

Changeling Press

ENCOUNTERS



Miranda

A Steampunk Adventure

Mikala Ash

Encounter: Miranda (A Steampunk Adventure)

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**Formats Available:
Adobe PDF, Epub
Mobi/PRC**

**Publisher:
Changeling Press LLC
315 N. Centre St.
Martinsburg, WV 25404
www.ChangelingPress.com**

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Cover Artist: Bryan Keller**

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England's survival may depend on the information Miss Clayton carries. Miss Clayton's future depends on getting out of France -- alive. And *that* depends on Mr. Willoughby, and his amazing flying machine, the Miranda.

Miranda

The coast of France. 1858

"Isn't she beautiful?"

My incredulity must have shown, because he launched into a volley of technical lingo that sought to convince me of the ugly contraption's virtues, but his enthusiasm only made it worse.

The sick feeling in my gut intensified. My last hope of escape gone.

When I'd first entered the ramshackle shed and fixed him in the beam of my lantern, I thought him a finely made gentleman. His fine clothes, though dirty and dishevelled, were expected as I'd been told he was a gentleman engineer. Tall, broad shouldered, with slim hips, strong thighs, and fine calves, I'd surprised him, and he rose from beside the contraption he was working on, oil can in hand. He was in his early thirties, his wild eyes shining in the lamplight. "Miss Clayton?"

I nodded. "Mr. Willoughby?"

He assented that this was so.

"I believe you have an airship?"

His lantern jaw spilt in a wide grin, exposing dazzling white teeth. "Indeed I do. Behold!" he picked up his own lantern and raised it above his head.

At the sight of the thing, the butterflies in my belly, fluttering in vibrant expectation, suddenly took ill and fell like lead weights. The source of my aforementioned incredulity was a cigar shaped patchwork bag of gas hovering above a gondola made of scrap wood joined by pieces of twine. It resembled something a child would make to fly in the park on a sunny summer afternoon.

His voice, proud and excited, prattled on about the virtues of the untidy object until he concluded with a perversely confident declaration, "I guarantee she'll get us to England!"

I slumped to the floor in abject despair. By tomorrow morning I'd be dead. Put against some stone wall, shot by half a dozen pimply faced soldiers, my body carefully dissected, and my fresh pink organs distributed across Paris by express post. By tomorrow afternoon I'd be alive, so to speak, but in the bodies of a dozen or more perfumed Parisians.

"You appear unconvinced."

"I am, sir, deeply and unequivocally unconvinced. I was promised an escape from my present travails, and what do I find? A joke, sir. A poor joke!"

"I realise she is not of a conventional design, but Miranda will exceed your expectations," he replied indignantly.

I couldn't contain my defeated laughter. "*Miranda?*"

"You find her amusing, Miss Clayton?"

"I do indeed, sir. I think I am going mad. My life is forfeit, my only hope of survival a tawdry excuse for a dirigible called Miranda. Though I'm doomed, I find my pitiful plight hilarious. That I should pin my hopes on... on... words fail me, sir."

"You underestimate her, Miss Clayton."

"I think not, sir. I ask you, will Miranda defy armour piercing shells?"

"No aerostat will survive penetration of that sort, Miss Clayton, Miranda's security lies in her petite size."

He had a point. The gas envelope was hardly fifteen yards long, and the gondola was a coffin sized box with a propeller set in the rear.

"Miranda is invisible at night, and the engine quiet as a mouse."

"It flies? So you've tested it, Mr Willoughby? Will it make it across the Channel?"

"I guarantee it."

Time was short. The French gendarmes were searching for me, and it wouldn't be long before a general alarm was raised, and the militia engaged in the hunt.

"Very well, let us aboard and depart."

He didn't move.

"Why do you hesitate, sir?"

He looked to his feet. It only now registered he wore no boots. "We must be as light as a feather, so to speak."

"What are you suggesting?"

"Our clothing, Miss Clayton. It will mean our deaths if we fly too low. We must divest ourselves of the outer layers. Every ounce we lose is added security of height that we gain."

"You suggest I disrobe?"

"We must."

I had two options -- live with indignity for a few hours, or die. I began unbuttoning my many buttons.

