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TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

Ernest Hemingway



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Part I

Harry Morgan

(Spring)

Chapter 1

You know how it is there early in the morning in Havana with the bums still asleep against the walls of the buildings; before even the ice wagons come by with ice for the bars? Well, we came across the square from the dock to the Pearl of San Francisco Café to get coffee and there was only one beggar awake in the square and he was getting a drink out of the fountain. But when we got inside the café and sat down, there were the three of them waiting for us.

We sat down and one of them came over.

'Well,' he said.

'I can't do it,' I told him. 'I'd like to do it as a favor. But I told you last night I couldn't.'

'You can name your own price.'

'It isn't that. I can't do it. That's all.'

The two others had come over and they stood there looking sad. They were nice-looking fellows all right and I would have liked to have done them the favor.

'A thousand apiece,' said the one who spoke good English.

'Don't make me feel bad,' I told him. 'I tell you true I can't do it.'

'Afterwards, when things are changed, it would mean a good deal to you.'

'I know it. I'm all for you. But I can't do it.'

'Why not?'

'I make my living with the boat. If I lose her I lose my living.'

'With the money you buy another boat.'

‘Not in jail.’

They must have thought I just needed to be argued into it because the one kept on.

‘You would have three thousand dollars and it could mean a great deal to you later. All this will not last, you know.’

‘Listen,’ I said. ‘I don’t care who is President here. But I don’t carry anything to the States that can talk.’

‘You mean we would talk?’ one of them who hadn’t spoke said. He was angry.

‘I said anything that *can* talk.’

‘Do you think we are *lenguas largas*?’

‘No.’

‘Do you know what a *lengua larga* is?’

‘Yes. One with a long tongue.’

‘Do you know what we do with them?’

‘Don’t be tough with me,’ I said. ‘You propositioned me. I didn’t offer you anything.’

‘Shut up, Pancho,’ the one who had done the talking before said to the angry one.

‘He said we would talk,’ Pancho said.

‘Listen,’ I said. ‘I told you I didn’t carry anything that *can* talk. Sacked liquor can’t talk. Demijohns can’t talk. There’s other things that can’t talk. Men can talk.’

‘Can Chinamen talk?’ Pancho said, pretty nasty.

‘They can talk but I can’t understand them,’ I told him.

‘So you won’t?’

‘It’s just like I told you last night. I can’t.’

‘But you won’t talk?’ Pancho said.

The one thing that he hadn’t understood right had made him nasty. I guess it was disappointment, too. I didn’t even answer him.

‘You’re not a *lengua larga*, are you?’ he asked, still nasty.

‘I don’t think so.’

‘What’s that? A threat?’

‘Listen,’ I told him. ‘Don’t be so tough so early in the morning. I’m sure you’ve cut plenty people’s throats. I haven’t even had my coffee yet.’

‘So you’re sure I’ve cut people’s throats?’

‘No,’ I said. ‘And I don’t give a damn. Can’t you do

business without getting angry?’

‘I am angry now,’ he said. ‘I would like to kill you.’

‘Oh, hell,’ I told him. ‘Don’t talk so much.’

‘Come on, Pancho,’ the first one said. Then, to me, ‘I am very sorry. I wish you would take us.’

‘I’m sorry, too. But I can’t.’

The three of them started for the door, and I watched them go. They were good-looking young fellows, wore good clothes; none of them wore hats, and they looked like they had plenty of money. They talked plenty of money, anyway, and they spoke the kind of English Cubans with money speak.

Two of them looked like brothers and the other one, Pancho, was a little taller but the same sort of looking kid. You know, slim, good clothes, and shiny hair. I didn’t figure he was as mean as he talked. I figured he was plenty nervous.

As they turned out of the door to the right, I saw a closed car come across the square toward them. The first thing a pane of glass went and the bullet smashed into the row of bottles on the show-case wall to the right. I heard the gun going and, bop, bop, bop, there were bottles smashing all along the wall.

I jumped behind the bar on the left side and could see looking over the edge. The car was stopped and there were two fellows crouched down by it. One had a Thompson gun and the other had a sawed-off automatic shotgun. The one with the Thompson gun was a nigger. The other had a chauffeur’s white duster on.

One of the boys was spread out on the sidewalk, face down, just outside the big window that was smashed. The other two were behind one of the Tropical beer ice wagons that was stopped in front of the Cunard bar next door. One of the ice-wagon horses was down in the harness, kicking, and the other was plunging his head off.

