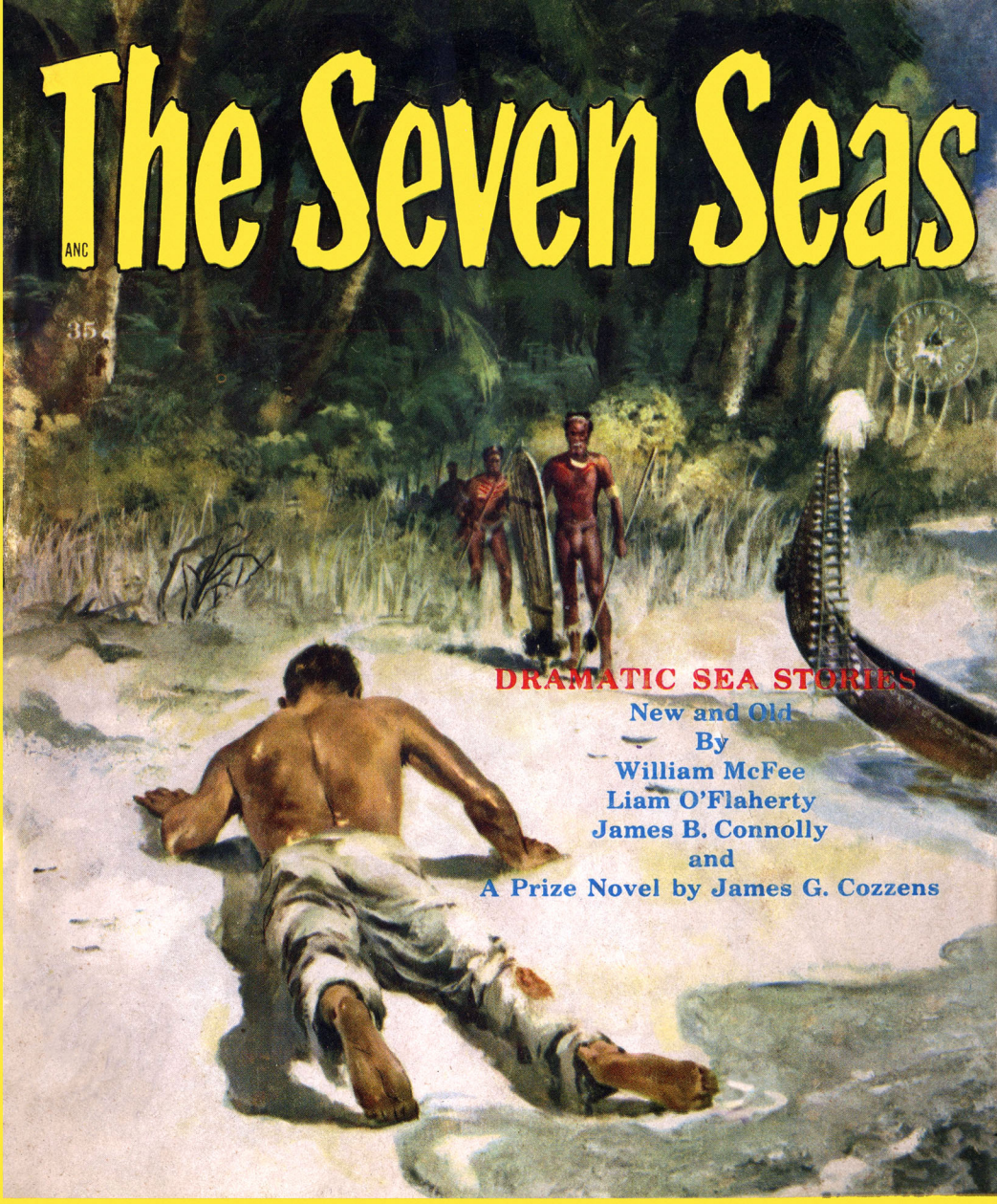
The Seven Seas



DRAMATIC SEA STORIES
New and Old
By
William McFee
Liam O'Flaherty
James B. Connolly
and
A Prize Novel by James G. Cozzens

SPECIAL NEW NOVELETTE BY GARLAND ROARK
Author of "Wake of the Red Witch"

Winter 1953 THE SEVEN SEAS Vol. 1. No. 1

The Captain's Walk

JAMES GOULD COZZENS

James Cozzens was born in Chicago in 1903. He was educated at the Kent School and Harvard, which he entered in 1922 and where he began writing his first novel. "S.S. San Pedro," which was based on the sinking of the *Vestris*, won both critical and popular acclaim when it appeared in 1931. Since then he has written several novels, the most recent being, "Guard Of Honor," which was enthusiastically heralded as one of the finest novels of our time. He received the Pulitzer Prize for this work in 1949.

LIAM O'FLAHERTY

Liam O'Flaherty was born in 1896 in the Aran Islands. He was educated in the Jesuit College, where he studied for the priesthood, and later at University College, Dublin. At the beginning of World War I, he joined the Irish Guards. A year later he was shell-shocked and returned to Ireland, where he took part in the Irish Rebellion. His experiences in this conflict provided him with the basis for his novel, "The Informer," which was later adapted for the screen by Dudley Nichols and John Ford. Mr. O'Flaherty has written many short stories and several novels. He is currently living in Ireland.

GARLAND ROARK

Garland Roark began writing best-selling novels about the sea after a long career in retail merchandising and sales promotion. His first published work turned out to be the highly successful novel, "Wake of The Red Witch," a Literary Guild selection and Republic movie. He followed this up with several other short stories and novels, all dealing with ships and the sea. A Texan by birth, Mr. Roark lives in Nacogdoches with his wife and two daughters.

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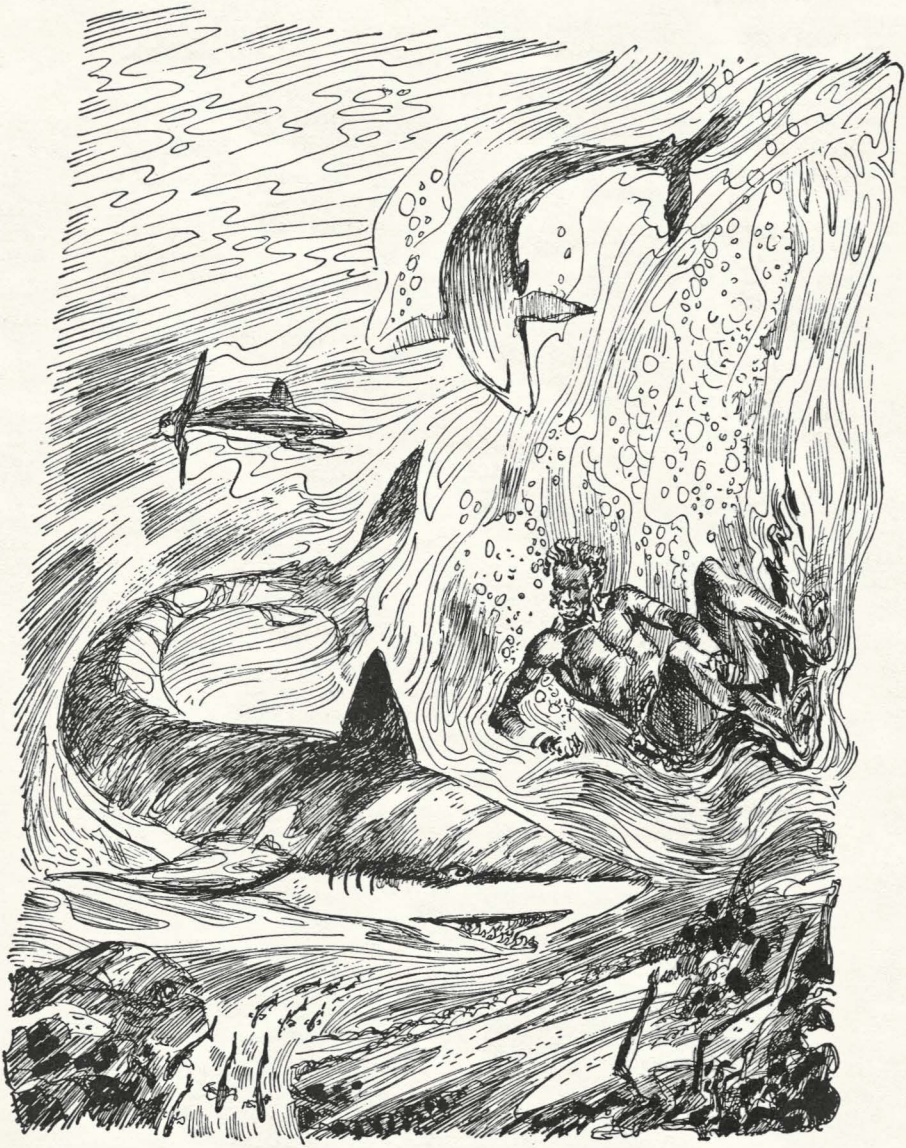


THE DIVER OF THE REBECQUE

By GARLAND ROARK

Somewhere below Papeete, where trade winds blow and passions run free, are the pearl beds and the men who wrest from them the ransom of kings. It is here that danger is as common as fish for breakfast, and human life less valuable than dime-store trinkets.

Out of this wasteland of water came a freebooter known as Pierre Larose and his halfbreed diver, one Leonce Carondelet. Theirs was a strange relationship of master and slave — with the question of which was which, a murky mystery — until death claimed one and the law the other.

Only Garland Roark, the author whose novel Wake of the Red Witch *stood high on the best-seller list and was made into a memorable motion picture, could have told this story!*

We lay in dangerously close to the island's fringing reef awaiting the outrigger canoe. The wind was freshening over the sea and night was falling swiftly with running clouds that shut out the afterglow. Darkness was an ally, for not a half mile away the French patrol schooner rode her anchors poised and vigilant.

While this was not a new experience it was freighted with the usual excitement. Where most pearlers carried cargo from one island to another between diving seasons, Pierre Larose risked his freedom for the big profits of smuggling. M. Nicot of the customs had sworn to catch him. All Papeete knew this. And here we were under Nicot's nose.

Larose sang out, "Bring her head to the seas, Jenkins."

I swung the wheel over and the seventy tons of his schooner Rebecque responded quickly. Her

bows were dipping and rising to the rhythm of the sea when the outrigger canoe shot out of the pass and lifted high on a roll of water. Against a band of color still clinging to the horizon the *commissaire's* pith helmet stood an instant in silhouette. The go-between in this game was bringing the contraband.

"She comes!" Larose cried. Taking in seas, weather, Nicot and our decks in a sweeping glance, he rattled off orders. "Jenkins, hold her close to the wind's eye. Nemitika, stand by for mains'l. Puaa, fores'l. Leonce, hand the jib sheet and look alive for the tack."

Leonce Carondelet lay flat of back on the forward deck, huge and brown. His head lifted and he was propping himself on elbows, grinning impiously.

"This time I'm not breaking the law, Larose."

Larose stiffened. "On the jibs, you half-breed!"

"Kanaka brown and French white are in my blood. Father Letruoin said I had nothing to be ashamed of, that white sometimes had smut on it."

Here was a resumption of the running duel between captain and diver. Seeming to forget outrigger and canoe, Larose took one threatening step forward, his black eyes snapping as he said, "*Sacré nom d'un chien!*" And Leonce was content to bleed Larose to the last ounce of restraint before falling to.

Tension fell away to night and sea. The island craft worked closer and slid down for an approach to our portside. She had a pile of water between her and Nicot's Entrépide when a flare lit up the night. The canoe grazed our side. Her crew took our line and fastened the sack to the hook. Swiftly, expertly, without loss of forward motion. The sea carried the canoe on and when the next flare burst the Rebecque was alone.

In the sack were twelve strings of copra, though embedded in a few of the cups were diamonds of size; left by a Dutch schooner and destined for recutting in Papeete.

With cargo on deck, we swung to leeward. The mainsail lifted and the schooner leaped forward like a tern on the wind.

The Entrépide's lights did not fall away in keeping with our speed. Nicot was putting out after us. Larose had been chased before. He doused our lights and placed the trade over our starboard quarter for a run to the north, watching from the masthead until the patrol schooner's light fell under horizon like a star winking off. Then we resumed our westerly course.

Larose had outwitted Nicot again.

As we ran on into the night, the weather worsened. A running

squall hissed in and kicked up the seas, tossing black water aboard. The bows struck hard and the bottom popped and the clouds dumped wet ballast in a gale of wind. We were used to this, as well as the chop of the ocean after the squall ran on. We tore past Rotova Anchorage and into backing winds, then strong, cross seas.

Larose swore and exhorted the elements to name this wind and quit playing roulette with his compass.

He was arrogant with even the weather.

We more or less took for granted the defiance in the wind-whipped face of this Frenchman from Martinique. It was easy to believe that Pierre Larose had teethed on a capstan bar and that any polish he might have gathered was from salt and seaweed; that he was actuated by a motive as old as time — greed. And I suppose all aboard entertained a little of his curious pride in the deception he practiced.

A tall man with black eyes and thin mustache, he wore no cap at sea, but a blue handkerchief knotted at the back of his head. This gear set him apart from the usual run of schoonermen. Some said it identified him for what he was. He excited many tales in French Oceania, among them the luck of his blue handkerchief, or *mouchoir*, his wealth, and the thorn in his flesh, the half-breed diver he shipped and endured for the sake of profit.

But he appealed to the fancy of native and French alike; all respected a captain whose luck in any game kept him clear of the reefs. There were few who did it.

The Rebecque had no sooner put rough weather behind her than Leonce laughed low in his throat. "It wasn't the blue rag that kept you free of Nicot tonight, Larose. The devil was baiting you. Wait and see."

Larose let such talk nettle him. He touched his handkerchief as another man might cross himself against evil influence and went to the cabinhouse.

Leonce chuckled as he perched himself atop an oil drum. He had a fine body. In the light of day his skin was the color of pale coffee. The hybrid coloring. His face was more Polynesian than French, broad and flat-nosed, though the placid look of islanders was missing in his expression. The strain simply ran out and the mixture of bloods put a chill in his eyes.

Like all islanders living with the sea, his glances seemed to reach beyond a horizon with some sixth-sense power that detected weather or the appearance of a sail ahead of their coming. On the other hand, where the Tahitian's memory of a wrong done him was short, Leonce's was long.

He was in talkative mood and

I at the wheel had nothing better to do than listen. Besides, he amused me. He was telling me about the priest of the Danger Islands who had raised him.

"Before Father Letruoin died he was cheerful. Like you, Jenkins. Only he worked. But my people respect a white man who lives in fine style without working."

"I tried work once," I said. "After Cambridge. Give an Englishman a jolt and he travels. A failure at business and marriage, I'm still traveling at forty."

"Just the same," he said, "It's better than being a slave like me."

Knowing the island schoonerman as I did there was nothing unnatural about his being a slave of a sort. French law said the Tuamotu Archipelago belonged to Tuamotans. Larose and other pearlers found ways of beating the law. The simplest method was to spoonfeed the diver. Leonce was an example. On his head was a silk hat bought by Larose and charged against Leonce's future take from the lagoons. The price was four pearls. And before the naked diving season opened again, he would owe Larose more pearls than he could bring up in several years. So if pearlers cheated divers good and proper, it was justified by the natives' love of luxuries. At least that was the practical way of looking at it.

However, Leonce resented the very thing he helped schoonermen practice. He nursed it and talked about it as he was doing now.

"After Father Letruoin died I dived for a living. Larose bought me from a Portugee, debts and all, for one case of gin and three sticks of Tahitian tobacco. Makes me a slave, a bought and sold slave, Jenkins."

"How much did you owe the Portugee?" I asked.

"Ten thousand francs, so he said. But I had a brass bed, silk socks, and a Prince Albert suit." He went on pensively, "I outgrew that suit. Wish Father Letruoin had seen me in it. Would have been proud of Leonce Carondelet.

"You know," he went on pensively, "Father Letruoin taught me a lot. It's all in my head now. Makes me wonder about things and think too much."

"About what?"

"Don't know. I like to booze as much as any Kanaka, but I keep hearing Father Letruoin. What I think and what I am aren't the same. And still—" He shook his head and folded the silk hat. "I'm what Larose made me.

"But," he brightened, "Larose never did learn where I hid the five pearls Father Letruoin gave me. He knew I had them. The good Father told him when he put in one day. And that was why Larose watched me and waited

until the good Father died. Then got the Portugee drunk and bought me."

I listened as though all this were new to me — about how Leonce parted with four of the pearls, and Larose's various methods of persuasion to learn where they were hidden and how Leonce learned to laugh at pain and then at Larose himself.

"I laughed at him, Jenkins. *Mon dieu,* but I was happy when he stood there unable to understand. To this day he can't figure me out — any more than the giant could David."

"David had a sling," I said.

"And I've got a pleasure," he replied. "It's making Larose pay for all he's done to me."

As I considered this, he laughed. "And I've got one of the pearls left. It's hidden where Larose or nobody else can find it."

We sailed on to Borabora Island for a real cargo of copra and shell before beating on the winds for Papeete. Leonce continued to taunt Larose. The conflict between them was a source of entertainment, a means of passing the time away. It was like a sporting contest, one against the other, Larose greedy and Leonce with a mind full of teachings his nature could not tolerate.

Then one afternoon the blue peaks of Tahiti rose up out of the sea. We skirted the breakers and ran through the pass to see Papeete spilling down the green slope to white beaches. We had no sooner moored the Rebecque than M. Nicot came aboard.

He was a small man with a long mustache and determined eyes. Ignoring Larose, he said to Leonce, "Monsieur Carondelet, you almost talked last time in. Perhaps you're ready to help us now."

"Help you? *Naturellement!* Is Larose *exempt de droits?* You look close this time, m'sieu." Rolling his eyes from Nicot to Larose, he said, "Things hid all over this schooner."

Larose didn't mind a little destruction where it did no harm. He waited, less angry at Leonce and more disturbed by the threat he constituted. And this rasped at his nerves. The search ended, but defeat was not a part of Nicot's expression.

"One day, mon Capitaine," he said slowly, "the wind will blow the blue *mouchoir* off your head."

He took Leonce with him, something he had never done before. Watching them go, Larose removed the blue rag from his head and held it as though he prayed to the goddess of luck.

Larose and I changed into whites and went ashore. A sea cap replaced the cloth on his head, though the talisman was fastened securely inside the breast pocket of his jacket.

The customary crowd assembled to meet any new arrival. French, Portuguese, Chinese, beachcombers, and no end of Tahitians crying, "*La Orana*," in greeting as they gave flowers to the sailor. "Play a tune on your concertina, *te tane* Jenkins. My wife here, she is fat but she does the *upa* dance *a la canaque*." As many flocked to Larose. "Let me touch your luck, man of the sea. The *mouchoir*."

Up the beach, Larose paused in conversation with a young lady of high standing. Rather indiscreet, both of them, since Papeete thrived on gossip.

The memory of her went back to a day when she was in a small skiff and we were approaching the quay. Larose helmed the schooner close and rocked her boat. She came alive at anchorage with a sharp tongue, then paused to study him as though minus any recollection of his deviltry. He wasn't blind. He might have seen prettier women than Jules Frilot's daughter, though seldom one with more romantic challenge in her face. I saw the spark between them then as I was seeing it now.

