" do?

DUCHESS

Yes, that would do.

MAY

(To Beatrix)

I think you were right. It is "land," not "strand."

BEATRIX

Are you sure?

MAY

I'm sure ... if you're sure you're sure.

BEATRIX

I'm sure I'm sure if you're sure you're sure I'm sure.

DUCHESS

Ahem!

BEATRIX:

(With feeling)

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.'

DUCHESS

Oh! My heavens! Captain Tarragon *does* love me. Where is he?

MAY

He is in your foyer.

DUCHESS

Tell him to come here this minute!

(Exit MAY AND BEATRIX. Enter CAPT. TARRAGON with his hat in his hands. MAY, BEATRIX, FREDERIC, and CAPT. ANDREWS spy from the doorway)

CAPT. TARRAGON

Your grace?

DUCHESS

I have just been informed of something most extraordinary by the two young ladies with whom you were traveling.

CAPT. TARRAGON

Of course, milady ... I must give my apologies ... I meant to kidnap Fitzwilliam, but I managed to kidnap Frederic instead—

DUCHESS

You kidnapped Frederic when you meant to kidnap Fitzwilliam?

CAPT. TARRAGON

Yes, I am afraid so ... I am quite awful at telling twins apart.

DUCHESS

You don't suppose you mixed them up because you were thinking of other things? It is the easiest thing in the world to observe that Frederic and Fitzwilliam's forelocks curl in distinctly different directions. Your mind must have been occupied!

CAPT. TARRAGON

Well, perhaps it is true ... I beg leave to apologize, your grace-

DUCHESS

It is true, you say?

CAPT. TARRAGON

(nodding)

And I will accept whatever punishment you see fit.

DUCHESS

Marry me!

(CAPT. TARRAGON staggers backwards, stunned, but he faces his fate with bravado)

CAPT. TARRAGON

Gladly!

(DUCHESS and CAPT. TARRAGON embrace)

CAPT. TARRAGON

I am sincerely glad that I find it impossible to tell twins apart. To think, all my life I was ashamed of this deficiency, but now it is the cause of all my mortal bliss!

DUCHESS

How charming you are. At long last, I have found a man worthy of me! Come, Tarragon, let us sit in the parlor and discuss all the cliched romance tropes that exist in contemporary fiction.

(Exit DUCHESS and CAPT. TARRAGON)

CAPT. ANDREWS

(To May)

A happy ending.

MAY

Yes, indeed. I hope more happy endings are in store.

CAPT. ANDREWS

You never know. Perhaps there are.

FREDERIC

(To Beatrice)

You were awfully clever, Bea. You got the duchess and Tarragon together in the end. They owe their whole happiness to you.

BEATRIX

(Bashfully)

Oh, I don't know about that. I really don't think I was the cause of anyone's happiness.

FREDERIC

I assure you that you are the cause of happiness more often than you think.

MAY

Ought we go down to the dock and notify your crew?

CAPT. ANDREWS

An excellent idea.

(Exit CAPT. ANDREWS and MAY,
BEATRIX and FREDERIC)

Scene 4

(OFFSTAGE a piano performs the wedding march. Enter CAPT. TARRAGON and DUCHESS)

(Enter MAY and BEATRIX after)

MAY

We wanted to say goodbye. We hope you enjoy your honeymoon.

CAPT. TARRAGON

It was a pleasure knowing you ladies. Where will you be headed?

BEATRIX

After we say goodbye to Frederic and Fitzwilliam, we will make our way to Derbyshire.

DUCHESS

Why, the Andrews brothers left upwards of three hours ago. They told us they had to return home.

MAY

(disappointed)

Oh dear ... we do not know where they live.

DUCHESS

Don't look so glum! There is not a doubt you will see them again. Take my second-best carriage, won't you? It will afford you a comfortable ride to Derbyshire.

BEATRIX

Thank you. That is very kind.

CAPT. TARRAGON

We will think fondly of you young ladies in years to come.

DUCHESS

Farewell, my friends.

(Exit DUCHESS and CAPT. TARRAGON)

BEATRIX

What are we to do now?

MAY

We've still got our appointment with the brothers in Derbyshire.

BEATRIX

All men are vapid and vulgar compared to Frederic.

MAY

We gave those gentlemen our word. We must go to Derbyshire.

(Exit MAY and BEATRIX)

(The set changes. Enter MAY and BEATRIX. BEATRIX approaches bookcase)

BEATRIX

May, look! These are our books!

(BEATRIX and MAY sit down in front of a coffee table)

MAY

Why, there are two letters on this table. This letter has got my name on it, and this one has got yours! What does it mean?

BEATRIX

Under our names, it says 'please read.' I think we should read.

(BEATRIX and MAY unfold the letters)

MAY

"Dear May, I fell in love with you before I met you, and I have grown to love you tenfold since. My heart is yours, devotedly, entirely, and unconditionally. Fitzwilliam Andrews."

BEATRIX

"Dear Beatrix, you are everything I love and esteem: kind, brilliant at writing, able to recite poetry in dramatic intonation. I pledge my heart to you. Frederic Andrews."

(MAY and BEATRIX gape at each other. Enter CAPT. ANDREWS and FREDERIC. MAY and BEATRIX leap towards them, falling into the arms of their respective lover)

(Enter PIRATE CHORUS)

PIRATE CHORUS

To our audience fair we end now with a verse
But your patience we implore for this was unrehearsed
We finish our seaside story on a touching scene
A union with a pirate gentleman is every writer's dream
Where we'll go from here is now made clear at the close of day
Our job is done; so sets the sun; we hope you enjoyed this play