One of the boys shot from the rear corner of the wagon and it ricocheted off the sidewalk. The nigger with the Tommy gun got his face almost into the street and gave the back of the wagon a burst from underneath and sure enough one came down, falling toward the sidewalk with his head above the curb. He flopped there, putting his hands over his head, and the chauffeur shot at him with the shotgun while the nigger

put in a fresh pan; but it was a long shot. You could see the buckshot marks all over the sidewalk like silver splatters.

The other fellow pulled the one who was hit back by the legs to behind the wagon, and I saw the nigger getting his face down on the paving to give them another burst. Then I saw old Pancho come around the corner of the wagon and step into the lee of the horse that was still up. He stepped clear of the horse, his face white as a dirty sheet, and got the chauffeur with the big Luger he had; holding it in both hands to keep it steady. He shot twice over the nigger's head, coming on, and once low.

He hit a tire on the car because I saw dust blowing in a spurt on the street as the air came out, and at ten feet the nigger shot him in the belly with the Tommy gun, with what must have been the last shot in it because I saw him throw it down, and old Pancho sat down hard and went over forwards. He was trying to come up, still holding onto the Luger, only he couldn't get his head up, when the nigger took the shotgun that was lying against the wheel of the car by the chauffeur and blew the side of his head off. Some nigger.

I took a quick one out of the first bottle I saw open and I couldn't tell you yet what it was. The whole thing made me feel pretty bad. I slipped along behind the bar and out through the kitchen in back and all the way out. I went clean around the outside of the square and never even looked over toward the crowd there was coming fast in front of the café and went in through the gate and out onto the dock and got on board.

The fellow who had her chartered was on board waiting. I told him what had happened.

'Where's Eddy?' this fellow Johnson that had us chartered asked me.

'I never saw him after the shooting started.'

'Do you suppose he was hit?'

'Hell, no. I tell you the only shots that came in the café were into the show case. That was when the car was coming behind them. That was when they shot the first fellow right in front of the window. They came at an angle like this -'

'You seem awfully sure about it,' he said.

'I was watching,' I told him.

Then, as I looked up, I saw Eddy coming along the dock looking taller and sloppier than ever. He walked with his joints all slung wrong.

'There he is.'

Eddy looked pretty bad. He never looked too good early in the morning; but he looked pretty bad now.

'Where were you?' I asked him.

'On the floor.'

'Did you see it?' Johnson asked him.

'Don't talk about it, Mr Johnson,' Eddy said to him. 'It makes me sick to even think about it.'

'You better have a drink,' Johnson told him. Then he said to me, 'Well, are we going out?'

'That's up to you.'

'What sort of a day will it be?'

'Just about like yesterday. Maybe better.'

'Let's get out, then.'

'All right, as soon as the bait comes.'

We'd had this bird out three weeks fishing the stream and I hadn't seen any of his money yet except one hundred dollars he gave me to pay the consul, and clear, and get some grub, and put gas in her before we came across. I was furnishing all the tackle and he had her chartered at thirty-five dollars a day. He slept at a hotel and came aboard every morning. Eddy got me the charter so I had to carry him. I was giving him four dollars a day.

'I've got to put gas in her,' I told Johnson.

'All right.'

'I'll need some money for that.'

'How much?'

'It's twenty-eight cents a gallon. I ought to put in forty gallons anyway. That's eleven-twenty.'

He got out fifteen dollars.

'Do you want to put the rest on the beer and the ice?' I asked him.

'That's fine,' he said. 'Just put it down against what I owe you.'

I was thinking three weeks was a long time to let him go, but if he was good for it what difference was there? He should have

paid every week anyway. But I've let them run a month and got the money. It was my fault but I was glad to see it run at first. It was only the last few days he made me nervous but I didn't want to say anything for fear of getting him plugged at me. If he was good for it, the longer he went the better.

'Have a bottle of beer?' he asked me, opening the box.

'No, thanks.'

Just then this nigger we had getting bait comes down the dock and I told Eddy to get ready to cast her off.

The nigger came on board with the bait and we cast off and started out of the harbor, the nigger fixing on a couple of mackerel; passing the hook through their mouth, out the gills, slitting the side and then putting the hook through the other side and out, tying the mouth shut on the wire leader and tying the hook good so it couldn't slip and so the bait would troll smooth without spinning.

He's a real black nigger, smart and gloomy, with blue voodoo beads around his neck under his shirt, and an old straw hat. What he liked to do on board was sleep and read the papers. But he put on a nice bait and he was fast.

'Can't you put on a bait like that, captain?' Johnson asked me.

'Yes, sir.'

'Why do you carry a nigger to do it?'

'When the big fish run you'll see,' I told him.

'What's the idea?'

'The nigger can do it faster than I can.'

'Can't Eddy do it?'

'No, sir.'