She went her way and Larose and I moved on to Cercle Commerciale, better known as Sorry's Place. Beyond the round tables was a door we had walked through many times. We entered the private office and waited for Sorry himself.

Soon he arrived and sat down. He was a big man with a hawklike face. Listening and staring balefully at Larose, he haggled over the price of "twelve strings of copra." In the end, he passed over the money.

He said, lowering his voice, "We're in luck, Pierre. With just enough time for one good run before the diving season begins, I've arranged the one big deal we've waited for. You'll pick up the stuff at Hao Island."

"Nicot's hot on my trail," Larose said. "And right now he has my Kanaha, Leonce."

"For all of five years I've warned you to get rid of that diver, Pierre."

"I'll get rid of him in due time."

"You've said that before. Now get rid of him before he talks."

"He's the best diver in the islands," Larose said.

"Name of a cracker!" Sorry exclaimed. Then he sat back and said thoughtfully, "You are a strange one. No schoonerman runs the reefs with more daring than Pierre Larose. But you put a pearl or two ahead of the big money. That doesn't make sense."

Larose's hand came up and felt of the blue handkerchief.

Sorry eyed the cloth solemnly. "The blue *mouchoir*," he said. "You put too much faith in the

blue rag. Less than an hour ago you talked with Frilot's daughter on the beach."

"You are suddenly the meddler," Larose said with quiet menace.

"True. I meddle for our health. Frilot is rich and powerful. He will not like to hear that his daughter was seen with a man of your reputation. You know Papeete, so you can imagine he had already heard."

He flipped a hand against Larose's handkerchief in disdainful manner and said, "So wear the *mouchoir* on your head and not over your heart."

Larose settled back like a coiled spring unwinding and drank in silence. He said nothing when Sorry's final utlimatum rang in his ears — either get rid of Leonce and forget Ninon Frilot or some other schooner captain would run for the big haul at Hao.

A little later, Larose asked me to follow him. He was paying call on Ninon Frilot. I got up from Sorry's tinny piano somewhat reluctantly and walked out into the light of a half-moon. We moved on up in the high streets beyond the lights and sounds of revelry, past trellis and garden where the fall of moonlight made shadows darker. Suddenly from the bougainvillea someone addressed Pierre in hushed voice.

Larose went to her after ordering me to keep a sharp eye out. Under the cover of hedge I could hear all that was said. Her greeting was low and husky and Larose was asking why she met him here instead of in her garden.

"There was talk when you walked me home from the Chinaman's shop last time," she said. "Papa heard."

"What did he say, Ninon?"

"Plenty!"

I parted the leaves and saw her standing half-shadowed and smiling up into his face. As if she thought to forestall further questioning, she asked of his voyage only to be told he didn't talk of his voyages. Hadn't she heard as much? She had. Then why was she interested?

She said, "I don't know — unless it's islands and sails, things I've been deprived of. Maybe that's why I'm seeing you, Pierre."

"If it's islands and sails, your father has a finer schooner than mine," Larose said.

"You don't know Papa," she laughed.

"I don't want to know him. But what did he say about me?"

"He said you were a smuggler. Are you?"

"Suppose I am?"

"It doesn't matter to me. But Papeete says Ninon Frilot is making a great mistake." There was entreaty in her face as she said, "Perhaps I am."

"You're asking me, aren't you?"

"I could be. Yes."

"Asking why a man like me has an eye for a lady like you, and what a smuggler could offer you?"

"Perhaps."

In the silence he created she waited for a reply to the questions he had voiced. It came, sudden and naked of pretense.

"I haven't asked you to marry me, have I?"

She backed a step and stared unbelievingly. "The way you say it, Pierre!"

"Is the way I mean it."

She stood speechless, eyes wide. As if she had only her pride to fall back on, she whirled to leave him. He caught her to him and kissed her roughly.

He held her for a long time, then pushed her away and said, "A smuggler's woman will know where to find my boat."

He walked away and she stood there looking after him. "Smuggler's woman —" she said before walking swiftly for the safety of her house.

I remained still, just turning it all over in my mind while gazing up at the moon that seemed a laughing caricature. Life was strange, women were puzzles, and a man like Larose was enough to confound anyone. She had responded to his embrace. Her giving was a thing I could see and think she had waited all her life for. And Larose — whether the sea, his trade, or Leonce had so hardened him, it was all the same, for she had failed to soften him.

I was getting up when a shuffling in the street drew my attention. A shadowy figure in a silk hat and Prince Albert too small for him was identified as Leonce. Now what was he doing here? He was abreast of me and trudging on in the direction of Frilot's house. Moving clumsily, as though half-seas over with his favorite absinthe.

As he cleared the rise of the street and disappeared into the shadows across the way from Frilot's fence, I followed. He was seated in the shadows when I slipped up close enough to observe him.

"Said Larose came here," he muttered.

Then he got up, paced back and forth, and stared anxiously at the light in Frilot's window. A sound formed in his throat and died away before he said, "A woman. *Non!* What a woman do to Larose?"

He was suddenly running toward the house. Straight through the iron gate and on to the door of Frilot's house, where he pulled at the bellcord. The door opened and he was talking to Jules Frilot. Then he went inside.

Curiosity held me there the better part of an hour when

I wished for the merriment of Sorry's Place. I was ready to depart when Leonce came out.

Seeing me in the street, he asked what I was doing there. My unyielding reply — what was *he* doing in Frilot's house? — opened his mouth. He had heard Father Letruoin's voice and the order sounded: Leonce should save the girl from Larose. I scoffed at this, asking if he out of jealousy hadn't intended saving Larose from any influence that might lessen the effect of his jeers.

"Why M'sieu Jenkins!" he said as. though hurt. He went on. "Now I told Frilot and his daughter about how Larose bought me and abused me for Father Letruoin's pearls. She didn't believe me. But Frilot did. Look at the cigars he gave me. And the franc notes! Look, Jenkins!"

"You must have earned the money. What else did you say?"

"Don't worry. All I said was the usual thing. Same as I said to Nicot — 'Watch Larose. Something big is in the wind.'" He laughed. "And Frilot paid me money for that!"

"For once you told the truth. Something big is in the wind. Now Nicot will do everything in his power to catch Larose on this trip."

"*Non!*" He stopped and gripped my arm. "You know I didn't intend to do that, Jenkins. I wouldn't tell on Larose."

He was sincere. Despite the sadistic pleasure he derived from taunting Larose, he was as dependent on him as a child.

I went from one casino to another that night. Leonce trailed me like a faithful dog, asking as the hangers-on what had happened to Jenkins the troubadour. Not one of them could imagine a man of my nature at grips with a problem. But something in my makeup pointed out a dour loyalty to a situation. Telling Larose what I knew would endanger Leonce and keeping it from him was as bad for Larose. On the other hand, concern for either sawed against the grain to a carefree sailor. There were other schooners. The world was bigger than the cramped deck of the Rebecque.

Sorry was a discerning devil. Inviting me to his office, he poured his finest brandy and looked wise. "Ready to quit, aren't you? I can't blame you, Jenkins." Watching me with a trace of humor in his birdlike eyes, he said, "Larose is sailing at dawn."

Surprised, I said, "Rather unusual isn't it?"

"Better to go before the chase can get organized." He waited for me to say something. Out of silence he went on. "I've kept a man tailing Leonce in port for several years. Tonight it paid off.

The Kanaka entered Frilot's house and Frilot went to see Nicot. So Leonce said something."

"Hold it, Sorry. Leonce doesn't know about the big deal."

"But he told you what he said, Jenkins. My man heard — '*Something big was in the wind.*' Whose side are you on, Jenkins?"

"Does Larose know about all this?"

"Yes. In our business we have no secrets from each other." We sat out a silence. He got up and said, "I once thought you the smartest man in the islands." He waited before saying, "With a few hours between him and dawn, the Jenkins I once knew would drink free and sing loud."

It wasn't a bad idea. There were all sorts of answers to all sorts of riddles in wine and song; some good, some mediocre, some worthless. But Sorry was at the door of his office looking at Leonce with eyes that saw a corpse. And I drank up to keep the same picture out of my mind.

The crowd was thin until the word got around that I was pumping the concertina for all its worth at Cercle Commerciale. Within an hour I was seas over gunwale and singing wicked ditties to as mixed a crowd as you'd find east of Singapore. I was picking up coins from the floor when Sorry came up and asked if I would like to run his schooner down to Raratonga for copra, all legitimate, of course.

Our glances met and held strong. He was looking at a possible peacemaker aboard the Rebecque where he didn't want peace and thinking I was drunk enough to stay just plain vagabond.

"Thanks," I said. "You know I always sail with Larose — and his diver."

Two hours later I stood the deck of the Rebecque awaiting the dawn. A strange sadness seemed to hang over the island and there was a moan on the sea wind. The Jenkins was gone out of me and I was facing the future as any other man with a responsibility. So perhaps the morning wasn't sad at all.

The coming of day brought Larose on deck. He stood watching the pink and blue mists about the peaks take on shape. The foreground of Papeete melted into light while the hidden bulk of city slept off the orgies of night.

"Jenkins," he said, "You may not enjoy this voyage. Better not go along."

"I know the reef passes."

He was suddenly hostile. "Maybe I don't want any witnesses."

"I can be as deaf and blind as Puaa or Nemitika. Or," I said, looking toward the beach,

"our good friend Leonce there."

He studied Leonce with eyes envenomed by old memories but mostly new, watching his every move as he came aboard with a sack of trinkets and franc notes in either hand. He looked on in silence as his diver found hammer and nail and fastened the money to the mast — "Honest money for Larose to look at," he said.

"Judas' money," Larose replied before ordering every man but Leonce to the job of getting under way.

The anchor was hauled in and the bows swung out into the lagoon. The schooner felt her way and was soon running toward the pass. On through the coral traps, she hit the open sea with all canvas curving in the southeast trade. Leonce hadn't turned a chore, hadn't been asked to. He waited through every tack for some order from Larose, and when none was forthcoming he sat with trouble in his face. We ran on for days, beating against the wind, needing all hands and not once calling on Leonce.

We were near on to six hundred miles east of Papeete when a low, thin smear of land broke the afternoon horizon. The long island came on, tufted with coconut palms on the north where the pass lay. I knew the velocity of the current running out of the pass. Ahead, the sweeping rips to seaward were visible.

This was the island where we would take on the big haul. Terns flew inland and a bird dipped low over our foremast. We coasted along under scant sail, conning the road from aloft as we stood off for slack water. Leonce remained still and quiet.

"Good pearling there," I said, watching the breakers race in and crash on the coral heads. "But deep, and the current —"

"Skip it," Larose said. He was staring out to sea.

A sail broke the western horizon and grew larger. The schooner heeled under all sail, her tricolor whipping to leeward as she sliced up the seas in a race toward the Rebecque. She was not Nicot's Entrépide so we wondered who she was and why she cut a straight wake toward us. A little later Larose identified her.

Sorry's schooner, the Southern Cross.

She came close and spoke us. A boat was lowered and Sorry in the stern sheets said we were the devil to chase. He came aboard and looked from Leonce to Larose. Then we went to the cabinhouse.

Sorry said, "Ninon Frilot came to see me shortly after you sailed, Pierre." Larose reached for the bottle in the rack. "She told me all your Kanaka babbled to Frilot. Angry, I said this was his last trip and she asked what I meant.

Just that, and she asked why it was his last trip and I said Pierre Larose who wasn't given to idle talk said it was, on account of business security. But perhaps I'm wrong, Pierre. I was expecting to learn that Leonce had happened upon an accident."

With no reply from Larose, he shrugged and went on. "She said she had information that might save you from a trap and asked me to send her after you in my schooner. *Mon dieu!* Wasn't her father's schooner out there? She told me it was slower than my wits, that unless I helped her we'd both be in trouble. Probably in jail, for Nicot and her father had hatched a scheme that would put us both there."

"What was the scheme?" Larose asked.

"She refused to tell me."

"And you sailed six hundred miles to tell me that?"

"No. To bring Ninon Frilot to you."

Soon Ninon made the crossing and came aboard. As she met Larose there were trust and trouble and fear in her face.

When they entered the cabinhouse, Leonce came bounding up to me. "Why is she here, Jenkins? Why?" His eyes darted aft and back on me. "You better tell me, Jenkins."

With Sorry's approach, Leonce ambled to the mast where his franc notes were fastened and tore one off, then another. Crumpling each, he flung them to the wind, whining and muttering from deep in his throat. He was pacing the deck like a caged animal when Larose and Ninon came on deck.

"Well, what was the scheme?" Sorry asked eagerly.

Larose waited until Leonce was out of earshot before saying Nicot and his men were sailing after the Rebecque disguised as sailors aboard Frilot's schooner.

"So we'll trade schooners, Sorry. You'll wait for them in the Rebecque and lead Nicot a merry chase while I run the Southern Cross inside the lagoon. There I can attend to both pieces of business."

His glance fell on Leonce and slid away as he said it. Ninon caught the moment's play. A hint of understanding showed in her face and fell away before what looked like judgment.

She said, "Pierre, you told me a smuggler's woman would know where to find your boat."

Her eyes were searching his face quietly, but with determination in them. Larose tensed as though caught off guard. Despite his silence he could not fully hide the surge of feeling inside him.

"I found your boat," she went on. "And I'll be waiting to become a smuggler's woman, if that's the way you want it — but not a

heartless murderer's woman."

Then she put her back to him, leaving him rooted to deck and staring thoughtfully at the empty expanse of sea and island.

Trading schooners, we parted company. Larose watched Ninon sail away. When the Rebecque dropped under the horizon, he raised canvas.

With slack water, we ran the treacherous pass and dropped breast anchors in the lagoon some distance out from a crescent-shaped beach. Canoes swarmed out to meet us, their outriggers loaded with laughing islanders. Larose asked about an old trader, who was the smuggler's go-between here, and learned that he had sailed up to Amanu Island with the *commissaire*. Larose turned a deaf ear to the native's bid for trade.

Loading our dinghy with trade goods, I went ashore. The grizzled trader arrived and told me how he had drawn the French official away from the island. The smuggled goods were ready and waiting, and the sooner we took them aboard the better.

Returning to the schooner with shell and a few chickens, I went straightway to Larose. He sat in his cuddy with bottle and glass. His dark glance said he wished to be left alone. Nor was there any change in his humor when I gave him the trader's message.

"I'm in no hurry," he said, causing me to ask why he wasn't in a hurry to load and get under way.

"I told you not to come along this trip, Jenkins."

Reaching for his bottle, I poured a finger, not taking my eyes off him. "So you left Leonce on a barren atoll once," I said slowly. "He met you in Papeete. Later, you ditched him on Rapa Island, but needed a diver and returned for him."

I drank, watching him, searching behind the mask of his face before saying, "The pearling season isn't far off. With shell bringing a high price and pearl buyers hiding behind every bush in the islands, you may need a good diver again."

"I'll need one tomorrow," he said.

He refused to divulge more and I could only guess at his meaning. He confounded me by his lack of interest in the very thing that had drawn him to the island. In this game he was an expert; or had been. The qualities separating success from failure, and entirely missing in him now, were alertness to an opportunity and a swift stroke and run. His luck was nothing more than the coordination of these requisites. And yet he dallied and spoke of his need of a diver, touching his luck piece as he said it.

He posted no anchor watch that night. Ordinary precautions seemed forgotten. With morning, there was no order to scan the pass from masthead for Nicot or the island's *commissaire*. Instead, he waited for the sun to lift halfway to its zenith before saying we would do a little pearling.

"Pearling!" I exclaimed. "You joke, Pierre."

There was something stormy about his eyes. He was otherwise calm as he said, "There's a fine bed off the far shore that needs shelling, Jenkins." His eyes were on Leonce.

As we raised sail and tacked for headway, Leonce said he wouldn't go down. Larose remained quiet as he confiscated the silk hat in lieu of the pearls Leonce owed him for it. The play between them ended as I predicted, Leonce giving in, but gloating over Larose's need of him.

The schooner slid over the smooth lagoon. We dropped anchor several times for a look at the floor before the oyster bed was located. It lay at two levels, the higher in about ten fathoms, or sixty feet, the other down almost twice the depth and perhaps ten times as dangerous on account of pressure and the strong current leaning toward the pass. Twenty fathoms seemed a little too much for even the finest Tuamotan diver. I had seen them exceed that, though often they doubled up with the bends.

However, Nemitika was an accomplished diver's mate, quick to sense trouble and go into action. He was in the dinghy with mesh basket while Puaa lay on the oars. As Larose drew the schooner closer with enough sail to tauten anchor cable, I went aloft. My job was to look below as well as toward the pass and sing out a warning of any craft entering the lagoon or of trouble below. Nicot might enter, though I wasn't concerned with Nicot now. This pearling jaunt simply didn't fit into the scheme of things. Something else was in the wind.

Water was Leonce's element. With goggles on his head and weights in hand, he split the water and plummeted down like the merman he was. On he worked with amazing ease into the blue-green depths, hovering over coral formations, backing from a lavender shelf where vicious moray and conger eels were known to lurk. He touched a foot to the coral sand and rose up instantly. A giant clam closed the purple sore of its mouth, missing his foot by scant inches.

Used to such dangers, Leonce went on unhurriedly. I sent an eye seaward. Nothing marred the scene. The current swept on out and the distant roar of breakers sounded through the pass. All

seemed peaceful, though the lulling quiet failed to calm me. Perhaps we hadn't deceived Nicot after all. And here inside the coconut-fringed lagoon, pearling wasn't pearling, but an excuse for something else.

I looked at Larose, for long curious seconds. My glance slid away, falling to the lagoon and piercing the crystal thickness down to Leonce; and still I continued to see Larose. If Leonce was his interest now, I knew his mind.

Then I was watching the undulations of the spangled floor beneath me. A world in itself, it was alive with colors in sharp contrast to the pale sands. Leonce emerged from a thin shelf and reached for the basket. Four large shells were placed in it. With luck, he might pay for his hat with that cluster. He slid into a cavern and sent Moorish idols scurrying like butterflies into the open. A slimy arm stretched out and another. The water turned inky as the octopus shot down to the lower bed.

Leonce ran out of bubbles and surfaced for air, enough to last a minute and a half before exhaling for the same amount of time. The Kanaka way.

Larose said, "Drop down for the big bed."

Nemitika drew in the weights and Leonce took them. As he went down again, my attention was drawn to deck.

Larose's movements were deliberate. He walked straightway to the coop near the bows and choked off the sound of a chicken. Next he severed its head and soaked up the blood in a rag. He was an open book then. What he would do next was revealed even to the line and weight he would employ. Ninon had lost, though she would never know it, he was playing it that skillfully; his game and Sorry's against her single demand, simply planning an accident not uncommon to divers. Shaping the excuse, but cheating as he had done all his life.

With Nemitika's and Puaa's attention fixed on Leonce in twenty fathoms, and forgetting me or not caring what I saw, Larose tied the bloody rag to a line and paid it over the side. He trailed it in the water. The smell would draw sharks if there was one within miles. And Larose would wait for a black fin to purl the water before attaching the weight and dropping the rag down over Leonce.