"Wait," he said. "We need to take Miranda out into the open air before we ascend."

Fear was making me stupid. "Of course. Please excuse my haste, but my life depends upon a speedy exit from France."

We doused our lamps and carried a surprisingly light Miranda out into the open.

"How much clothing do I retain, sir?" I asked impatiently after scanning the darkness around us. "You have not yet said,"

"Underdrawers, I'm afraid."

I grimaced at the thought. At least the darkness preserved my modesty. "Why are you helping me?" I asked.

"It seems we must both be out of France in a hurry. Birds of a feather, what? And you?"

I couldn't tell him I was a spy for Her Majesty the Queen. France was developing a secret weapon. I'd been so close to figuring out what it was, but with my contact captured, I was exposed. I had to tell London what little I knew. "The fate of England is at stake, Mr Willoughby."

"Then we must be about it. Ready? You need to lie beneath me."

I looked at him suspiciously.

“Trust me. I have to lay face downward to work the controls. You cannot be above me as that will obstruct the levers that control the engine and the steering.”

I reluctantly accepted his explanation. “Be advised, sir. Do not think you can take liberties, or there will be a reckoning on the other side.”

“I assure you, Miss Clayton, my thoughts are fully focussed on our escape. Ssssh!” He put his hand over my mouth. “Someone approaches. Quick, get in.” He shoved me facedown into the coffin. He primed the small steam engine, then lay on top of me.

“You’re crushing me, sir.”

“My sincere apologies.” He adjusted himself, but it didn’t help.

Despite the coolness of the night his naked flesh was hot and firm. He wiggled, spreading my legs so he was able to reach his foot pedals. A suspicious sausage shaped lump pressed between my buttocks.

He ditched the ballast, and Miranda wobbled alarmingly as she lifted into the air. “Relax. Think of England!”

I wiggled to make myself more comfortable, but that only conspired to make the hard lump press deeper between my buttocks. It occurred to me that my split drawers might open and allow his actual flesh to enter my innermost places. “Mr Willoughby,” I shouted. “Are you wearing underdrawers?”

“What a strange inquiry,” was his reply. Then he added, “Every ounce counts, what?”

My God! He was naked! I swore if I survived this I would shoot him dead.

Explosive sounds came from below. The French were shooting at us!

Thankfully they missed, and we carried on into the frigid air. The wind was turbulent over the channel, and with each shudder of the gondola, his hardening manhood pressed into me. I could do nothing, and within minutes my quim was wet and tingling, and with each shudder his cock pressed even harder against me.

The sensation was not disagreeable. In fact my excitement quickly grew, my heart beat faster and my breathing quickening. As we progressed across the channel I

wished that I wasn't wearing any clothes at all, that his cock was actually inside me, moving with each shudder of the gondola.

Sensual pleasures continued to build until the dam of propriety burst and I climaxed. I barely suppressed my cry of delight. The gondola rocked again, the hard lump of his cock pressed against my nub, and incredibly I climaxed again!

"Hold tight," he said at long last. "We're about to land."

I was just recovering when the basket was rocked by several hard impacts, and despite the threat of imminent death. "I'm releasing the gondola," he shouted, and we began tumbling, over and over in such a chaotic fashion that we were ejected from the wouldbe coffin. I found myself rolling uncontrollably across the grass. Eventually I stopped, gasping for breath and feeling extremely dizzy.

"Miss Clayton. Are you well?"

"I think so," I mumbled. "No bones broken."

"Excellent," he said. "Miranda was superb, was she not?"

"We made it?"

"Aye, we're home."

I was laughing hysterically in relief when I noticed he was staring at my semi nakedness. It was early morning, and in the dim light I saw he was, in fact, wearing drawers. "You lied!" I screamed at him.

He was clearly puzzled. "I say," he said. "Before you rush off -- will we meet again?"

"We've never met," I replied coldly.

"Oh, your spy business, what? Can't get involved with anyone, I shouldn't wonder."

My heart thudded in my chest. "You never know," I conceded. "I may need rescuing again. I believe the ministry needs pilots. You should apply."

"Then indeed, Miranda and I shall apply."

"Don't mention me, though."

He grinned. "How could I? We never met."

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