'It seems an unnecessary expense to me.' He'd been giving the nigger a dollar a day and the nigger had been on a rumba every night. I could see him getting sleepy already.

'He's necessary,' I said.

By then we had passed the smacks with their fish cars anchored in front of Cabañas and the skiffs anchored fishing for mutton fish on the rock bottom by the Morro, and I headed her out where the gulf made a dark line. Eddy put the two big teasers out and the nigger had baits on three rods.

The stream was in almost to soundings and as we came

toward the edge you could see her running nearly purple with regular whirlpools. There was a light east breeze coming up and we put up plenty of flying fish, those big ones with the black wings that look like the picture of Lindbergh crossing the Atlantic when they sail off.

Those big flying fish are the best sign there is. As far as you could see, there was that faded yellow gulfwed in small patches that means the main stream is well in and there were birds ahead working over a school of little tuna. You could see them jumping; just little ones weighing a couple of pounds apiece.

'Put out any time you want,' I told Johnson.

He put on his belt and his harness and put out the big rod with the Hardy reel with six hundred yards of thirty-six thread. I looked back and his bait was trolling nice, just bouncing along on the swell, and the two teasers were diving and jumping. We were going just about the right speed and I headed her into the stream.

'Keep the rod butt in the socket on the chair,' I told him. 'Then the rod won't be as heavy. Keep the drag off so you can slack to him when he hits. If one ever hits with the drag on he'll jerk you overboard.'

Every day I'd have to tell him the same thing but I didn't mind that. One out of fifty parties you get know how to fish. Then when they do know, half the time they're goofy and want to use line that isn't strong enough to hold anything big.

'How does the day look?' he asked me.

'It couldn't be better,' I told him. It was a pretty day all right.

I gave the nigger the wheel and told him to work along the edge of the stream to the eastward and went back to where Johnson was sitting watching his bait bouncing along.

'Want me to put out another rod?' I asked him.

'I don't think so,' he said. 'I want to hook, fight, and land my fish myself.'

'Good,' I said. 'Do you want Eddy to put it out and hand it to you if one strikes so you can hook him?'

'No,' he said. 'I prefer to have only one rod out.'

'All right.'

The nigger was still taking her out and I looked and saw he had seen a patch of flying fish burst out ahead and up the stream a little. Looking back, I could see Havana looking fine in the sun and a ship just coming out of the harbor past the Morro.

'I think you're going to have a chance to fight one today, Mr Johnson, I told him.

'It's about time,' he said. 'How long have we been out?'

'Three weeks today.'

'That's a long time to fish.'

'They're a funny fish,' I told him. 'They aren't here until they come. But when they come there's plenty of them. And they've always come. If they don't come now they're never coming. The moon is right. There's a good stream and we're going to have a good breeze.'

'There were some small ones when we first came.'

'Yes,' I said. 'Like I told you. The small ones thin out and stop before the big ones come.'

'You party-boat captains always have the same line. Either it's too early or too late or the wind isn't right or the moon is wrong. But you take the money just the same.'

'Well,' I told him, 'the hell of it is that it usually is too early or too late and plenty of time the wind is wrong. Then when you get a day that's perfect you're ashore without a party.'

'But you think today's a good day?'

'Well,' I told him, 'I've had action enough for me already today. But I'd like to bet you're going to have plenty.'

'I hope so,' he said.

We settled down to troll. Eddy went forward and laid down. I was standing up watching for a tail to show. Every once in a while the nigger would doze off and I was watching him, too. I bet he had some nights.

'Would you mind getting me a bottle of beer, captain?' Johnson asked me.

'No, sir,' I said, and I dug down in the ice to get him a cold one.

'Won't you have one?' he asked.

'No, sir,' I said. 'I'll wait till tonight.'

I opened the bottle and was reaching it toward him when I

saw this big brown bugger with a spear on him longer than your arm burst head and shoulders out of the water and smash at that mackerel. He looked as big around as a saw log.

'Slack it to him!' I yelled.

'He hasn't got it,' Johnson said.

'Hold it, then.'

He'd come up from deep down and missed it. I knew he'd turn and come for it again.

'Get ready to turn it loose to him the minute he grabs it.'

Then I saw him coming from behind under water. You could see his fins out wide like purple wings and the purple stripes across the brown. He came on like a submarine and his top fin came out and you could see it slice the water. Then he came right behind the bait and his spear came out too, sort of wagging, clean out of water.

'Let it go into his mouth,' I said. Johnson took his hand off the reel spool and it started to whiz and the old marlin turned and went down and I could see the whole length of him shine bright silver as he turned broadside and headed off fast toward shore.