As he worked the line back and forth, I scanned the lagoon on all sides. Coming toward the schooner from the pass was a long blue shark, its fin slicing the surface. Then another appeared from the opposite direction, both investigating the blood smell.

Larose saw them. He hauled

the rag in, soaked it red once more, and affixed the lead. All unhurried. There would be no telltale splash of the weight. It would be noiseless, the rag slipping under and plummeting down. Perhaps he would call Nemitika's and Puaa's attention to deck at just the precise moment. As neat as you please. Larose was not one to pass up any refinement of the odds.

The lead was secure. The rag was dripping crimson. I spoke up then.

"I'd tie on a part of the chicken, Pierre."

He looked up at me.

I didn't alter my gaze. Neither did he. Seconds slipped by. "I told you not to take this trip, Jenkins."

"Ninon isn't looking, Pierre. So drop the rag."

"She's not in this."

"No? She's in it heart deep."

Slowly he lowered his gaze to the water. Slower still, he drew it in and let it fall on the rag. He had to make a choice. His oath said he was making one.

The basket surfaced, water cascading through the mesh, when Larose dropped the rag on deck and ordered Nemitika to beat the water, a signal for the diver to come up.

As Larose whirled and went to the cabinhouse, I moved down the ratlines to deck and flung the weighted rag far in the opposite direction before Leonce and his mates came aboard.

It was only natural to think Larose was drinking to his defeat. Unable to censure him unduly, I took over, raised sail, and worked back to our former anchorage. The hot sun bore down and I cast longing glances at the beach, cool with shadows of coconut palms. A tension hung over the schooner; else it was simply a part of me, since Nemitika and Puaa slept and Leonce sat on deck untangling fishing gear, happy because Larose had needed and used him once more. But the feeling persisted. It seemed as though all sound ceased and I was confronted with some strange puzzle of the universe.

Larose appeared on deck and broke the spell. Nudging our sailors awake with a foot, he ordered them to set Sorry's entire stock of trade goods on deck. He appeared to be opening shop when no end of fancy goods were lined against the rail. He spread them out to advantage, as the Chinese merchants of Papeete.

Then he eyed Leonce, who seemed as curious as I.

"All yours, Monsieur Carondelet," he said. "To set up a store in the village."

Leonce blinked his eyes, shook his head and looked from the maze of goods to Larose, then me. Over his surprise, he got

up and took a step or two toward the merchandise before eying Larose dubiously.

Larose was saying, "You know the natives, Leonce. Any item here that catches their fancy might fetch a nice pearl or a ton of shell. You can become a rich man before the pearling season ends."

"What you mean, Larose?"

"It's all yours if you'll stay on the island."

"Stay on the island? What you do without me, Larose? You needed me today. Thought you wouldn't need Leonce again, didn't you? But you did."

"You heard my proposition," Larose replied.

Leonce appeared hostile then bewildered, and next interested. Adjusting his loincloth, which was all he had on, he examined a polka-dotted parasol. A blue and gold jacket caught his eye. Looking at the faded epaulets, he grinned and put it on. With parasol over his head and a dandy stick in the other hand, he walked aft and turned up the deck with all the dignity of a Tonga king. He was something to see. I laughed and said he needed a headpiece to match the outfit.

"*Oui*, that's right. And some striped trousers, Jenkins."

The childlike eagerness in his face almost caused me to forget he was a big Kanaka buck; until he asked Larose if he were trying to get rid of him. Larose seemed to reach deep for the little policy left in him. He said he knew a good diver when he saw one, that he wasn't about to get rid of him for good. All this was Leonce's with no strings attached, unless Leonce wished to trade and split the take with him.

Leonce said, "What you think, Jenkins?"

"A good business proposition. It's something out of the ordinary for a diver to be taken into partnership. Why that jacket on your back will fetch a pearl of size, Leonce."

"This? I wouldn't sell it for two pearls."

I laughed. "There goes the profit."

Larose said, "That's why pearlers grow rich."

He defined the economy of the islands with those words. And he was putting all the dazzle and glitter of a lot of junk before Leonce in a bid for their separation. It might work. However, I thought Larose appeared unduly anxious for a man of his trading experience when he said:

"All debts cancelled, Leonce."

This was too much. I amended it, saying, "You mean, of course, if he accepts a partnership."

Larose fingered his mustache. Darting me a glance, he said, "*Naturellement*," when his look said he'd gladly pay any price

imaginable for good riddance.

Leonce paid no attention to this. He was counting the items. "Just one jacket and one talking machine. For everything I sell, I got to have one for myself."

Larose was about to voice his disgust when Puaa cried, "Sail come in pass!"

We looked. Larose raised his glass and took in the sloop. He said nothing and I reached for the telescope. Whipping above the single mast was a tricolor. "The *commissaire*," I said. "Seems you waited too long, Pierre."

"I know what I'm doing, Jenkins," he replied crisply. But little ridges of muscles were crawling his jaw. He darted a glance at Leonce and said impatiently, "Make up your mind in a hurry, Kanaka."

"I'm thinking about it, Larose."

The Frenchman's sloop was working closer. It did nothing to calm Larose. "All right, Puaa," he growled, "gather up the goods and stow them below."

"Wait," Leonce said. "I thought all this was mine. Trying to get rid of me, aren't you, Larose?" He backed to the bowsprit and caught up the situation in his own peculiar manner. Laughing, he went on, "Trying to fool Leonce. Father Letruoin taught me not to be a fool, Larose."

He kept it up, and Larose stood there quivering in his rage, impotent to deal with him.

"Easy, Pierre," I said. "Easy as you go. Don't undo all you've done."

He turned on me, saying I was a fool to think he had accomplished anything or ever would. The situation was hopeless, wasn't it? Next he said, "I can't conquer him, can't make peace with him, can't live with him, and can't kill him."

I let it pass, thinking it a waste of time to try and convince him that the malice and malignity of years could be bought and erased in a single gesture.

Mouthing an oath he went below. I walked forward and asked Leonce why the devil he had turned down such an excellent proposition.

"You'll find out why, Jenkins. He's got a reason for trying to get rid of me. And it's not a business reason."

"So what? As long as you have the trade goods — and your freedom."

"You don't understand, Jenkins."

I thought I did. But I had no answer that would serve me or Larose at the moment.

Leonce remained astraddle the bowsprit the remainder of the afternoon. He put on a show for the natives. They could not

understand why one of their kind all dressed up in a fine jacket and holding a parasol over his head sat there jeering at nothing in a mixture of French and Tahitian. He must be very drunk. The alternative, he was "crazy brains" which was worse than a man on booze.

The sun was setting when I coaxed Leonce off the bowsprit with a suggestion that we swim ashore. After fastening his jacket to the bobstay, he dropped into the water. I swam after him to the beach, where we gathered coconuts and sat down to husk them. The afterglow was unusually bright. Clouds took on renewed color as though the sun were backing up. Leonce said something about it then fell to trepanning coconuts again. I voiced a reply. Looking at Sorry's schooner in detachment, I said:

"Larose killed a chicken today, Leonce."

"What you mean, Jenkins?"

I told him. He dropped the coconut and thought about it in silence.

"This is a day to remember," I said at last. "He tried two ways of getting rid of you. Good and bad. For years you've resented being a slave, but when he offered to set you free you turned him down. There's a devil in you, Leonce."

"If there is, Larose put it there. Didn't he buy me and abuse me? Didn't he cheat me today? He's got the shell I brought up. There are pearls in them. I know, for I opened a shell under a ledge and worked the flesh of the oyster with my fingers." He handed me a small pearl, saying it was mine.

It was useless to remind him he had cheated Larose also. I tried another tack. "Let him alone for a year, Leonce. Take all you can get out of him, but leave him alone for one year. If he comes looking for you to dive for him again — and he might do it — he'll deserve all the hell you can stir up for him."

"One year? Now that's not a long time, Jenkins." He thought about it. "I might try it. He's got a gold watch I want."

"And a gold tooth," I said. "Take that too."

"I could dive for anyone I pleased," he reflected.

"And being the best diver in the islands, you could get the long end of the take."

"And Larose would be wanting me back when the diving season opens. I bring up more shell than any Kanaka."

"Let him learn to appreciate you, Leonce."

"One year?" he said. "He wouldn't wait that long."

"That's what I was thinking, Leonce."

"If I leave, I'll go laughing at him."

"And if he returns for you, meet him that way."

"I might try it, Jenkins," he said, getting up.

I remained dubious. He had not mentioned the real issue, the thing that was troubling him. Hoping to bring it into the open, I said, "Let's go tell Larose you'll remain on the island."

"Wait, Jenkins." His hand fell to my arm. "Don't forget Frilot's daughter."

This was what I wanted. Now it was up to me. I slapped him on the back and burst out laughing. "What's she got to do with it? You know Larose. She's a passing fancy. Besides, she's out of his class."

As much as he wanted to believe this, he couldn't bring himself around to it. "She sailed out after him, didn't she?"

"To warn us after you talked too much," I said. "And she sailed off with Sorry, didn't she?"

"Just the same," he replied, slipping into the water.

He was a better swimmer than I. By the time I reached deck, he was on the bowsprit jeering Larose. "So you tried to kill me today. Why didn't you drop the chicken blood down on me, Larose? What were you afraid of, my ghost? Maybe Frilot's daughter told you to do it and you got scared. Or maybe she didn't want you to kill anybody."

There was a beaten look about Larose. His shoulders sagged and his eyes were dull and glassy. He said hopelessly, "It doesn't matter. This time tomorrow you'll have something more important to think about."

"What you mean, Larose?"

"I tried to kill you, Leonce. Then I tried to buy you off. Neither worked. Nothing seems to. So there's not much left for me to try."

Leonce showed concern. "What you mean?"

Larose had no reply for him. He turned slowly and seemed to drag himself off to the cabin-house.

"What does he mean, Jenkins? Said I'd have something more important to think about tomorrow. What?"

I said nothing, just stared after Larose. Desperation was written all over him. I knew all he had been through on this day. He was no murderer, he was no peacemaker, though he had sweated blood over both. I pitied him then, and realized that he could not for long remain in the tight grip of his frustrations. But how would he break free?

"Have you figured out what he meant, Jenkins?" Leonce asked anxiously. Before the moon came up, he was walking the deck. By midnight, he was nervous as a tiger. "What'll he do, Jenkins?"

Tired of his questions, I said impatiently, "Kill himself, maybe. God knows you've given him enough trouble to drive him crazy."

This really caused him worry. And I wasn't so sure I hadn't stumbled on the truth when the dawn touched the eastern sky.

The day came up fast. A squall ran inland and drove on, and out of the mist the sun burned down on island and sea. The trade wind breathed life over the lagoon. Still Larose had not shown himself. Leonce waited, his anxious gaze fixed on the cabinhouse.

"Why doesn't he come out, Jenkins?"

Toward midmorning Larose appeared on deck. He said nothing as he lowered the dinghy and put out for shore. We watched him make his way to the trader's hut. A little later the old man rowed out with him. Several jute bags were hauled up to our deck, right under the *commissaire's* nose. Larose completed the business and Puaa rowed the trader to the beach.

Leonce said, "You never took chances like that before, Larose."

"I probably won't ever do it again, Kanaka." Turning to me, he said, "We'll run for the pass, Jenkins."

"We usually wait for the cover of night, Pierre."

"Not this time. Now raise sail."

The hangdog look was gone out of his face, though something fierce and mysterious had taken its place. Like decision, however reckless.

"The wind's against us," I said.

"No hurry. I'll be in jail a long time."

"Jail!" Leonce and I said it in unison. Then Leonce ran up to him. "You drunk, Larose? Crazy maybe?"

"I'm sane at last. And you lose, Kanaka, for I've found a sure way of getting rid of you."

"What you mean, Larose?"

"We're sailing to Nicot."

This seemed so unlike the real Pierre Larose that I was tempted to laugh. How cunning or sincere he might be, there was no way of telling just yet. But he was smarter than I had thought if this was a threat, and as desperate as I had imagined if he meant it. Either way, he was appealing to Leonce's possessive fears.

Leonce was saying, "You can't do it, Larose! I've gone down deep for you. So deep my ears bled. I brought up pearls for you, Larose."

"And you're a free man for it. None of you are involved. Nicot will be so glad to get me, you'll all go free."

Leonce stood with mouth open, eyes entreating. "Put all that fancy stuff in a boat and set me on the beach. You won't see me

again, Larose. Never again."

"You're a day late, Kanaka."

Now Larose had me worried. I could go along with a joke so far, though all humor would turn to risk the moment we hit the current in the pass. But perhaps he wasn't joking. He had never been known to jest. And next to suicide, giving himself up was his only sure way out.

"I'll prove it, Larose. Just give me a chance." Leonce turned to me. "You believe me Jenkins. Tell him you do."

"I think he means it, Pierre."

I had never expected to see this. Yesterday a situation that defied solution. Today a miracle of a sort. And Leonce pleading almost; Pierre saying, "My mind's made up."

"I'll show you!" Leonce cried excitedly. "I've got a way of proving it."

He held us fascinated as he drew a knife and sliced the skin above his hip. As though insensible to pain, he widened the slit with his fingers and worked down into the flesh. A pearl of size emerged. Wiping it free of blood, he handed it to Larose.

"Now you know where I hid the last pearl."

Larose rubbed the pearl between his palms and held it up to the sunlight. "*Sacrebleu!*" he exclaimed. "One fine gem this. Look at the color and size, Jenkins. Nothing like it has ever turned up in the islands."

I held it, admiring it, until I saw the trickle of blood running Leonce's leg. My glance lifted to his anxious face, and I was thinking he had given up more than a pearl. It was the Kanaka way, everything or nothing.

Laughter from Pierre Larose was an uncommon sound. But we heard it.

"Name of a sacred shark!" he said. "But it is strange indeed that it should require this to uncover the last of Father Letruoin's pearls."

Perhaps it was the way he said it. The inflection of his voice made a joke out of it.

Leonce backed away as though Larose had struck him. "So you pretend!" he said. "Tricked me."

Larose's silence could be taken either way or both. Leonce shook his head and eyed Larose intently. "I'm all mixed up," he said. And then he was searching Larose's face again, feeling for the old malice, grasping it almost. But not quite. "I'm all mixed up," he said again.

"Cheer up, Kanaka," Larose said, holding the pearl up to the sunlight. "Think of this unusual pearl about the neck of my future bride."

Leonce didn't voice any reply. His expression sufficed. He was cut off from Larose, by a woman. Once he had said, "What a

woman do to him?" Jealous of any influence over Larose other than his own, he was trapped within himself now, not knowing which way to turn. It didn't make any difference that he deserved this or that there was some justification for his deviltry; all that mattered was his loss. It was definite and final. He could no longer dominate Larose's mind as he had done for years. The very thought of this was an unbearable thing from which a man of his nature could find no escape.

He stared inanely from the pearl to the hip wound, and mumbled in utter disbelief, "For the neck of Frilot's daughter."

He crawled out on the bowsprit and gazed at the pass in the distance. A whine escaped him and a shudder ran through his frame. I pitied him then, for the very thing I had once found a source of amusement. He was totally lacking in maturity and the refinements of it, in those qualities which give a man strength to bear up under trouble.

On his feet suddenly, he slashed himself from hip wound to knee. Before Larose or I could cry out or make a move, he leaped into the lagoon and swam toward the pass.

The wind wasn't in our favor. Leonce was swept up on the current like a chip and carried through the pass far ahead of us. When we reached the sea, he was aiming between two schooners at anchor a mile apart; one carrying Nicot, the other Ninon.

Leonce moved on. Out of the sea rose an escort more patient than predatory. Though they trailed the pink stain in the water, something held them in check, for Leonce Carondelet was last seen putting one arm ahead of the other in the sunswept waters toward the horizon.

I glanced at Larose. What he had achieved or lost was hidden behind a mask as he stared at the feeble wake of the diver of the Rebecque. Only he knew what he felt when finally free of the Kanaka.

At the wheel, I said, "To Nicot or Ninon?" With no answer from Larose, I pointed the schooner in her direction as though to deliver a pearl and more.

Suddenly I was pushed aside. Larose swung the wheel hard over. The schooner heeled and strained, and the booms threatened to tear loose and swing wild as he pointed away from Ninon Frilot and Nicot at a tremendous clip.

He was cheating a promise or he was being noble, or both. But his hair was blowing in the wind. Something was missing, though I saw it in the bounce of our wake, and heard in memory, "Let me touch your luck, man of the sea. The *mouchoir*."

Illustrator: Tom Knoth

PORT OF LONELY MEN

By WILLIAM McFEE

Have you ever wondered what life in tramp steamers was like at the turn of the century? For many men it was a tedious, unrewarding existence. Monotonous voyages, back breaking work, long periods of loneliness. To give you a more realistic picture of this life, William McFee has produced a lively and stimulating account of his own youth spent in the "tramps", and few writers dealing with the sea speak with as much authority. A distinguished author for the past 40 years, Mr. McFee drew upon his own experiences upon the water to write his famous novel, "Casuals of the Sea." Here is a story with plenty of humor and excitement.

MANY YEARS in tramp ships took me to a number of out-of-the-way places, but Port Nolloth, on the west coast of South Africa, held the record for utter, complete isolation and loneliness. It was the end of the world.

It was the only inhabited spot in nearly a thousand miles of surf-beaten, reef-ridden coast. North, there was nothing until you came to Walfish Bay, with a few hundred people. To the south there was nothing until you reached Cape Town. By nothing I mean nothing; no harbors, no trees, no people, no natives, no safe landing, no canoes; no steamers either, for the steamer route from Europe lay far out to the westward.

West there was nothing but deep salt water for nearly five thousand miles. And to the east the land was a desert, with salt flats and low hills. If you got ashore, which was very difficult, there was more nothing; no cafes, no saloons, no scenery, no girls; nothing but wooden shanties with corrugated iron roofs, a couple of unpaved streets, a jetty for lighters and a narrow-gauge railway running a hundred miles into the interior to one of the richest copper mines in the world. It was so rich that for years the stockholders took seventy percent dividends out of it. All gone now.

We went there three times a year, my ship and another, alternating, the only link with theoutside world. Two tramp ships arriving with coal, coke, stores and machinery, and occasionally a new clerk or foreman for the mines. Going home we were loaded with five thousand tons of reduced ore, and any lucky employee who had finished his time. One such said it was like being in a penitentiary; but in jail you had visits from your friends and relations, amusements of a sort and even a social life if you were a trusty. Out there, there was nothing at all but work and booze. No letters for three months, no papers either, for there was no communication with the Cape at all.

It was even worse on the ships. Once arrived, after a month's voyage from Swansea, where the ore was refined and cast into ingots, we lay outside the great barrier-reef that runs along the coast for hundreds of miles, anchored in forty fathom, and rolling, day in, day out, for six weeks, in a swell that came from the Antarctic wastes. There was a gap in the reef (made by dynamite) through which the lighters and the tug came out. Loading and unloading was done by gangs of bushmen, dwarf-like Hottentots, bossed by alcoholic stevedores who favored a formidable drink called Cape Smoke. All day the decks stank of bushmen and raw liquor. If the sea rose, as it often did, and the signal on the jetty read "Bar impossible," everybody remained on board all night, while the plunging lighters strained at the hawsers, banging against the ship's sides, keeping the sailors busy, and making us all wish we were dead.

