

"Until A Far To-morrow"

One of the most popular of women authors, noted for her books and magazine stories, is Ursula Parrott (right). She is a native of Brookline, Massachusetts, and attended Radcliff. Chew dogs and roses are her hobbies at her attractive home in Wilton, Connecticut. She spends winters in New York with her attorney husband. She likes the West Indies, bridge and fine automobiles. Her preference of her own works is "The Tumult and the Shouting," a novel about three generations of Boston Irish.



Written by
Ursula Parrott

THE breeze that rose over Grenada towards sundown was sweet with the scent of full springtime, but cool across her still lovely face as she sat waiting by a high window in the palace, in a tall chair, waiting, regarding the Moorish roofs of the city, that were pink in the last night, and the high Sierras far off that were already blue with dusk.

She who had been Isabella, Queen of Castile and Leon in her own right since she was a girl in her first twenties, long Queen of Aragon by her marriage to Ferdinand, and sometimes since Queen of all Spain that mattered, since he and she had driven the Moors from this same city of Grenada, was long schooled in the composure of her face, the steadiness of her hands, that were so white against the wine colour of her dress. As for the tumult in her heart, she told herself with a faint smile, she was long used to that too. Sixteen years since, at Cordova, in the midst of the Moorish wars, the young man Christopher Columbus first came to her with a letter. Was it from the Duke of Medina Celi? She could not remember that, but she could remember herself as in a portrait not much dimmed by time, a young queen in a wine-coloured dress (so had she chosen that colour to-day) and a tall young man, and personable, with the most eager eyes she had seen in her whole life long, talking of things far from the Moorish wars that weighed upon her spirit, talking of a round world, of a short way to the rich Indies, of the gold and the pearls he would bring back in her honour. Not much interested then, in gold and pearls for herself—though Spain could use the gold, heaven knew, with the war costs mounting and mounting, something reached out from her sheltered life then, that first day, to the bronzed boy who had seen far northern seas, and dreamed of seas beyond them. She was a great queen, he was just as much more than a common

sailor as she chose to consider him, but, he made her world seem little.

She wanted to help him then, to send him to find his dream's truth, but could not. Duty and patriotism compelled her and Ferdinand alike to conserve Spain's money for the war.

It was six years till Grenada fell (and Christopher there to see that, summoned by her), Christopher still sure of his dream as ever, arrogant as a boy is arrogant, but honest, as few in her life she'd known. So, after the court dickering for terms, she sent him on his way.

Three times he had gone, and returned, since that first day. And now to-morrow was to go for the fourth time.

The first time, he had returned to his triumphal procession in Barcelona, where the court held then. (In the stillness of the town at sunset, Isabella could hear the cheers of that procession, echoing in her heart. She had greeted him with dignity, as a queen should, but snatched odd hours afterward to talk to him, to listen to his stories of that world so far from any world she would ever see.)

So she had loved him, he had loved her, but with honour, with honour through the years. Herself married, to a good king, Christopher married, their duty plain before them. They had held to that duty. Give that comfort to her heart that was grown tired.

She would see him at the State banquet to-night, would see him, if she chose to rise early, riding out from Grenada to Cadiz with the dawn, but now in this small room, far from her own apartments, she would see him alone, have for the last time private speech with him before he sailed. For the last time have a chance to tell him. . . .

His quick footsteps echoed along the corridor, a little uneven they were, from that old bullet wound, but light, and she would know them, she thought, should they walk over her tomb.

He stood in the doorway, bronzed, tall, lean, his bright hair a little faded by time and hot suns, his eyes as ardent as ever.

She remembered, absurdly, the month they'd quarreled over his bringing back of so many miserable slaves. No man of his time could understand her odd pity for those poor wretches. But he had tried to understand, because he loved her.

He closed the door, said "Your Highness," knelt and kissed her hand. There had never been any closer gesture of intimacy between them in all of their lives.

She thought, "To-morrow he goes for years again, perhaps never to return. With him goes my heart. Now we grow old, perhaps I could tell him that in words"

She spoke quickly, "Not to-day like all the other days, 'your highness' and 'my admiral,' but 'Christopher' and 'Isabella,' very old friends parting. Say 'Isabella' to your queen. Time goes fast for us, any to-morrow we may meet is far or never. We have just these minutes."

He said "Isabella." He said "There with the sunset colour behind your hair, there with your grace and gentleness you stand, and I shall see you so in many still nights when the dark sea's quiet, and the stars over Spain shine down. I have loved you as a man may love a queen, and as a man may love a woman in his heart, a love kept far from the hurry and the turmoil of living. Now that we may not meet again, I may tell you. Since to you I owe any small fame I've won, anything I've done beyond the run of what men do. But for you, I never

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