'Put on a little drag,' I said. 'Not much.'

He screwed down on the drag.

'Not too much,' I said. I could see the line slant up. 'Shut her down hard and sock him,' I said. 'You've got to sock him. He's going to jump anyway.'

Johnson screwed the drag down and came back on the rod.

'Sock him!' I told him. 'Stick it into him. Hit him half a dozen times.'

He hit him pretty hard a couple of times more, and then the rod bent double and the reel commenced to screech and out he came, boom, in a long straight jump, shining silver in the sun and making a splash like throwing a horse off a cliff.

'Ease up on the drag,' I told him.

'He's gone,' said Johnson.

'The hell he is,' I told him. 'Ease up on the drag quick.'

I could see the curve in the line and the next time he jumped he was astern and headed out to sea. Then he came out again and smashed the water white and I could see he was hooked in the side of the mouth. The stripes showed clear on him. He

was a fine fish bright silver now, barred with purple, and as big around as a log.

‘He’s gone,’ Johnson said. ‘The line was slack.’

‘Reel on him,’ I said. ‘He’s hooked good. Put her ahead with all the machine!’ I yelled to the nigger. Then once, twice, he came out stiff as a post, the whole length of him jumping straight toward us, throwing the water high each time he landed. The line came taut and I saw he was headed inshore again and I could see he was turning.

‘Now he’ll make his run,’ I said. ‘If he hooks up I’ll chase him. Keep your drag light. There’s plenty of line.’

The old marlin headed out to the nor’west like all the big ones go, and brother, did he hook up. He started jumping in those long lopes and every splash would be like a speed boat in a sea. We went after him, keeping him on the quarter once I’d made the turn. I had the wheel and I kept yelling to Johnson to keep his drag light and reel fast. All of a sudden I see his rod jerk and the line go slack. It wouldn’t look slack unless you knew about it because of the pull of the belly of the line in the water. But I knew.

‘He’s gone,’ I told him. The fish was still jumping and he went on jumping until he was out of sight. He was a fine fish all right.

‘I can still feel him pull,’ Johnson said.

‘That’s the weight of the line.’

‘I can hardly reel it. Maybe he’s dead.’

‘Look at him,’ I said. ‘He’s still jumping.’ You could see him out a half a mile, still throwing spouts of water.

I felt his drag. He had it screwed down tight. You couldn’t pull out any line. It had to break.

‘Didn’t I tell you to keep your drag light?’

‘But he kept taking out line.’

‘So what?’

‘So I tightened it.’

‘Listen,’ I told him. ‘If you don’t give them line when they hook up like that they break it. There isn’t any line will hold them. When they want it you’ve got to give it to them. You have to keep a light drag. The market fishermen can’t hold them tight when they do that even with a harpoon line. What

we have to do is use the boat to chase them so they don’t take it all when they make their run. After they make their run they’ll sound and you can tighten up the drag and get it back.’

‘Then if it hadn’t broken I would have caught him?’

‘You’d have had a chance.’

‘He couldn’t have kept that up, could he?’

‘He can do plenty of other things. It isn’t until after he’s made his run that the fight starts.’

‘Well, let’s catch one,’ he said.

‘You have to reel that line in first,’ I told him.

We’d hooked that fish and lost him without waking Eddy up. Now old Eddy came back astern.

‘What’s the matter?’ he said.

Eddy was a good man on a boat once, before he got to be a rummy, but he isn’t any good now. I looked at him standing there tall and hollow-cheeked with his mouth loose and that white stuff in the corners of his eyes and his hair all faded in the sun. I knew he woke up dead for a drink.

‘You’d better drink a bottle of beer,’ I told him. He took one out of the box and drank it.

‘Well, Mr Johnson,’ he said, ‘I guess I better finish my nap. Much obliged for the beer, sir.’ Some Eddy. The fish didn’t make any difference to him.

Well, we hooked another one around noon and he jumped off. You could see the hook go thirty feet in the air when he threw it.

‘What did I do wrong then?’ Johnson asked.

‘Nothing,’ I said. ‘He just threw it.’

‘Mr Johnson,’ said Eddy, who’d waked up to have another bottle of beer – ‘Mr Johnson, you’re just unlucky. Now maybe you’re lucky with women. Mr Johnson, what do you say we go out tonight?’ Then he went back and laid down again.

About four o’clock when we’re coming back close in to shore against the stream; it going like a mill race, us with the sun at our backs; the biggest black marlin I ever saw in my life hit Johnson’s bait. We’d put out a feather squid and caught four of those little tuna and the nigger put one on his hook for bait. It trolled pretty heavy but it made a big splash in the wake.