Always the ship rolled. For six weeks the racks were on the messroom table. Eating, sleeping, reading, smoking or working, we had to wedge ourselves against the roll. Everything in our cabins was made fast, as in a gale at sea. Working in the engine room, overhauling, was plain hell. But it had to be done. The chief never sent anything ashore in Swansea for repairs. He had a name for economy in the company and he took it out of our bodies, just as the

skipper made money out of our bellies. It took three times as long as it should have to do a job, and everything had to be closed up before we knocked off at night, in case it carried away, or the ship had to fight bad weather. All tackle had to be stowed and tools put away. All the time we were tired, working against the rolling of the ship. Tired physically. We were tired mentally, too. Tired of the never-ending monotony of the surf pounding on the sharp teeth of the reef a mile away, tired most of all of each other.

One explainable reason for this was that the ship itself had an unhappy history. She was an old tramp, often breaking down at sea, and commanded by a vicious old shellback who was a ruthless cheeseparer. He got two shillings and sixpence a day apiece to feed us, and he did it on the sixpence. He bought tons of potatoes to sell the commissary of the mines, and when the potatoes spoiled he fed us on them. He was forever at loggerheads with the chief, which made that man turn and snarl at us. The chief mate was an ex-skipper who had lost a ship and had had his license suspended for a while, which kept him under the Old Man's thumb. The steward was merely the Old Man's stooge, selling liquor on the sly when he got a chance. When the Old Man retired he owned a whole street of houses, and you can see how he made it. Not much conscience.

There was no love at all in the ship. And there was no going on shore. For three and a half months we walked that rolling steel deck, and when we finally got ashore in Swansea, the pavements were so hard they made our feet ache.

I was second assistant. The first was new every voyage. Nobody with a license could stand two such voyages, but I stuck it for twenty months to get my time in for a license.

On this occasion the first was a North East Coast man, just married, and with a brand new chief's license. He had been in big liners. Cooped up between a stingy Welsh chief, and a Cockney second who had not been long at sea, unable to find a soul who spoke his language, without letters from his wife (a pretty Sunderland girl), barred from going ashore to get drunk, to get away from the stench and squalor of a busted old tramp, the voyage to him was a nightmare.

After six weeks of it we were ready to up anchor and start the twenty-nine-day run home. The Old Man went ashore with the ship's papers and the chief went with him, for some reason or other. Possibly merely to show he was chief. There was an immediate change of atmosphere when those two, who hated each other, were seen on the lighter casting

off. Steam was rising, two hatches were closed, and the two men left in charge — the mate and the first assistant — at once disappeared into the steward's cabin for a long time.

Late in the afternoon they were both drunk. They stumbled out to look at our opposite number, the Chatfield, which had arrived and anchored a half mile off. A sailor on the bridge, whose job it was to watch the shore through the long glass, reported the signal had been hoisted, "Bar dangerous. Return at once." We could see the tug steaming fast through the gap in the reef, where the bell-buoy was rocking and clanging with a new and urgent note.

As a rule the wind, day after day, was from the south. Now it was from the north, and getting up. Down below, where I was warming the engines through, I could feel the ship give a shiver now and again as she strained at the anchor chains. It was easy to warm that old engine! Every valve in the place leaked. The chief was always going to make requisitions, but when it came to the point his economical soul, skinning a flea for its hide and tallow, as we say, took charge, and we went to sea with all valves leaking. Coal was cheap, and so were engineers. He was the meanest man I ever sailed with.

When the tug drew near we could see our noble commander and equally noble chief engineer clinging to each other to keep from falling overboard from the narrow deck as the tug did everything except turn over in the huge seas. They were both probably scared out of their wits because the sudden change in the weather had caught them on shore. But they hated each other so much it was rich comedy for us to see them looking so affectionate. The lighter, being empty, was bounding about like a crazy elephant in a swimming pool. The skipper and chief had to climb on to it before they could reach our deck. The mate and the first, both drunk as a fiddler's bitch, leaned over the rail and made raucous remarks of a profane and blood-curdling character. They hoped to see at least one of the returned wanderers get a sea bath. When the lighter was reached and the skipper and chief were sprawling among the greasy bushmen, the first gave a whoop and fell over laughing.

I stood by the engine-room door watching and feeling worried. I could see the first was drunk, but I lacked the experience and the license to get the engines away by myself. When the skipper and chief finally gained the deck I went down below and the first clattered after me. I expected him to fall on top of me. A sailor followed him with care, yelling to put steam on the windlass. The first yelled at him to go chase him-

self. Steam was already on the windlass. Steam was roaring into the crankpits through the main engine drains and the auxiliary pump was banging away in a corner. I opened the main funnel damper. Now it was the first's job to operate the reversing gear and give the main engines a turn.

He stood with his great arms on the reversing wheel, his head down, vomiting on the floor-plates. The telegraph snarled "Stand By." I answered it and wrote down the time, six-ten. It was nearly dark. I lit the lamps on the bulkhead. We could feel the grind and shake as the windlass hauled in the anchors. The first pulled at the reversing wheel and the little engine shot over and jammed solid. The telegraph rang "Full Astern!" I answered it and it rang again, and I answered it again. We hung on to the wheel, but the reversing engine wouldn't budge. The telegraph shrilled "Astern, Astern!" as though a maniac had hold of it on the bridge. We could hear the wind howling in the ventilators. We saw the chief almost tumbling down the ladder, shouting to the first to put her astern for Christ's sake.

He knew the first was drunk and shoved him away from the levers. The telegraph continued to go mad. The shut-off valve leaked, so we could not shut the steam from the reversing engine. It served the chief right, but that didn't help us any at this crisis. We struggled and pulled, all three of us on the wheel, moving it slowly, oh so slowly, to the astern position. Another sailor crawled fearfully down the ladder and bawled that the ship was going on the reef. "Cap'n says, got to get her astern or we'll be on the reef, Cap'n says."

The first picked up a wrench and threw it at the sailor, who scrambled up the ladder shouting "Don't say I didn't tell yer!" The chief hit the first in the face and yelled "Pull, god dammit, pull!" The first hit the chief, and then they were on the floor at my feet, while I held the wheel, dismayed. Then they leaped on the wheel again and pulled. She came around. The chief opened the maneuvering valve and the main engines began to go astern. They gathered speed and I went into the boiler-room to make the boys shake her up, and adjusted the check valves. We were away.

Soon the engines were racing astern, with the safety-valves lifting and muttering on the funnel. Faster, faster! The chief had opened the valve full. We watched the telegraph, wondering whether we were really moving, or just drifting on the reef. Then the order came "Stop! Full Ahead!" The chief and first fell on the wheel, I rushed to help, and we got the gear reversed and the

engines started full ahead. The telegraph pointer swung to and fro once or twice to indicate that was the final order. We were full away. The chief started to walk past where I was chalking the time and suddenly turned and hit the first again on the jaw, and he went down like a ninepin. "Now get to hell out of my engine room!" the chief yelled.

I was surprised to see the first, who was now partly sober, get up and hurry to the ladder, shaking his fist. He shouted he would have the chief logged. The chief said nothing. The ship was now pitching, and occasionally the engines would race. Not much, but a little. I thumbed the crank throws and gave them more oil. The chief said, "Better turn in."

I got out of there fast. I had been on since six in the morning and it was nearly eight o'clock. The chief began to take off the steam chest cover of the reversing engine. He knew the first had shot steam into an engine full of water and broken the slide-valve spindle. "I'll have the bastard's ticket when we get home," he said, softly. I wondered about that. The first had only just got his ticket. What would his wife say?

Our quarters on that old ship were aft, under the poop. It was a crazy idea, to put engineers so far away from their work, but the line thought it saved material and money. They had a lot of old fashioned notions like that. I had to go along the after well-deck and climb into a scuttle facing forward, so that whenever she took a sea, if the door was open, our cabins were swamped. The door had been left open, of course. My port-hole was open too, so my bunk would be awash.

When I got out of the engine room it was like being in a wind tunnel. I clung to the rail. Over the side great seas raced by. I heard one hit the foredeck like thunder and the ship shook. I waited until a wave went by with out boarding and started to run. I heard another coming along behind me like an express train. It caught up with me by the after winches. I clung to the winch-barrels, but the sea swept me away, and I thought, for a moment, it was my finish.

I was carried away out of the world. There was a splintering crash behind me, and for a moment it was all water. I was afloat, and after what seemed a very long period I was face down on the poop holding onto something covered with canvas. It turned out to be the hatch of the lazarette, far aft near the hand-steering wheel. So far aft that another ten feet would have carried me over the fantail into Davy Jones' Locker.

It took me some time to decide to get up, for the seas kept coming aboard. But I was alive, appar-

ently, and finally I took a look around. Forward the deck steam-pipes were hanging in loops, and there was a stove-in lifeboat where I had been when the sea caught me, all its gear awash in the scuppers.

I was scared, not so much by what had happened but because I was alone. If I had gone over nobody would have been the wiser until midnight, eight bells, when I was due to be called. Another thing, I couldn't face going down into that mess in my cabin. I knew it was full of sea water, my shoes and clothes were floating around with the carpet, and maybe books and pipes and stuff. I wanted to see a human being. I wanted to tell somebody what had happened to me, for I thought it was something. I found the main cabin scuttle and crept down the curving stairway and saw the Old Man sitting in the cabin under the swinging brass oil lamp.

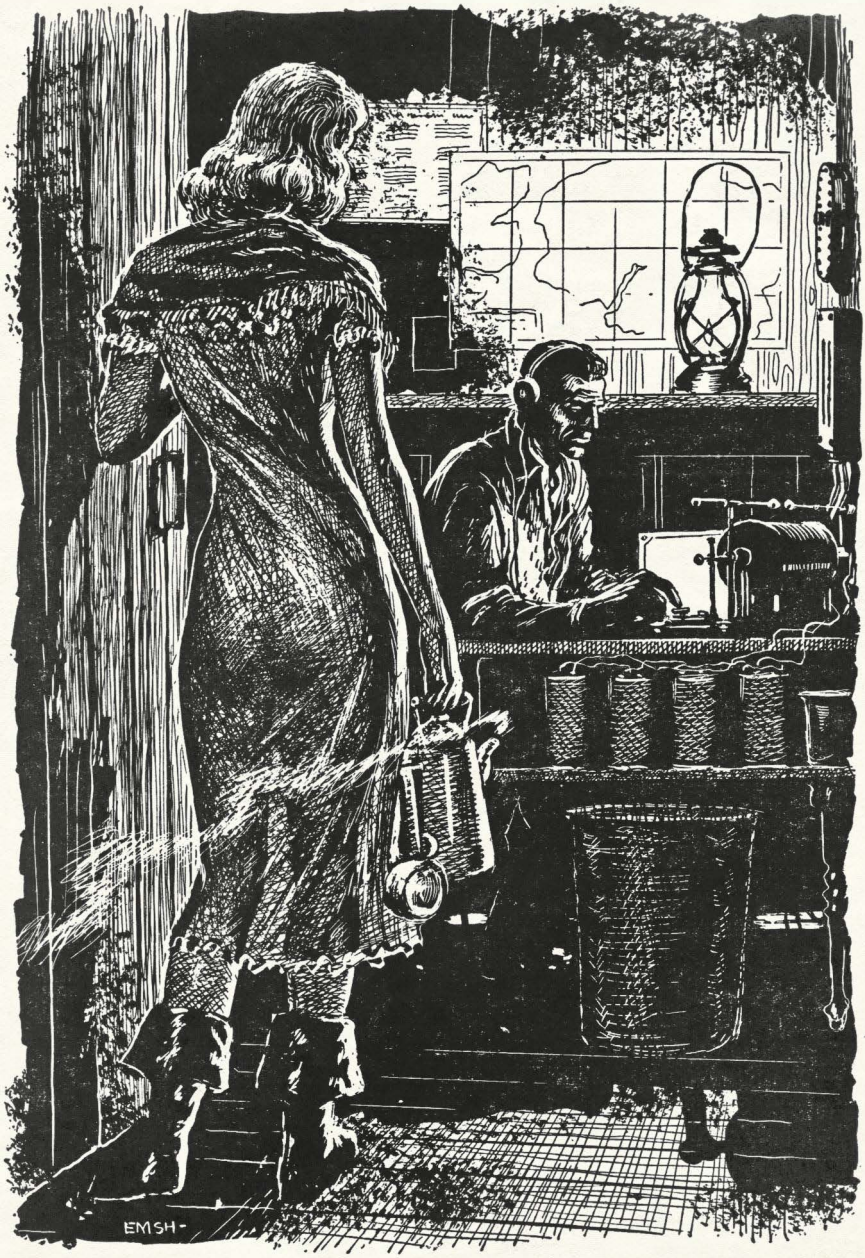
He had had a narrow escape from losing his ship, his cargo, his license, and maybe his life. And all due to those engineers. When he saw one of them, in dripping dungarees, staring at him, he must have been appalled. He didn't say anything. He just stared at me, as if he thought I was a ghost. I felt like one. I felt exactly as if I had just come back from the other world.

He opened his mouth to speak, probably to tell me to get out of his cabin, when another sea wave roared over the poop, cracking one of the panes in the skylight over his head. Water dripped on the table. The ship shook as if a mountain had fallen on her and for a moment there was no sound save the wind and sea. Then, once more we heard the steady beat of the propeller.

I seized this temporary companionship to tell him hurriedly how I had been washed from Number Three Winch clear on to the lazarette hatch. We had both been pretty close to finishing our sea careers. He stared at me, his arms on the table in front of him, taking in what I had said. I was soaked to the skin. Now I had to go up on deck, struggle to open our scuttle and try to sleep in a bunk that was sodden and stank. If the Old Man had bawled me out at that moment I would probably have bawled back. I hated him. I hated myself, and I hated the sea. There seemed no sense in it.

He frowned. "Washed up on the poop, eh?" His big red face, with its white handle-bar mustache, took on a milder expression. He gave a short, harsh laugh.

"Looks to me like you were born to be hanged," he said, staring hard. "Go get yourself turned in."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ILLUSTRATOR: EMSH

THE MISTRESS OF CKU

By THOMAS H. RADDALL

You've heard of Cleopatra and Madame Pompadour, of course. Well, it's about time you met a salt water courtesan, the lady known as the "Mistress of CKU." This young lady probably indulged in more passing love affairs over a twenty-five year period than any of her famous predecessors, and without the inconvenience of gossip or malicious rumor.

How did she do it? Homely of face, but heavenly of figure, Lena occupied a unique position on the small lighthouse off the coast of Canada. As the sole female on the island, she cooked, scrubbed and mended for the young radio operators. One group would leave, another would replace them. An endless supply of lonely young men — how could she fail to make the list of history's great lovers?

She was a woman who, in another place and another time, in the Paris of Dumas or Balzac, say, might have made a figure in the world. As it was, she passed her days in an obscure corner of the Canadian east coast. She was famous enough in her way. But let me begin where I should, at the start of the present century, when Signor Marconi was setting the world agog with his remarkable invention.

In the year 1904 the Canadian government began to build a chain of wireless stations along the Atlantic coast, one of them at Sand Head. To be exact, it was built on The Capstan, a small rocky island lying off the Head,

and separated from it by The Race, a narrow channel impassable except at certain stages of the tide. There was a lone inhabitant, a fisherman named Fitch. He was a widower and his daughter Lena kept house for him. She was then about twenty-five, a quiet young woman with a plain face relieved somewhat by a pair of large dark eyes. The homeliness of her features and the remote spot on which she lived had deprived Lena of young male companionship. The young fishermen of Cod Harbor, just around the corner of Sand Head, could find more attractive partners where they were.

As soon as it was built the wireless station on Capstan was manned by three operators and a dour male cook. The call letters of the station were not CKU, but they will do as well as the real ones by which Capstan was known to the roving young men of the radio service. Trained hands were scarce in those early days, and as the advantages of wireless telegraphy proved themselves, with new shore stations springing up and ships being fitted right and left, there was for years a continual movement of operators being switched from one post to another, or going off blithely to see the world in the merchant marine. Thus the little group on Capstan underwent continual change. By the chances of the service a man might stay as long as two years or he might be moved in two or three months. On the average there was a complete new set of faces every year or so.

They soon had trouble with their catering arrangements. Cooks willing to share the lonely life on Capstan were invariably a poor lot, and none stayed very long. At last the chief operator suggested to Lena that she undertake to board and lodge the staff of three. Each man received a subsistence allowance of $30 per month, so that her income would be ninety, a goodly sum in those wonderful days, especially at Sand Head where food was cheap. Lena agreed at once. The house was a wooden, shingled affair, weather-beaten but stoutly built, and neatly painted inside. It had four bedrooms upstairs, one of which was occupied by her ailing father, a morose man doomed by heart disease, and Lena herself slept in a small room off the kitchen.

The new arrangement was an immense success. Lena was a first-rate cook and she kept the house as clean as soap itself. She washed the operators' clothes and darned their socks. She shared their laughter when they were merry and consoled them when they were bored. Her heart was warm and she looked upon them in the good-natured way of a young maiden aunt. The wireless station, a small grey shack, stood a comfortable distance away, and

so the two men off-watch at night could sleep without the harsh roar of the old-fashioned spark transmitter dinning in their ears. Within a short time old Fitch died and was buried in the cemetery at Cod Harbor; and when the funeral was over Lena returned to her little family of young men.

It was not long before propinquity began to work in the small household. Lena's face was gaunt and sunburnt, her nose was snubbed and her mouth was large, and the rest of her, swathed in the long and shapeless feminine clothing of that time, the men could well imagine. Nevertheless, starved for feminine society, they came to regard her with a sort of brotherly affection. It went no farther than that until one of them, strolling along the island shore, discovered that he had been living all these weeks in the abode of a flesh-and-blood Venus. It was Lena's habit in summer to go to a secluded nook in the rocks and bathe in the nude, as she had done from childhood. Thus he found her, and stood admiring and amazed. The angular brown face of a fish-wife was set upon the well-nourished body of a nymph.

For her part Lena, with her sleek plumpness curved and gleaming in the sunshine like that of a white seal lazing on a rock, regarded him quite unabashed. She greeted him in her calm voice precisely as if she had been clothed and sitting in her kitchen. And she invited him to bathe. What followed is as old as Eden. When they returned to the house they were lovers. Thereafter when her discoverer was off-watch at night he retired to his room until the other off-watch operator was certainly asleep, and then crept down the stairs to Lena's bed. The discovery was mutual, really. They were enraptured with each other. But apart from these hours they remained simply friendly but aloof. Lena would never permit tell-tale familiarities in the daytime; and although, inevitably, the situation became known to the others, there was nothing to which they could object.

When the crew changed, Lena found herself bereft of a very satisfactory companion. She knew nothing of the world except that by some mysterious dispensation three young and lonely men had been set down on her island for a space of months, and now by some equally mysterious rotation they had been replaced with three others. After a fortnight's deprivation she came to a decision, and in the magical way of women, without words, without even a gesture, she intimated to the man of her choice that he might solace her. So it went, year after year. The operators were all young, healthy and intelligent; but there

was always one more lively, better looking or merely more charming than the rest, and for the term of his service on Capstan he became the sole possessor of Lena's favor. The woman with the homely face and the superb figure found herself in the remarkable position of being able to choose a succession of lovers from some of the finest young manhood on the coast — and without a rival, without even a Mrs. Grundy to observe and condemn.

In the course of time, as the operators moved from station to station, the quaint situation at CKU became known to the radio fraternity up and down the seaboard. As each new crew moved in, and the departing lover took a reluctant farewell, there was an intense curiosity amongst them to see who would take his place. It was of no use, indeed it was fatal to force their attentions. Lena could not be wooed. Outwardly indifferent, busy with her household tasks, she studied them carefully for a week or so and made her choice, and that was that. She was friendly to all, she continued to wash, to darn, to cook, to scrub, for one as much as another; but her intimate favors belonged to one alone, and once her choice was made it was as binding as a marriage.

Thus Lena in her way was virtuous, and if her marriages never lasted long they were probably the better for it. Satiety and the familiarity that breeds contempt had no chance to work their poisons in her little world. Every year, more or less, with the finesse of a conjuring trick, station CKU was dealt a fresh hand of human cards containing two new jacks, a new king, and the same imperishable queen.

It must not be supposed that all went smoothly. There were jealousies of course; but these Lena always quelled in her calm decisive way. Sometimes a highly moral young man turned up on the station and was outraged by the whole affair. If he voiced his opinions Lena quietly pointed out that her private life was her own concern and that if he did not like it he could find his bed and board somewhere else. At least six times in the course of the years there were actual rebellions, when the two unfavored operators removed to the dusty beds and barren kitchen of the wireless shack and hired a cook from Cod Harbor. But these matters, like the cook, never lasted long. Lena's excellent food and the solid comforts of her cleanly house were too much for their scruples in the end.

How the mistress of CKU escaped the usual penalty of sin remains a mystery. If her lovers knew they kept their secret well. But there was one accident. During the First World War she bore

a child. There was no fuss about it. When her time came she went to stay with some discreet relatives at Sand Head, and she left the child in their keeping, sending them money from time to time. A certain amount of illegitimacy was common in the villages about Sand Head and nothing much was thought of Lena's misadventure. When she had recovered she returned to her island and her men, and in the course of time she took another lover.

Lena was now thirty-five. Her face was uncomely as ever and she was at least ten years older than the average young men on the station; but that perfect flesh was unblemished, and instinct and experience had given her the art of love as it is known only to the great courtesans of history. For the lonely men of her choice she made life on the bleak little island not merely passable but an ecstasy. Yet with all this she rigidly maintained an outward propriety. She had about her a kind of primitive innocence that never became tarnished. Whatever the intimacies of her chamber she permitted none outside. She was modest in manner, speech, and dress. To all appearance she might have been any one of a thousand happily married women whose emotions are satisfied behind the bedroom door and are never permitted to emerge. And to the end she was unconscious of her fame amongst the wandering radio brotherhood from Cape Sable to the Labrador and in ships of the merchant marine. For Lena the earth began and ended at the Race.

Of course there was an end to all this and it came in 1924. The vast improvement of radio communication during the First World War had made the old stations obsolete, and during the post-war depression there was a sudden spasm of economy. Amongst other stations, CKU was closed — for ever. The operators departed, the apparatus was removed, the very building was torn down. Nothing was left but Lena, who found herself bereft at once of men and of means. Like the gleaming apparatus of the station itself, well designed for its time, well made, well cared for, the mistress of CKU was written off at last by the merciless pen of progress.

Lena had saved a little money and she left the island to live with her relatives at Sand Head. There was nothing else to do. She was secretly glad, for it gave her a chance at last to face the world as the mother of her son, an attractive youngster ten years old, with a mass of brown curls. And it was as the mother of her son, with his future to consider, that she chose her last lover. At the age of forty-five, with her unlovely features and an illegitimate child, she had

not much choice in that small fishing community. For the first time in twenty years she had to take what other women would not have, in her case a middle-aged bachelor living alone, a stocky little man with a squint. He was hardworking and thrifty. He had a snug house overlooking the Race and a snug savings account in the bank at Cod Harbor. All he lacked was the comfort of a woman about the house, and when Lena calmly suggested matrimony he did not hesitate. They were married and the boy came to live with them during the summer months; but each Fall she sent him to Cod Harbor for the school term; she had great hopes for him and determined that nothing should stand in his way. In a placid sort of way she was kind to her husband; and secure at last, with a multitude of memories to look back upon, Lena settled back into the stodgy existence of a middle-aged fishwife. The boy grew up tall and goodlooking. He disappointed her by turning to the fishery as soon as he reached the top grade in the Cod Harbor school — "wasting all that schooling", as she said. But he remained the apple of her eye. As soon as the Second World War broke out he enlisted in the Canadian Navy, and when he was lost in a torpedoed corvette it made the one blot on the serenity of her old age.

You may ask how I know all this. I know because I was a wireless operator in the Canadian service myself during part of the time of this tale, and aboard ship and in the scattered lonely stations of the coast I heard a good deal about the mistress of CKU. Lena's strange reign, which lasted altogether twenty years, was then nearing its end. She had become a legend and I wondered how much of it was fancy and how much was fact. As time went by I got some of the facts from men who had been there; and by an odd chance one of Lena's former lovers served with me at Gannet Island and again four years later at Cape Baleine.

On those isolated three-man stations, where one operator was always on watch and the others were thrown together for their diversions, I spent a lot of time with Mark O'Hare, jigging for cod in an old battered dory, gunning for ducks along the shore, or merely sitting on the edge of a bed, smoking, yarning, staring out at the rain and the snow. He was a goodlooking fellow in the thirties then, tall and lean, with an air of quiet force that you felt the moment he entered a room. He carried a violin wherever he went about the coast, and he could fiddle a jig that set your heels rattling on the floor, or in another mood, some melancholy thing that brought the tears to

your eyes and made you wonder what curse kept you wandering so far from home and all the things you loved.

Bear in mind that Lena's favorites were discreet. In the judging of men she was an expert and she never liked a boaster. The few amongst her lovers who talked at all spoke of her affectionately and with a curious respect, as if for a time they had been caressed by a goddess lurking behind a mask and were grateful for an experience that could never come again. Most of the tales were spread by the unfavored men who for months on end had watched and envied those like Mark O'Hare; and even they did not speak of her unkindly but in a tone of whimsical regret.

Mark talked to me frequently about life on the Capstan, and in one of his moody turns he laid the violin aside and sat tapping the bow on the floor and talking of Lena Fitch. He poured forth her story in a bitter flood that I can give you in one sentence. He had been her lover and was grateful but he could not forgive her the others. There had been a good many women in his wandering life; he was one of those men who attract women at sight and accept their favors pleasantly but casually, and then pass on and think no more about them. But of Lena he said in a quiet, passionate voice, "There was never anyone like her. She was marvellous."

I left the radio service in '22 and went to live in a small Nova Scotia town. I married and the years went by. After a time I began to write — but none of this matters. What matters is that last year — last year, mind you — I saw the Capstan for the first time. I had gone to Sand Head to get some material on the wreckers who flourished there in the days of the sailing ships, and I wanted to visit The Tusks, a group of rocky islands which lie to the west of the Head. When I arrived at Cod Harbor the weather was bad and for two days the boat passage to The Tusks was impossible. I soon tired of the little hotel and I amused myself by strolling about the stony roads which link the fishing villages about the Head. One afternoon I found myself looking across the Race to the small island which was for so many years the site of CKU. Amongst the wind-blasted spruce trees I could see the ruin of a house, but of course the radio shack and the mast had gone long since. There was no sign of life.

The old tales stirred in my mind. I wondered what became of Lena Fitch. I enquired, discreetly, at a fisherman's house and was told that she lived not far away. A small boy took me there. The house was a small wooden box of the sort you see everywhere about Sand Head,

with the green front door, the crumbling white paint on the shingles, the well, the pile of firewood and the vegetable patch at the back. I knocked, and Lena herself came to the door.

It was a shock. She was seventy. The once luscious figure had gone to shapeless fat. Her hair was thin and grey, and the plain face of the tales had become swarthy and wrinkled and hideous. Only the moist dark eyes enabled me to recognize the woman of the legend. I asked some casual question about the old wireless station and mentioned that I had been an operator many years ago. At once she invited me inside. I was introduced to her husband, the little man with the squint, and we sat about the kitchen table talking of the old days when every fisherman of Sand Head steered for home by the tall white mast of CKU.

After a time the little man, bored, got up and went outside about his chores. Lena's glance strayed to the window, to the view of the Race and the small desolate island on the other side. Presently she went upstairs. I heard objects being moved — in the attic, I suppose. She came down with two picture-postcard albums of the sort so popular thirty or forty years ago, and placed them on the table before me. I turned the stiff leaves curiously, and now and then, at Lena's suggestion, I looked at the back of a card to see the signature. There were cards from every wireless station on the Canadian east coast, and from ports all over the world — the casual remembrances of Lena's friends and lovers. The written greetings were discreet, as one might expect. A postcard in a village post office is well read. But it was weird to see the signatures of men I had known nearly thirty years ago, all vanished since, many of them lost at sea or in misadventures on the frozen posts of the North.

As she murmured the names I watched Lena carefully, but I read nothing in her face. I was wondering — what we had all wondered — which was the father of her son. In the gossip of the old days it was believed that Lena's conception was no accident at all, but that she had given one man, of all her lovers, that supreme privilege. Deliberately, you understand, as an expression of the uttermost surrender. These discussions, of course, took place in my own time in the coastal service, after I had left the sea. The First World War (we called it The Great War then, as if there could never be another) was just behind, with all its manifold excitements and its swiftly changing personnel. No one could remember who was stationed where at any particular time. For that

(*Continued on page 81*)

Illustrator: Ernie Barth

THE CAPTAIN'S DREAMS

By BRIAN O'BRIAN

Old Man McLeod's entire attitude toward his fellow man could be summed up in four blunt words: Don't mess with me! The boys in the know attributed it to a combination of churlishness and an unverified fondness for tell-tale beverages.

But not me! I had to know what was under the rough exterior of the old bat. So, with a lot of patience and a thick hide to ward off insults, I managed to wangle an invitation to join him on a fishing trip. Worked out fine, too — and as soon as I get back the use of my hands, I'll write the story of what happened. . . .

YOU'LL find some queer ones along the steamy underbelly of the great West African bulge, frail, slow-moving characters, aloof in the blinding sunglare, and so old you marvel that, in a climate that kills off normal men after a few years service, they have survived. There is pathos in their loneliness but they are grimly close-mouthed, drunk or sober, and shy away from friendly overtures as though fearful of revealing the secrets that haunt

their faded eyes and gaunt faces.

I wondered a lot about Captain McLeod, who had charge of the freight wharf on Iddo Island, a barren smear of silt in Lagos Lagoon. I was stationed there to superintend the discharge and storage of construction material for the railroad that was being pushed north to connect the rich cotton lands below the Sahara with Lagos, chief seaport and capital of the British colony of Nigeria, a mile across the lagoon from Iddo.

McLeod was a dour Shetlander; five feet two, with broad shoulders, bandy legs and long, swinging arms that ended in hands like cargo hooks. He moved with the broad straddle of a windship man, in square-cut pantaloons and a white, duck tunic. Under his pipe-clayed helmet his craggy face was tanned brown in startling contrast to pale, gray eyes and frosty brows. His large nose was veined and flattened, his mouth toothless, sunken and gentle.

He kept his wharf like a yacht's quarterdeck, and it was rumored, had once kicked a high-ranking Government official into the lagoon for smoking on the ancient, oil-soaked planks. He held no conversations with the captains of ships under discharge and ruled his stevedores with orders bawled from afar. He lived in Lagos and, though there were boatmen at his disposal, insisted on rowing himself back and forth every day in a white-painted dinghy that was not much longer than himself. With me he communicated only when necessary and for over a month replied to my greetings with no more than a nod.

I watched him rowing across the lagoon, a lonely little patch in the dusk, every evening. I wanted to help the old man but I couldn't break through the wall which he had built up around himself. Yet, whether it was my imagination or not, it seemed to me that he wanted to be friendly but was mistrustful like an old, sick dog sometimes is. One evening I invited him to my bungalow for a drink. He said he never touched it. I offered him home newspapers and magazines. He said he had no time for reading. Yet his refusals were not churlish, rather the proud denial of things he could not repay. On Sundays he took his dinghy far out in the lagoon, fishing, a tiny black spot in the blinding glimmer. I hinted that I'd like to go with him. He hedged from asking me.

"Leave him be," Kelsall, the Railway doctor advised me. "He's just a surly old rogue who's alone because he wants it that way."

"Oh, I don't know," I mumbled. "I — he's an old man."

"Look, he's cantankerous and uncivil. He's old enough to be retired."

"Maybe he has no one at home," I said.

"Maybe he's afraid to go home," Kelsall snapped. "I heard some rumor about his losing his ship many years ago. Something funny about it; I don't know what. Anyway if you try to comfort all the old Coasters in this port you'll have your hands full — and your pocket empty. Leave him alone, I said."

But the old man's wistful aloofness challenged me. I took pains to show him that at least one person was interested in him. Whether or not he appreciated it he showed no sign.

"Probably doesn't want you nosing into his business," Kelsall commented. "Watch out you don't get yourself in trouble."

One Sunday evening the Marine tug, *Hercules*, found him in his dinghy, asleep, floating out to sea.

"Drunk," Kelsall said.

"He doesn't drink," I defended. "Must have been the heat. The poor devil is too old to be out fishing alone."

The following weekend I mentioned again my passion for fishing. McLeod listened soberly.

"Ye'd not like fishin' from my boat," he said at last. "Too tippy."

I was assuring him of my enthusiasm for tippy boats when a problem, real or fancied, called him away from me.

"Cagey old rascal," Kelsall grinned, when I told him. "He's got you marked as a police spy, I shouldn't wonder."

I tried again a week later, wording my hint carefully to avoid hurting his pride.

"I'm no' fishin' this Sunday," he told me.

But I saw him, bobbing up and down in the channel swell, as usual.

"I'm beginning to think you don't want to take me fishing," I said to him, Monday morning.

"It's no' that," he said carefully. "My wee boat's no' very comfortable."

"I don't mind. Look, Captain, you'd do me a big favor if you'd show me how to fish these waters. I'll bet you're a hot fisherman."

"Oh, aye." He almost smiled, then caught himself. "I'll take ye some time." He turned and stumped up the wharf.

That week, while not exactly come-hither, he seemed more friendly. On Saturday I caught him as he was leaving.

"Say, Captain, it must be pretty warm rowing all over the lagoon. What about my giving you a hand with the oars next trip."

"Air ye insinuatin' I'm no' hale enough to row my wee boat?" he barked.

"Hell no," I laughed. "I just thought that with me working my passage at the oars you'd have more time for fishing."

He eyed me fixedly.

"Verra well," he said at last. "Ver-ra well. Though I'm no' sayin' ye'll like it. Be at the wharf at seven in the morn'."

"Fine! I'll bring a chop box and —"

"I'll furnish the proveesions," he said grandly.

There was a trace of smile on his dour features.

"Poor old devil just ain't used to people being friendly," I told Kelsall.

"Just watch out he doesn't try to drown you," the doctor warned. "I wouldn't trust him 'round the corner."

"Ah, he's okay," I scoffed.

At seven, the following Sunday he waited for me at the wharf. I stepped down into the tubby little craft and a couple of flirts of the oars swung us out into the lagoon. From where I sat in the stern my feet reached his, amidships. In the bow was fishing tackle and a wooden box covered with burlap.

McLeod refused to give me the oars and pulled with short, deep water strokes past the anchorage opposite Lagos town. A couple of Elder Dempster freighters were moored to buoys and their launches rocked us badly. But the old man pulled on, not sweating a drop in the already sultry heat.

"Where are we going?" I asked as Government House was left astern and we began to pitch in the channel swell.

"Ye wantit fish," he said and pulled into the lagoon entrance.

I hadn't bargained for the open sea. The little boat tossed like a chip in sandy waves but McLeod played her skilfully between the moles until we reached the long rollers of the Gulf of Guinea. We had come a good seven miles but the old man wasn't even breathing hard.

"Can I spell you?" I asked, mopping sweat from under my helmet.

He grunted a negative and pulled on until the beach was a thin streak astern and shipped oars. Then he reached behind him into the burlap covered box, fished out a bottle labelled Hollands Gin and handed it to me. I took a thirsty gulp and almost strangled. It WAS gin!

"What the hell?" I choked. "Haven't you any water?"

"Aye," he said, deadpan. "Ye're floatin' on't." He took the bottle from my nerveless hand, swallowed deeply and tucked it into the box.

"I thought you said you never touch the stuff," I said indignantly.

He ignored me, backed into the bow and lifted two fish out of the box. These he split with an enormous claspknife and carefully bound them to large, weighted hooks and tossed them overside after securing the lines to a cleat in the bow.

"What on earth are we fishing for?" I demanded.

"Tar-rpon."

I didn't even know there were tarpon in West African waters, or that they feed on the bottom and have to be trolled for. I looked around as we slid down the flank of a glistening green swell and up the other side. The palms on Victoria Beach seemed awfully far away.

McLeod took the oars again and began to row. I was astounded at his stamina, also at his palate. I was parched already but scared to drink raw, trade gin in that awful heat. But he didn't mind. After a while I offered to take the oars. He refused, pulling steadily, watching the two lines slanting down into the green deeps astern. I tried to make talk. He ignored me. I felt myself getting angry. After all, even if I had practically invited myself, the captain might have had the decency to be polite.

I was about to ask him to put me ashore when he hauled line, examined the baits and tossed them back again. Then, brushing off his fishy hands, he reached into the box from which he had taken the bait and handed me a pantile; ship biscuit, hard as iron. Before I could tell him what I thought he had fished out another pantile and broke it on the gunwale. He tossed the broken pieces in his mouth and washed them down with gin. Then I got it; the old scoundrel was giving me the works, just to see if I could take it. I admired his spirit. I gnawed at my biscuit, not with relish, for, what with the smell of fish, gin, my empty belly and the lurching of the boat in that brassy heat I was beginning to feel queasy.

Then we got a bite. McLeod hauled one line and took up slack on the other. Then he leaned overside and gave it a yank.

First the boat veered a little and began to move ahead. McLeod emptied his bottle, tossed it overboard and reached for another. We moved more quickly. He hauled line, snubbing it about the bow cleat. The boat surged forward several feet and, about thirty feet ahead a silver shape soared out of the water and curved like a scimitar, tossing spray like diamonds in the sunshine. It fell back with a mighty splash and McLeod took in more slack. We lurched and heeled, shipping water. I bailed frantically as the tarpon leaped again, shaking his glittering head. He dived and shot out like a porpoise, walking across the water on his tail. McLeod watched calmly, taking in more slack.

"What'll we do now?" I shouted as the great fish sounded.

"Nothin'," he said. "He'll just tow us 'til he's spent."

I grabbed for balance as the bow dipped. McLeod waited until I was sure we'd go under before he

paid out line. The tarpon ran on the surface, towing us through seas that slopped warmly inboard. But the speed slackened and McLeod hauled steadily until the massive shape was under our keel. Then he scooped a whacking great revolver from the foodbox and fired twice. Something damned nearly kicked us out of the water and the tarpon rolled alongside, a foot longer than the dinghy.

"Noo," McLeod said. "We'll ha'e a drink." He took a hearty swig and belched. "Gimme a hond," he grunted, cutting line with his murderous claspknife.

We secured the fish alongside. McLeod motioned me to change places with him. When this difficult balancing feat was performed he sat in the stern with a commanding air, though he looked like a pirate with the bottle on one knee and the revolver butt sticking out of his belt.

"Give way," he ordered.

I looked about us as we rose to the crest of a roller. There was no sign of land. I took the oars and eyed McLeod who was tilting the bottle. Then I remembered my boy scout days, put the sun on my right and rowed on a northerly course towards Africa and, what was more important to me, dry land and a long, cool drink.

It was difficult to hold a straight course with that carcass dragging me to port all the time. My hands soon blistered and I noticed with the sinking of the sun towards the west a certain liveliness in the seas that popped over the gunwale. McLeod sucked contentedly at his bottle and winked every time his watery eye caught mine.

I rowed until I thought my back was broken while McLeod lolled in the stern like a blasted pasha. I was getting good and fed up. He had pulled all the way out there, of course, and it was only fair that I should take my turn at the oars. If he had been giving me the business to show me his independence I had shown him I could take it. That made us quits. But his lofty air of command irritated me; after all, I was only trying to befriend what I thought was a rather pathetically lonely old man.

"I'll kick yer head in for tuppence," said the pathetically lonely old man, regarding me fixedly.

Fine! Me dying of thirst and he, drunk as a lord.

"I'll kick yer head in and GIVE ye the tuppence," he said impressively.

"Oh, go take a drink for yourself," I panted.

"For a drink I'll kick yer head in," he said mildly, taking the drink.

"Shut up!" I snarled. I felt terrible. My mouth was crusted and sweat blinded me. I shook it out of my eyes. When I looked up I

felt worse for the revolver was pointed at my head and beyond it a bloodshot, gray eye watched me unwinkingly. The muzzle moved a little and there was a deafening report.

"Shar-rk." McLeod said. "After my fush!"

I shook my ringing head and took another look-see. Still no sign of land and the sun was a red ball just above the horizon. I shipped oars to wrap something around my blistered hands.

"Give way," McLeod snapped.

"Wait a minute," I said.

"Give way, ye mutinous gawp!" he bellowed.

I gaped at the revolver and his wildly swivelling eyes. My heaving stomach turned cold as lead and as heavy. Drunk as he was, if his finger pressed hard enough on that trigger he could not miss me.

"Look," I said soothingly. "What —"

The boat heeled sharply. McLeod yelped and fired into the water. We swung back to even keel and the sea was stained with blood from a great rent in the tarpon.

"How about cutting it adrift?" I said through stiff lips.

"Touch a line and I shoot ye dead," he said grimly.

I tried to remember how many times he's fired that cannon. I couldn't. The sun was low on the horizon. It glowed crimson on his rugged features that glowered from me to the fish. I shut my eyes, pulling grimly. Thirst tormented me until I was tempted to snatch the gin from him. I knew I dared not try that. When I opened my eyes again it was dark.

Now I really was scared! I could hear him glugging away at the bottle and the splash as he threw it overside. Two fifths of gin that ancient souse had swallowed. I hated him. We lurched and heeled, shipping water that sloshed about our feet and I could feel the long, brown sharks hacking the tarpon to bits, each snatch almost capsizing us.

"Cut it loose," I shouted.

"Aye," he said softly. "Ye always were a cowar-rd, Angus."

Angus! Was he having D-Ts yet?

I risked another look over my shoulder and almost wept at the orange flash of Victoria Light. But it was still far away. McLeod began to sing some wordless, minor, wailing lament from his Shetland youth. It made me think of goblins and sprites and grisly things in the dark. We lurched again as something worried at the fish. I leaned down to untie the line. Something hit the gunwale too close to my fingers.

"Git for'rard," he roared. "I'll kill the first man abaft the mainmast!"

Oh, Lord! Alone with a madman, drunk and armed, in a cock-

leshell surrounded by sharks in the middle of the night!

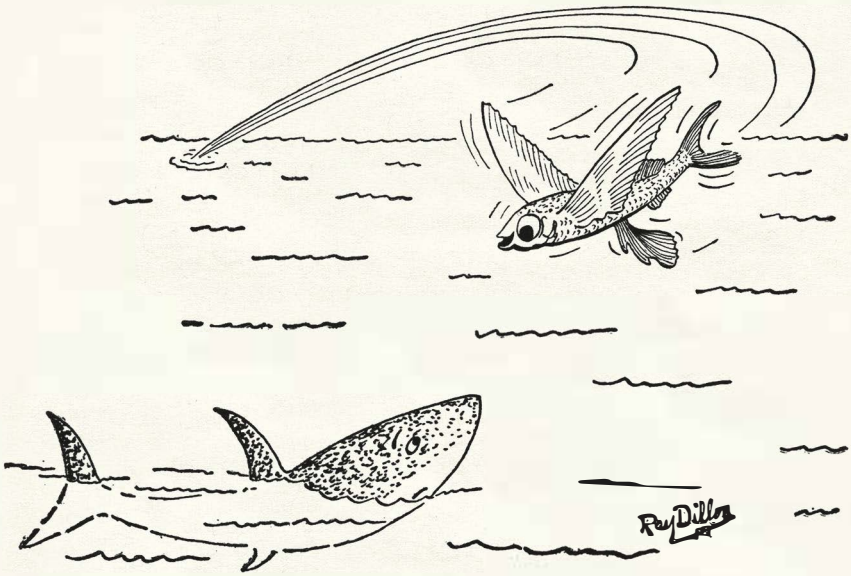
" 'Vast, there," McLeod roared. "I can see ye! Back to the fo'c'sle, ye Dumfermline scum!" There were more mumbled orders and then, to my blessed relief, a fine, ripe snore.

Stealthily I bent forward and cast off what was left of the tarpon. The horrible swirling, as I pulled away from it, chilled my blood. I wondered what would happen if McLeod awakened and found his precious fish gone. I dared not risk trying for the gun; the slightest struggle would have capsized us.

My head ached sickly and my throat was parched down to my stomach. My eyes prickled and blisters, broken and smarting, made my hands agony. But I dared not rest them, for there were things in the water. I could hear movement and it seemed that something watched us from the darkness. In the silent combers that rose about us there were green patches of phosphorescence like eyes. I was more scared than ever.

I called to McLeod; rather his crazy whoopings than this sinister silence. I kicked at his feet, risking a bullet in the belly. But he sprawled there, trumpeting like an elephant!

Now a wind rose and cold spray soaked me. My hands were slimy



"Is this the road to Mandalay?"

on the oars with blood and the salt stung like knife cuts. Once something bumped us and I quaked with terror when two green circles glowed stationary just off our starboard side for minutes before disappearing with a mighty swirl and a cold, dank odor.

I put my head down, eyes tight shut, more scared than ever, weary to blindness, every muscle taut to snapping point, and pulled, pulled, pulled. I was in a sort of daze when I became aware of the drumming of surf and the wave tops were gilded by the Mole light. Feebly I tugged at the oars until we reached the silent lagoon. It was six miles to Iddo Island. I couldn't make it. I heaved on the port oar until the bow touched rock, climbed out, made fast and stumbled through sand and scrub until I found a road. Shaking my agonized hands I staggered along it until the sky lightened and I found a native hut.

I awakened the occupants and the native, terrified at a wild-looking white demanding water, of all things, at that time of night, produced a calabash which I drained, germs or not. Then I sent him to find a car, truck, taxi, anything, sat down against the wall and went to sleep.

It was full day when a battered Chevvie turned up. I climbed into it and directed the sleepy driver to where I had left the boat fast to a rock in the lagoon bank. The boat was gone! The driver pointed to a tiny speck rowing calmly up the lagoon.

My heart was too full for comment. I crawled feebly into the car and slept until we reached Iddo Bridge. Then I managed to get to my bungalow and slept again.

It was late afternoon when, bathed, shaved, fed and my blistered hands dressed, I went out to the wharf. So help me, there was Captain McLeod, sober as a judge and immaculate in fresh-pressed tunic and trousers, his white helmet at a correct angle, pacing up and down as though nothing had happened.

"Well," I snarled. "I'm glad you got home all right!"

He examined me coolly. The only marks he carried were a razor nick and the ruddy glow in his gray eyes.

"What ye spierin' aboot?" he said at last.

"You!" I snapped. "Sharks, tarpon, mutiny, gin, revolvers! Remember?"

"Ye have the advontage of me," he said primly. "And I'll osk ye to stay off my wharf until ye're sober-r-r!"

"Sober!" I yelled. "Me! Why you —"

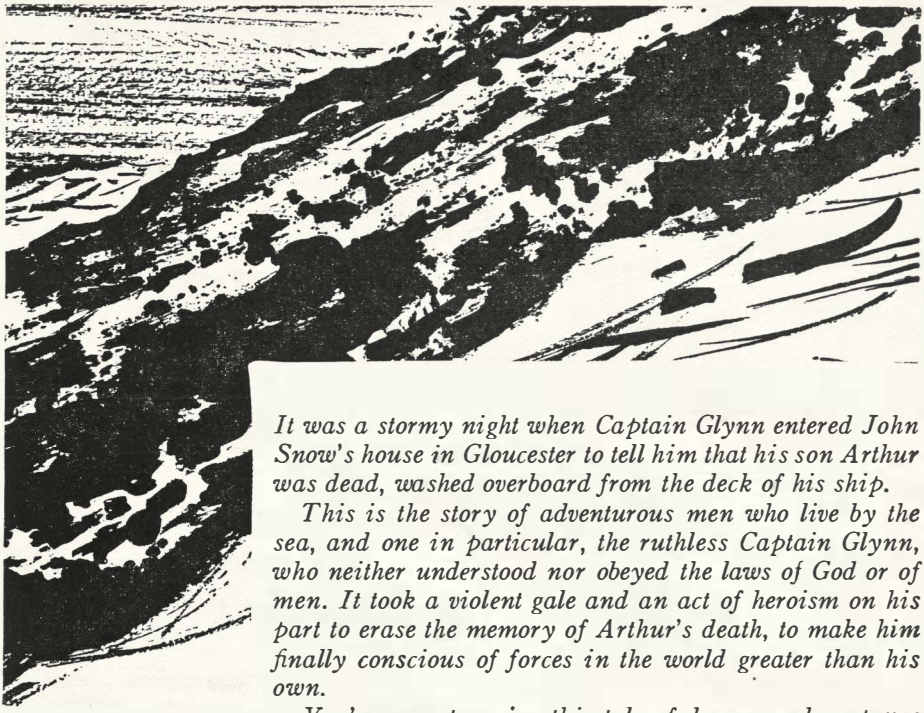
"I have no more to say to ye," he said with stately dignity, and walked away.

That's the closest I ever got to Captain McLeod!

THE TRAWLER

By JAMES M. CONNOLLY

Illustrator: David Stone



It was a stormy night when Captain Glynn entered John Snow's house in Gloucester to tell him that his son Arthur was dead, washed overboard from the deck of his ship.

This is the story of adventurous men who live by the sea, and one in particular, the ruthless Captain Glynn, who neither understood nor obeyed the laws of God or of men. It took a violent gale and an act of heroism on his part to erase the memory of Arthur's death, to make him finally conscious of forces in the world greater than his own.

You're sure to enjoy this tale of drama and suspense among Gloucester fishermen by a master story teller!

TO John Snow's home in Gloucester came the tale this night of how Arthur Snow was washed from the deck of Hugh Glynn's vessel and lost at sea; and it was Saul Haverick, his sea clothes still on him, who brought the word.

"I'm telling you, John Snow," said Saul, and he out of breath almost with the telling — "and others than me will by an' by be telling you — what a black night it was, with a high-running sea and wind to blow the last coat o' paint off the vessel, but o' course he had to be the first o' the fleet — nothin' less would do *him* — to make the market with his big ketch. It was for others, not for him to show the way to take in sail, he said, and not a full hour before it happened that was." Such was Saul Haverick's ending.

John Snow said nothing, Mrs. Snow said nothing. Saul looked to me, but I gave no sign that I had

heard him. Only Mary Snow looking up from her hands folded in her lap, said: "Surely you must find it painful, Saul Haverick, to ship with such a wicked man and take the big shares of money that fall to his crew?"

"Eh!" said Saul frightened like at her. "I'm not denying that he is a great fish killer, Mary Snow, and that we haven't shared some big trips with him, but it is like his religion I'm telling you, to be able to say how he allowed no man ever he crossed tacks with to work to wind'ard of him. He's that vain that he'd drive vessel, himself, and all hands to the bottom afore he'd let some folks think anything else of him."

"He lost my boy — we'll say no more of him," said John Snow.

"Aye," said Saul Haverick, "we'll speak no more of him. But I was Arthur's dory mate, John Snow, as you well know, and my heart is sick to think of it. I'll be going now," and he did go, without sound, and by way of the back door.

And he no more than gone when a knock came to the front door. After a time, the clock on the mantel ticking loud among us, John Snow called out, "Come in!"

I remember how Hugh Glynn stepped within the door of John Snow's kitchen that night, and how he bent his head to step within; and, bending his head, took off his cap; and how he bowed to John Snow, and Mary Snow in turn, and, facing John Snow, made as if to speak; but how his voice would not come, not until he had lifted his head yet higher and cleared his throat. And, beginning again, he took a step nearer the middle of the floor to where the light of the bracket lamp above the kitchen table shone full on his face. He was a grand man to look at; not only his face, but the height and build of him, and he was fresh in from sea.

"John Snow — and you, Mrs. Snow — the *Arbiter's* to anchor in the stream and her flag's to half-mast. And knowing that, maybe there's no need to say anything more?"

Mrs. Snow said nothing, Mary Snow said nothing, but I remember how, from under her father's brows, the deep eyes glowed out. "Go on," said John Snow at last.

Hugh Glynn went on. "Well, he was a good boy, your Arthur — maybe you'd like to be told that, even by me, though of course, you that was his father, John Snow, and you that was his mother, Mrs. Snow, know better than anybody else what he was. Three nights ago it was and we to the south'ard of Sable Island in as nasty a breeze as I'd been in for some time. A living gale it was, a November no'wester — you know what that is, John Snow — but I'd all night been telling the gang to be careful,

for a sea there was to sweep to eternity whoever it could've caught loose around deck. I could've hove her to and let her lay, but I was never one to heave-to my vessel — not once I'd swung her off for home. And there, God help me, is maybe my weakness.

"She was under her gaff tops'l, but I see she couldn't stand it. 'Boys,' says I, 'clew up that tops'l.' Which they did and put it in gaskets, and your Arthur, I mind, was one of the four men to go aloft to clew it up. Never a lad to shirk was Arthur. Well, a stouter craft of her tonnage than the *Arbiter* maybe never lived, nor no gear any sounder, but there are things o' God's that the things o' man were never meant to hold out against. Her jib flew to ribbons. 'Cut it clear!' I says, and half the crew jumped for'ard. Half a dozen of the crew at once, but Arthur, your Arthur, your boy, Mrs. Snow, your son, John Snow — he was quick enough to be among the half dozen. Among a smart crew he was never left behind. It looked safe for us all then, coming on to morning, but who can tell? Fishermen's lives, they're expected to go fast, but they're men's lives for all that, and 'Have a care!' I called to them myself to the wheel at the time, where, God knows, I was careful. I saw this big fellow coming, a mountain of water with a snow-white top to it, against the first light of the morning. And I made to meet it. A better vessel than the *Arbiter* the hand o' man never turned out — all Gloucester knows that — but her best and my best, there was no lifting her out of it. Like great pipe organs aroaring, this sea came, and over we went. Over we went, and I heard myself saying: 'God in heaven! but you great old wagon, are you gone at last?' And said it again when maybe there was ten feet of water over my head — her quarter was buried that deep and she that long coming up. Slow coming up she was; but up she came at last. But a man was gone."

He had stopped; but he went on. "It was Arthur, John Snow and you, Mrs. Snow, who was gone. The boy you were expecting to see in this very room by now, he was gone. Little Arthur that ten years ago, when first I saw him, I could've swung with my finger 'most — little Arthur was gone. Well, 'Over with a dory!' I said. And gale and all we over with a dory, with three of us in it. We looked and looked in that terrible dawn, but no use — no man, short o' the Son o' God himself, could 'a' stayed afloat, oilskins and red jacks, in that sea. But we had to look, and, coming aboard, the dory was stove in — smashed like 'twas a china teacup and not a new banker's double dory, against the rail. And it was cold. Our frostbitten fingers slipped from her

ice-wrapped rail, and the three of us nigh came to joining Arthur, and Lord knows — a sin maybe you'll say to think it, John Snow — but I felt then as if I'd just as soon, for it's a hard thing to see a man go down to his death, maybe through my foolishness, and to have the people that love him to face in the telling of it — that's hard, too."

He drew a great breath. "And" — again a deep breath and a deepened note of pain — "that's what I've come to tell you, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow, how your boy Arthur was lost."

John Snow, at the kitchen table I remember, one finger still in the pages of the black-lettered Bible he had been reading when Hugh Glynn stepped in, dropped his head on his chest and there let it rest. Mrs. Snow was crying out loud. Mary Snow said nothing nor made a move except to sit in her chair by the window and look to where in the middle of the kitchen Hugh Glynn stood.

There was a long quiet. Hugh Glynn spoke again. "Twenty years, John Snow and you, Mrs. Snow — twenty good years I've been fishing out o' Gloucester, and in that time not much this side the Western Ocean I haven't laid a vessel's keel over. From Greenland to Hatteras I've fished, and many smart seamen I've been shipmates with — dory, bunk, and watchmates in days gone by — and many a grand one of 'em I've known to find his grave under the green-white ocean, but never a smarter, never an abler, fisherman than your boy Arthur. Boy and man I knew him, and boy and man he did his work. I thought you might like to hear that from me, John Snow. And not much more than that can I say now, except to add maybe that when the Lord calls, John Snow, we must go, all of us. The Lord called and Arthur went. He had a good life before him — if he'd lived. He'd've had his own vessel soon — could've had one before — last summer if he wanted. But 'No,' he says, 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh.' He loved me and I loved him. 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh,' he says, but staying with me he was lost, and if I was old enough to have a grown son o' my own, if it was that little lad that lived only long enough to teach me what it is to have hope of a fine son, and then to lose him — if 'twas that little lad o' mine grown up, I could hardly feel it more, John Snow."

John Snow let slip his book and stood up, and for the first time looked fair at Hugh Glynn. "We know, Captain Glynn," John Snow said, "and I'm thanking you now. It's hard on me, hard on us all — our only son, Captain — our only boy. But, doubtless, it had to come. Some goes young

and some goes old. It came to him maybe earlier than we ever thought for or he thought for no doubt, but — it came. And what you have told us, Captain, is something for a man to be hearing of his son — and to be hearing it from you. And only this very night, with the word of you come home, my mind was hardening against you, Captain Glynn; for, no denying it, I've heard hard things, even as I've heard great things, of you. But now I've met you I know they mixed lies in the telling, Captain Glynn. And as for Arthur —" John Snow stopped.

"As for Arthur" — 'twas something to listen to the voice of Hugh Glynn then, so soft there was almost no believing it. "As for Arthur, John Snow, he went as all of us will have to go if we stop long enough with the fishing."

"Aye, no doubt. As you may go yourself, Captain?"

"As I expect to go, John Snow. To be lost at the last — what else should I look forward to?"

"A black outlook, Captain."

"Maybe, maybe. And yet a man's death at the last."

"So 'tis, Captain, so 'tis."

John Snow and Hugh Glynn gripped hands, looked into each other's eyes, and parted. Hugh Glynn out into the night again and John Snow, with Mrs. Snow, to their room, from where I could hear her sobbing. I almost wanted to cry myself, but Mary Snow was there. I went over and stood behind her. She was looking after someone through the window.

It was Hugh Glynn walking down the steep hill. Turning the corner below, I remember how he looked back and up at the window. For a long silence Mary Snow sat there and looked out. When she looked up and noticed me she said: "It's a hard life, the bank fishing, Simon. The long, long nights out to sea, the great gales, and when you come home no face, it may be, at the door to greet you."

"That it is, Mary."

"I saw his wife one day, Simon," said Mary softly, "and the little boy with her. But a week before they were killed together that was. Six years ago, and he the great tall man striding between them. A wonderful, lovely woman and a noble couple, I thought. And the grand boy! And I at that heedless age, Simon, it was a rare person, be it man or woman. I ran ahead to see again."

"Come from the window, Mary," I said to that, "and we'll talk of things more cheerful."

"No, no, Simon, don't ask me to talk of light matters tonight." With that and a "Good night," she left me for her room.

Out into the street I went. John Snow's house stood at the head of a street atop of a steep hill, and I remember how I stood on the

steps and looked down the slope of the hill and below the hill to the harbor, and beyond the harbor to clear water. It was a cold winter moonlight, and under the moon the sea heaved and heaved and heaved. There was no break in the surface of that sea that night, but as it heaved, terribly slow and heavy, I thought I could feel the steps beneath me heaving with it.

There is no striving against the strength of the sea, and the strength of Hugh Glynn was the strength of the sea.

All that night I walked the streets and roads of Cape Ann, walking where my eyes would lose no sight of that sea to which I had been born, and thinking, thinking, thinking always to the surge and roar of it! and in the morning I went down to where Hugh Glynn's vessel lay in dock; and Hugh Glynn himself I found standing on the stringpiece, holding by the hand and feeding candy to the little son of one of his crew, the while half a dozen men were asking him, one after the other, for what I, too, had come to ask.

My turn came. "I never met you to speak to before, Captain Glynn," I began, "but I was a friend of Arthur Snow's, and I was hopeful for the chance to ship with you in Arthur's place. My name is Simon Kippen," I went on when he made no answer. "I was in John Snow's kitchen when you came in last night, Captain Glynn."

"I know," — he waved the hand that wasn't holding the little boy — "I know. And" — he almost smiled — "you're not afraid to come to sea with me?"

"Why more afraid," I said, "than you to take me with you?"

He had a way of throwing his head back and letting his eyes look out, as from a distance, when he wanted to get the measure of a man. 'Twas so he looked out at me now. "You were a great friend of Arthur's?" he said.

"A friend to Arthur — and more if I could," I answered.

He looked out at me once more from the eyes far back in his head, and from me he looked to the flag that was still to the half-mast of his vessel for the loss of Arthur Snow.

"He's a hard case of a man, shouldn't you say, Simon Kippen, who would play a shipmate foul?"

I said nothing to that.

"And, master or hand, we're surely all shipmates," he added; to which again I said nothing.

"Will you take Saul Haverick for dory mate?" he said again.

"I bear Saul Haverick no great love," I said; "but I have never heard he wasn't a good fisherman, and who should ask more than that of his mate in a dory?"

"We might ask something more in a dory mate at times, but he is a good fisherman," he answered.

"A good hand to the wheel of a

vessel too, a cool head in danger, and one of the best judges of weather ever I sailed with. We're sailing in the morning. You can have the chance."

As to what was in my heart when I chose to ship with Hugh Glynn I can not say. There are those who explain how they can interpret every heartbeat, quick or slow, when aught ails them. I never could. I only know that, standing on the steps of Mary Snow's house the night before, all my thought was of Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street after Hugh Glynn. And "God help you, Simon Kippen!" I found myself saying. "It's not you, nor Saul Haverick, nor any other living man will marry Mary Snow while Hugh Glynn lives." But of what lay beyond that in my head I could not say.

And now I was to sea with Hugh Glynn, and we not four days out of Gloucester when, as if but to show me the manner of man he was, he runs clear to the head of Placentia Bay in Newfoundland for a baiting on our way to the Banks. And Whoever knows Placentia Bay knows what that means, with the steam cutters of the Crown patrolling and their sleepless watches aloft night and day to trap whoever would try to buy a baiting there against the law.

No harm fell to Hugh Glynn that time. No harm ever fell to him, fishermen said. Before even the cutters could get sight of him he had sight of them; and his bait stowed below, safe away he came, driving wildlike past the islands of the bay, with never a sidelight showing in the night, and not the first time he had done so.

"What d'y' say to that, Simon? Didn't we fool 'em good?" he asked when once more we were laying a free course for the Western Banks.

"I'm grateful you did not ask me to go in any dory to bring the bait off," I answered.

"Why is that, Simon?" he asked, as one who has no suspicion.

"It was against the law, Captain Glynn."

"But a bad law, Simon?"

"Law is law," I answered to that.

He walked from the wheel where I was twice to the break of the vessel and back again, and said in a voice no louder than was needful to be heard above what loose water was splashing over her quarter to my feet: "Don't be put out with me for what I'll tell you now, Simon. You're a good lad, Simon, and come of good people, but of people that for hundreds o' years have thought but one way in the great matters of life. And when men have lived with their minds set in the one way so long, Simon, it comes hard for them to understand any other way. Such

unfrequent ones as differed from your people, Simon, them they cast out from among them. I know I know, Simon, because I come from people something like to them, only I escaped before it was too late to understand that people who split tacks with you in a matter of sailing do not always fetch up on a lee shore."

"And from those other people, no doubt, Captain Glynn, you learned it was right to break a country's laws?"

"It wasn't breaking our country's law, Simon, nor any good man's law, to get a baiting last night. There are a lot of poor fishermen, Simon — as none know better than yourself — in Placentia Bay who have bait to sell, and there is a law which says they must not. But whose law? An American law? No. God's law? No. The law of those poor people in Placentia Bay? No. Some traders who have the making of the laws? Yes. And there you have it. If the Placentia Bay fishermen aren't allowed to sell bait to me, or the like of me, they will have to sell it to the traders themselves, but have to take their one dollar where we of Gloucester would pay them five, and paying it, would give some of them and their families a chance to live."

He stood there in his rubber boots to his hips and his long greatcoat to his ankles — he was one who never wore oilskins aboard ship — swinging with the swing of the plunging vessel as if he was built into her, and with his head thrown back and a smile that, it may be, was not a smile at all, and kept looking at me from out of eyes that were changeable as the sea itself.

"Don't you be getting mad with me, Simon, because we don't think alike in some things. To the devil with what people think of you — I've said that often enough, Simon, but not when they're good people. If some people don't like us, Simon, there will come no nourishment to our souls. Some day you're going to come to my way o' thinking, Simon, because we two are alike underneath."

"Alike!" I smiled to myself.

"Aye, alike at heart, Simon. We may look to be sailing wide-apart courses now, but maybe, if our papers were examined, 'twould be found we'd cleared for the same last port of call, Simon."

And no more talk of anything like that between us until the night before we were to leave the fishing grounds for home. In the afternoon we had set our trawls, and, leaving the vessel, the skipper had said: "Our last set, boys. Let 'em lay to-night, and in the morning we'll haul," and, returning aboard after setting, we had our supper and were making ready, such as had no watch to stand, to turn in for a good long sleep against the labor of the morrow.

It was an oily sea that evening — a black, oily smooth surface, lifting heavy and slow to a long swell. A smooth, oily sea — there is never any good comes out of it; but a beautiful sea notwithstanding, with more curious patterns of shifting colors than a man could count in a year playing atop of it. The colors coming and going and rolling and squirming — no women's shop ashore ever held such colors under the bright night lights as under the low sun we saw this day on the Western Banks. It was a most beautiful and a most wicked sea to stop and look at.

And the sun went down that evening on a banking of clouds no less beautiful. It was a copper-red sun, and, after 'twas gone, above the horizon, in all the western quarter, were piled the clouds in lovely massy forms and splendid colors.

Such of the crew as stopped to speak of it did not like the look of it, and some stopped beside the skipper to say it, he leaning against the main rigging in the way he had, the while he studied the weather signs; but he made no answer to the crew to that or any other word they had this evening — only to Saul Haverick when he came up from supper complaining of not feeling well.

He was one could drive his crew till they could not see for very weariness; but he was one could nurse and comfort them, too.

"Go below and turn in," was his word to Saul, "and stay there till you feel better. Call me, Simon, if I'm not up," he then said to me. "I'll stand Saul's watch with you if Saul is no better."

It was yet black night when I was called to go on watch, and, Saul Haverick still complaining, I went to call the skipper. But he was already up, and had been, the watch before me said, for the better part of the night.

I found him leaning over the gunnel of the wind'ard nest of dories when I went on deck, gazing out on a sea that was no longer oily smooth, though smooth enough too, what was to be seen of it, under the stars of a winter night.

I stood on the break and likewise looked about me. To anchor, and alone, lay the vessel, with but her riding light to mark her in the dark — alone and quiet, with never a neighbor to hail us, nor a sound from any living thing whatever. The very gulls themselves were asleep; only the fores'l, swaying to a short sheet, would roll part way to wind'ard and back to loo'ard, but quiet as could be even then, except for the little tapping noises of the reef points when in and out the belly of the canvas would puff up and let down again to what little wind was stirring.

It was almost a perfect, calm night. But no calm day was to

follow. "Wicked weather ahead," said Hugh Glynn, and came and stood beside me on the break. "A wicked day coming, but no help for it now till daylight comes to see our trawls to haul 'em." And seeming to have settled that in his mind, he said no more of it, but from mainm'st to weather rail he paced, and back again, and I took to pacing beside him.

A wonderful time, the night watched at sea, for men to reveal themselves. Night and sky overhead, and the wide ocean to your elbow, it drives men to thought of higher things. The wickedest of men — I have seen them, with all manner of blasphemies befouling their lips by day, to become holy as little children in the watches of the night.

No blasphemer was Hugh Glynn, nor did the night hold terror for him; only, as we paced the break together, he spoke of matters that only himself and his God could know. It was hard to listen and be patient, though maybe it was as much of wonder as of impatience was taking hold of me as I listened.

"Do you never fear what men might come to think of you, Captain Glynn?" I said — "confessing your very soul!"

"Ho, ho, that's it, is it?" He came to a sudden stop in our walking. "I should only confess the body — is that it, Simon Kippen? And, of course, when a man confesses to one thing of his own free will, you know there must be something worse behind? Is that it, Simon?" He chuckled beside me, and, as if only to scandalize me, let his tongue run wilder yet.

His tales were of violations of laws such as it had been my religion to observe since I was a boy, and little except of the comic, ridiculous side of them all. The serious matters of life, judging by what he spoke to me so far this night, had small interest for him. But the queer power of the man! Had it been light where he could see me I would have choked before ever I would let him see me smile, but — He caught me at it and straightened up, chuckling, and said: "Many other things you would smile at too, Simon, if your bringing up would but allow the frost to thaw from your soul."

"And are reckless carryings-on and desperate chancing things to smile at?"

"Oh, Simon, Simon, what a lucky man you're to be that never expects to see the day when no harbor this side of God's eternal sea will offer you the only safe and quiet mooring?"

Again I saw Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street, and, remembering how she had spoken of his lonely home, I said: "No doubt a man, like a vessel, Captain Glynn, should

have always a mooring somewhere. I wonder you never thought of marrying again?"

"I have thought of it."

"And with some one woman in mind?"

"It may be." He answered that, too, without a pause.

"And does she know?"

"It may be she knows. No knowing when they know, Simon. As men best understand the soul, so it is woman's best gift to understand the heart. But no fair play in me to ask her. I've had my great hour and may not have it again with another. To offer such anything less than a great love, it would be to cheat, Simon. No, no, no — it's not the kind of a man I am now, but the kind you are, Simon, should marry."

"It's not my kind that women like best, Captain," I said.

"There are women to like every kind, Simon, and almost any kind of a woman would like your kind, Simon, if you would only learn to be less ashamed of what is no shame. And it is you, already in love, who should —"

"Me — in love?" I was like a vessel luffing to escape a squall, he had come on me so quickly.

"There it is — the upbringing of you that would never own up to what you think only yourself know. Three weeks to sea now you've been with me, and never a gull you've seen skirling to the west'ard that your eyes haven't followed. By no mistake do you watch them flying easterly. And when last evening I said, 'Tomorrow, boys, we'll swing her off and drive her to the west'ard — and Gloucester!' the leaping heart in you fair drove the blood to your very eyes. Surely that was not in sorrow, Simon?"

I made no answer.

Back and forth we paced, and talked as we paced, until the stars were dimming in the sky and the darkness fading from the sea. He stopped by the rail and stared, awearylike I thought, out upon the waters.

"Simon, surely few men but would rather be themselves than anybody else that lives; but surely too, no man sailing his own wide courses but comes to the day when he wishes he'd been less free in his navigating at times. You are honest and right, Simon. Even when you are wrong you are right, because to do what you think is right, whether you are right or wrong, is to come to be surely right in the end. And it is the like of you, not yet aweary in soul or body, should mate with the women molded of God to be the great mothers."

"You have done much thinking of some matters, Captain," I said, not knowing what else to say.

"Alone at sea before the dawn is a wonderful hour for a man to cross-question himself, Simon, and not many nights to sea of late

years that I haven't seen the first light of dawn creeping up over the edge of the ocean. You marry Mary Snow, Simon."

He knew. What could I say? "I never thought to talk like this, Captain, to a living man." In the growing light we stood plain to each other's sight. "I don't understand what made me," I said, and said it, doubtless, with a touch of shame.

"It may be just as well that at your age you don't understand every feeling that drives you on, Simon. Our brains grow with age, but not our hearts. No matter what made you talk tonight, Simon, you marry Mary Snow."

I shook my head, but opened my heart to him nevertheless. "It will be Saul Haverick between us two, I think."

"Simon, it's my guess to-night that Mary Snow will never marry Saul Haverick. Not that her life would be spoiled altogether if she should marry him. She's too strong a soul to be spoiled of her life by any one man. No matter what man she marries, in her heart will be the image, not of the man her husband is, but of the man she'd wish him to be, and in the image of that man of her fancy will her children be born. Women molded of God to be the mothers of great men are fashioned that way, Simon. They dream great dreams for their children's sake, and their hearts go out to the man who will make their dreams come true! If I've learned anything of good women in life, Simon, it is that. And, no saying, I may be wrong in that too, Simon, but so far I've met no man who knows more than I of it to gainsay me. You marry Mary Snow, Simon, and she will bear you children who will bring new light to a darkening world."

The dawn was rolling up to us; and the next on watch was on deck to relieve me; and the cook, too, with his head above the fo'c'sle hatch, was calling that breakfast was ready, and we said no more of that.

"Go for'ard, Simon," said Captain Glynn, "and have your breakfast. After breakfast we'll break out her anchor and out dories, and get that gear aboard afore it's too late. I'll go below and see how Saul's getting on."

With that he went into the cabin, but was soon back to take his seat at the breakfast table; but no word of Saul until we had done eating and he standing to go up on deck. Then he said: "Saul says he is still too sick to go in the dory with you, Simon."

And to that I said: "Well, I've hauled a trawl single-handed before, Captain Glynn, and I can do it again if need be."

He put on his woolen cap, and across the table he looked at me, and I looked hard at him.

"This will no morning to go

single-handed in a dory, Simon. Saul is not too sick, he says, to stand to the wheel and handle the vessel in my place. I will take his place along with you in the dory."

What he was thinking I could not say. His head was thrown back and his eyes looking out and down at me, as from the top of a far-away hill, and no more thinking what thoughts lay behind them than what creatures lay under the sea.

It was a red sunrise and a sea that was making when we left the vessel but nothing to worry over in that. It might grow into a dory-killing day later, but so far it was only what all winter trawlers face more days than they can remember. We picked up our nearest buoy, with its white and black flag floating high to mark it; and as we did to wind'ard of us we could see, for five miles it might be, the twisted lines of the vessel's other dories stretching. Rising to the top of a sea we could see them, sometimes one and sometimes another, lifting and falling, and the vessel lifting and falling to wind-'ard of them all.

Hugh Glynn took the bow to do the hauling, and myself the waist for coiling; and it was a grand sight to see him heave in on that heavy gear on that December morning. Many men follow the sea, but not many are born to it. Hugh Glynn was. Over the hurdy-gurdy he hauled the heavy lines, swinging forward his shoulders first one and then the other, swaying from his waist, and all in time to the heave of the sea beneath him, and singing, as he heaved, little snatches of songs that I believe he made up himself as he went along.

As he warmed to his work he stopped to draw off the heavy sweater that he wore over his woolen shirt, and made as if to throw it in the bow of the dory. "But no," he said, "it will get wet there. You put it on you, Simon, and keep it dry for me." He was a full size bigger than me in every way, and I put it on over my cardigan jacket and under my oil jacket, and it felt fine and comfortable on me. It came time for me to spell him on the hauling, but he waved me back. "Let be, let be, Simon," he said, "it's fine light exercise for a man of a brisk morning. A long time since I hauled a trawl, and it's making me think I'm a lad again, and reminding me of the day I hauled my first trawl on the Banks. Looking back on it now, Simon, I mind how the bravest sight I thought I ever saw was our string of dories racing afore the tide in the blue sea of a sunny winter's morning, and the vessel, like a mother to see her little boats, standing off and on to see that nothing happened the while we hauled and coiled and gaffed inboard the broadbacked

halibut. All out of myself with pride I was — me no more than a lad, but hauling halibut trawls, with full-grown men on the Grand Bank that morning!"

He took to the hauling again, and soon to the singing of it. And he sang:

My lad comes running down the street,
And what says he to me?
Says he: "Oh dadda, dadda,
And you're back again from sea!

And did you ketch a great big fish
And bring him home to me?
Oh, dadda, dadda take me up
And toss me high!" says he.

My love looks out on the stormy morn,
Her thoughts are on the sea.
She says: "'Tis wild upon the Banks."
And kneels in prayer for me.

"Oh, Father, hold him safe!" she prays,
"And —"

"There's one, Simon!" he called.

A bad sea he meant. They had been coming and going, coming and going, rolling under and past us, and so far no harm; but this was one more wicked to look at than its mates. So I dropped the coiling lines, and with the oar already to the becket in the stern whirled the dory's bow head on. The sea carried us high and far, and, passing, left the dory deep with water, but no harm in that so she was still right side up. We stopped to bail. "A good job, Simon," said Hugh Glynn. "Not too soon and not too late."

That was the first one. More followed in their turn; but always the oar was handy in the becket; and it was but to whirl bow or stern to it with the oar when it came, not too soon to waste time for the hauling, but never, of course, too late to save capsizing, and bailing her out, if need be, when it was by.

Our trawl was in, our fish in the waist of the dory, and we lay to our roding line and second anchor, so we might not drift miles to loo'ard while waiting for the vessel to pick us up. We could see the vessel — to her hull, when to the top of a sea we rose together, but nothing of her at all when into the hollows we fell together.

She had picked up all but the dory next to wind'ard to us. We would be the last, but before long now she would be to us. "Pick Simon and me up last of all," Hugh Glynn had said to Saul, and I remember how Saul, standing to the wheel, looked down over the taffrail and said: "Simon and you last of all," and nodded his head as our dory fell away in the vessel's wake.

Tide and sea was such that there was no use trying to row against

it, or we would not have waited at all; but we waited, and, as we waited, the wind, which had been southerly, went into the east and snow fell, but not for more than a half hour, when it cleared. We stood up and looked about us. There was no vessel or other dory in sight.

We said no word to each other of it, but the while we waited further, all the while with a wind'ard eye to the bad little seas, we talked.

"Did you ever think of dying, Simon?" Hugh Glynn said after a time.

"Can a man follow the winter trawling long and not think of it at times?" I answered.

"And have you fear of it Simon?"

"I know I have no love for it," I said. "But do you ever think of it, you?"

"I do — often. With the double tides working to draw me to it, it would be queer if now and again I would not think of it."

"And have you fear of it?"

"Of not going properly — I have, Simon." And after a little: "And I've often thought it a pity for a man to go and nothing come of his going. Would you like the sea for a grave, Simon?"

"I would not," I answered.

"Nor me, Simon. A grand, clean grave, the ocean; but the green grave ashore, your own beside you, would feel less lonesome — yes or so I've often thought, Simon."

"I've often thought so," he went on, his eyes now on watch for the bad seas and again looking wistful-like at me. "I'd like to lie where my wife and boy lie, she to one side and the lad to the other, and rise with them on Judgment Day. I've a notion, Simon, that with them to bear me up I'd stand afore the Lord with greater courage. For if what some think is true — that it's those we've loved in this world will have the right to plead for us in the next — then, Simon, there will be two to plead for me as few can plead."

He stood up and looked around. "It is a bad sea now, but worse later, and a strong breeze brewing, Simon," and he drew from an inside pocket of his woolen shirt a small leather notebook. He held it up for me to see, with the slim little pencil held by little loops along the edges. "My wife's. I've a pocket put on every woolen shirt I wear to sea so 'twill be close to me. There's things in it she wrote of our little boy. And I'm writing here something I'd like you to be witness to, Simon."

He wrote a few lines. "There, Simon. I've thought often this trip how 'tis hard on John Snow at his age to have to take to fishing again. If I hadn't lost Arthur he wouldn't have to. I'm willing my vessel to John Snow. Will you witness it, Simon?"

I signed my name below his, and he set the book back in his inside pocket.

"And you think our time is come, skipper?" I tried to speak quietly, too.

"I wouldn't say that, Simon, but foolish not to make ready for it."

I looked about when we rose to the next sea for the vessel. But no vessel. I thought it hard. "Had you no distrust of Saul Haverick this morning," I asked.

"I had, and last night, Simon."

"And you trusted him?"

"A hard world if we didn't trust people, Simon. I thought it over again this morning and was ashamed, Simon, to think it in me to distrust him — a shipmate. I wouldn't have believed it of any man ever I sailed with. But no use to fool ourselves longer. Make ready. Over with the fish, over with the trawls, over with everything but thirty or forty fathom of that roding line and the sail and one anchor and the two buoys."

It was hard to see that fine fish go that we'd taken hours to rig. But there was no more time to waste — over they went. And we took the two buoys — light-made but sound and tight half barrels they were — and we lashed them to the risings of the dory.

"And now the sail to her, Simon."

We put the sail to her.

"And stand by to cut clear our anchorage!" I stood by with my bait knife; and when he called out I cut, and away we went racing before wind and tide, me in the waist on the lashed buoy on the wind'ard side to hold her down, and he on the wind'ard gunnel too, but aft, with an oar in one hand and the sheet of the sail in the other.

"And where now?" I asked when the wind would let me.

"The lee of Sable Island lies ahead."

The full gale was on us now — a living gale, and before the gale the sea ran higher than ever, and before the high seas the flying dory. Mountains of slate-blue water rolled down into the valleys, and the valleys rolled up into mountains again, and all shifting so fast that no man might point a finger and say: "Here's one, there's one!" — quick and wild as that they were.

From one great hill we would tumble, only to fall into the next great hollow, and never did she make one of her wild plunges but the sea blew wide and high over her; and never did she check herself for even the quickest of breaths striving the while to break up the side of a mountain of water, but the sea would roll over her and I'd say to myself once again: "Now at last we're gone!"

We tumbled into hollows and a

roaring wind drove the boiling foam, white as soapsuds, atop of us: we climbed up the hills and the roaring wind drove the solid green water atop of us. Wind, sea, and milk-white foam between them — they seemed all of a mind to smother us that day. These things I saw in jumpslike. Lashed to the wind'ard buoy I was by a length of roding line, to my knees in water the better part of the time, and busy enough with the bailing. There was no steady looking to wind'ard, such was the weight of the flying bullets of water which the wild wind drove off the sea crests; but a flying glance now and again kept me in the run of it.

I would have wished to be able to do my share of the steering, but only Hugh Glynn could properly steer that dory that day. The dory would have sunk a hundred times only for the buoys in the waist: but she would have capsized more times than that again only for the master hand in the stern. There he sat, a man of marble, his jaw like a cliff rising above the collar of his woolen shirt, his two eyes like the cold lights looking out from under his cap brim.

We were so terribly beset that one time in pure fear: "We'll be lost carrying sail like this, Hugh Glynn!" I called back to him.

And he answered: "I never could see much difference, Simon, between being lost carrying sail and being lost hove to.

After that I said no more.

And so, to what must have been the wonder of wind and sea that day, Hugh Glynn drove the little dory far into the night and the lee of Sable Island.

We took in our sail and let go our anchor. Hugh Glynn looked long above and about him. "A clear night coming," said Hugh Glynn, "and cold, with the wind backing into the no'west. We'll lay here, for big vessels will be running for this same lee to-night, and maybe a chance for us to be picked up with the daylight. Did I do well this day by you, Simon?"

"I'd be a lost man ten hours back but for you," I said. "No man living could do what you did this day, skipper."

"So you don't hold me a reckless, desperate sail carrier. Simon, never mind the rest." His eyes were shining. "But your voice is weary, Simon, and you're hungry, too, I know, after the work of to-day."

I was hungry and worn — terribly worn — after the day, and so told him.

"Then lie down and 'twill rest you, and for a time make you forget the hunger. And while you're lying down, Simon, I'll stand watch."

And I made ready to lie down when I thought of his sweater I was wearing. I unbuttoned my oil jacket to get at it. "It's colder already, skipper, and you will be

needing something to warm you."

"No, it is you will be needing it, Simon. Being on my feet, d'y' see, I can keep warm thrashing around in the dory."

"But will you call me and take it off if it grows too cold, skipper?"

"I'll call you when I want it; lie down now."

"A wonderful calm night, full as quiet as last night, skipper," I said, "only no harm in this night — no gale before us on the morrow."

"No, Simon," he said, "naught but quiet before us. But lie down you, boy."

"And you'll call me, skipper," I said, "when my watch comes?"

"I'll call you after my watch is up. Lie down now." I lay down, meaning to keep awake. But I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was to the voices of strange men and the hands of strangers rubbing my feet and hands. A voice said: "He's coming around."

I sat up; I was still in the dory, and saw, besides the men working on me, other men looking down from a vessel's side at me. 'Twas naught but ice along the vessel's rail, and the look of ice was all about me.

I was weak with the fire of the pains running through my veins, but, remembering, I tried to stand up. "Hsh-h, boy!" they said, "you are all right," and held me down while they rubbed my body.

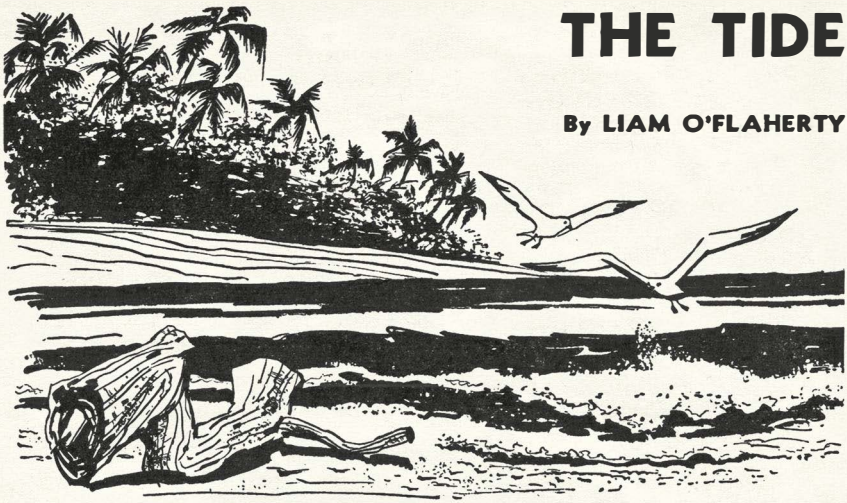
I stood up among them, nevertheless, and looked for Hugh Glynn. He was there, curled up in the stern, his arms folded over the gunnel and his forehead resting on his arms.

I stood over him and lifted his head to see his face. All was peace with him. "Skipper! Oh, skipper!" I called out, and again: "Oh, skipper!"

"Come away, boy," said one of the men who had been rubbing my feet. "Only the voice of God can wake him now."

And so Hugh Glynn died, and so I was saved and came home to marry Mary Snow and in the end to father the children which may or may not grow great as he predicted; but great in the eyes of the world they may become greater than all living men it might be and yet fall far short in our eyes of the stature of the man who thought that 'twas better for one to live than for two to die, and that one not to be himself.

Desperate he was and lawbreaking, for law is law, whosoever it bears hard upon; but the heart was warm within him. And if my children have naught else, and it is for their mother and me to say, the heart to feel for others they will have; and having that, the rest may follow or not, as it will. That would be Hugh Glynn's way of it, too, I think.



THE TIDE

By LIAM O'FLAHERTY

How many times during the summer have you gone early to your favorite stretch of beach, to enjoy the sun and the surf, only to find it littered with the remains of the previous night's beach party? Beer cans and orange rinds, mustard jars and half-eaten hot dogs, can, unfortunately, convert the most spotless bit of sand and water into a miniature Coney Island.

If the situation sounds familiar, then you'll enjoy this account of a 24-hour cycle in the life of a sun-lit beach by the brilliant Irish novelist who wrote "The Informer."

IN THE MORNING when the sea was full, a small grey bird with scarlet legs ran north along the beach in search of food. The tide was then so high that its foam-laced edge came to the exposed roots of the palm trees that lined the shore. The little bird was forced to dodge in and out among the trees sideways, ready to pounce on the least morsel. He found nothing. He never once paused to feed before he went out of sight behind the rocky bluff at the northern end.

The surf was immaculate. There was nothing but clear blue water in the never-ending waves that made soft music breaking on the yellow sand. The whole sea was

immaculate, as it lay shimmering in the morning light, away to the far horizon in the west.

The tide began to ebb. The sea flowed back into its own bosom, laying bare a wide strip of ground that sloped down gently to the dark ocean bed outside the bar. Brine drops and flecks of foam sparkled like diamonds for a little while on the brown sand that had just been uncovered. Then the heat of the tropical sun came in the wake of the retreating sea and drew all moisture from the surface. As when a shadow passes slowly from a carpet, the brown sand became golden.

When the tide approached its lowest ebb, the beach looked radiantly beautiful from end to end. The sand was without blemish. The waves in going forth had packed its fine grains close together and smoothed out all roughness in its texture and given it minute frills and undulations, that were now warm like passionate bosoms under the sun's wild heat. It lay between the green wood and the turquoise sea like a golden belt, in majestic stillness. Yet its curving beauty made it seem to sway before the eye in dancing rhythm.

Then people came. The first car halted shortly before noon at the end of the road behind the trees. Two small boys leaped from it at once and ran screaming into the tide. An old Negress came after them with blankets and a big green umbrella. A fat man with a bald head brought a wicker lunch basket. A red-haired woman in a leopard-skin bathing suit came with pillows and the Sunday edition of a newspaper. They hoisted the umbrella midway down the beach and spread the blankets in its shade. The Negress took a spirit stove from the basket, lit it and began to cook lunch. The white woman sat on a blanket and oiled the naked parts of her body. Then she stretched out on her back and put a pillow under her head. She undid her shoulder straps and oiled her breasts out to the nipples. Her husband lay beside her on his stomach. He lit a cigar and read the comic section of the paper. The two little boys came out of the water and scraped holes in the sand. They barked like dogs as they threw it rapidly back between their spread legs.

A shabby black sedan was the next car to park at the end of the road. A very thin man got out of it. He wore a white cloth cap and purple trunks that hung loosely about his fleshless loins. An old woman in a yellow straw hat and a long white dress followed him out of the car. They walked very slowly side by side down to the tide. The old man carried a fishing pole and a spade. The old woman had a sieve and a small pail. When he was near the water, the old

man began to dig up the sand and to throw it into the sieve. The old woman shook the sieve and sifted all the sand carefully, searching for bait. After they had found some, the old man baited his hook and went surf-fishing. The old woman then took the spade and continued to dig up the golden sand.

Two young men came in a yellow roadster. They brought a parcel of sandwiches, a dozen bottles of beer, a newspaper and a shovel down to the beach. There they dug an enormous hole in the sand, using the shovel in turns. Then they had a swim, dried themselves by walking in the sun and lay down at the bottom of their hole. Each took a section of the newspaper. They ate sandwiches and drank beer while they read.

Then a large party of rowdy men and women came in three shining black limousines. They shouted to one another as they came down the beach with their loads. Some of them gathered wood and lit a fire on the sand. Others went into the tide and gambolled, making a great tumult. An elderly woman with an enormous belly sat down on a spread newspaper, beside a radio she had brought. She took off her shoes and stockings, loosened her black silk dress and lit a cigarette. Then she turned on a broadcast of Cuban dance music. Excited by the savage rhythm, she slapped her belly, shook her bosom and shouted in ecstasy. Now and again she picked up a bottle of wine by the neck and drank deeply. The bathers soon joined her and danced about the radio in couples, rooting up the sand with their wet feet. Then the whole party ate sausages that had been roasted at the fire. They also ate bread, pickles, salami, beans, and apple-pie. They drank many bottles of wine, shouted, embraced one another, played the radio, danced and sang ribald songs. They stretched out on the sand when they were exhausted.

Two separate bands of shabbily dressed men and women debouched on to the beach from behind the rocky bluff at the northern end. They carried large brown sacks. They moved along towards the south in parallel lines, digging up the sand in search of precious shells. When they reached the southern end, they turned and marched north again, in two parallel lines, still digging with great energy and throwing shells into their sacks.

So many people came in cars and on foot that the whole beach was littered with them at low tide. By then scores of umbrellas had been hoisted. Seventeen radios were working at full cry. Thirteen fires had been lit. Eight parties were fishing and digging for bait.

(*Continued on page 130*)

THE FLOATING COURT

By EDWARD A. HERRON

An island trapper in the Alaskan wasteland kills his wife in a fit of drunken anger. . . . A seal hunter steals a fellow prospector's provisions and dog team, then disappears into the night.

What happens to these men in a territory where one would consider "law" and "justice" to be mere words, without meaning or definition? Well, it may surprise you to learn that one of the many functions of the U. S. Coast Guard includes the detailing of small cutters complete with legal staff — Judge, Prosecuting Attorney, and Defense Lawyer — to administer justice to the remote island outposts along the coast of Alaska.

"Semper Paratus", "Always Prepared", is a fitting motto for the men who perform these duties, who restore order to barren regions where desperate men often live by their own code of law.

THE law in Alaska ain't never so damn busy it can't find time to come out to the Islands and hang a man."

I heard a trapper mutter those words while we watched a Coast Guard cutter heave to far out in the bay and send a boat ashore. In the little boat bobbing on the waters was the defense lawyer who would try to save the trapper, the prosecuting attorney who would try to hang him, and the judge who would sentence him.

The Floating Court was back in the Aleutians to uphold the law.

The murder the trapper had done was a remote and meaningless affair on the dismal island. Alone at the end of the world with his partner, a white man, he had killed him in a sudden upsweep of hatred. The loneliness, the continual rain, the ceaseless round of wretched weather, had changed tolerance into hate, and hate into murder.

He stood before the judge who had come fifteen hundred miles across the meanest stretch of

ocean in the entire world in order to seek him out. He was convicted.

When the white Coast Guard cutter inched away from the island, the trapper was below decks, locked and barred, being delivered for a seven year term at the McNeil Island Penitentiary down in the state of Washington.

The cutter climbed high on the rolling waters of the shallow Bering Sea, headed west, and plunged from sight.

Lonely, miserable and cursed, the Aleutian Islands are almost forgotten as a part of the United States. Almost, but not entirely. The Islands are still fitted into the court calendar of the Third Judicial division in Alaska.

Distances are great in western Alaska, and the topography is rugged. The Floating Court has solved the problem of distance. Instead of bringing the criminal to justice, justice seeks out the criminal. It is as though the Superior Court of Los Angeles went each Spring north to Seattle and east to Chicago, following a trail of lonely crime, and sentencing the criminals.

For the four hundred Aleuts and the few white civilians living on the endless chain of islands, the Coast Guard is the arm of the law. It aids them in time of emergency, brings them food, medicine, and transports them. from one wild island to another. In the spring of each year it may bring them the judge who will send them to prison.

The Court plunges through seas that hem in the bleakest area in the world. If the judge of the Third Judicial Division so wishes, he may travel the same lonely area by plane. At first thought, an airplane seems the logical means of travel in that region of far-flung islands. But the weather, boiling around in a final burst of fury before slipping down over the northern States, makes the Bering Sea area a nightmare for small airplanes. Little pontoon aircraft, minus the expensive radar equipment of huge passenger liners, have waited three weeks in sheltered bays waiting for a break in the continual vile weather.

For seamen the world over, the dagger thrust of islands hold a nauseous dread. The cold winds from Siberia and the colder currents sweep down from the Bering Sea and through the island passages to collide head-on with the warm air masses and mild ocean currents moving eastward across the Pacific.

The Aleuts live out their short lives in endless winds, dense fog, rain, mist and snow. Summer and winter, the weather is beyond the endurance of a white man.

In the damp spring of each year a Coast Guard cutter detaches itself from the Bering sea patrol, the small flotilla ushering the seal

herds north to the safety of the Pribiloffs. The cutter heads into a rendezvous at Seward.

Waiting to climb the rough, wooden gangplank is the presiding judge of the Third Judicial Division, his secretary, the District Attorney, court reporters, Deputy Marshals, clerks of the court and an assortment of assistants. The law moves in force.

Mixed in with the group is one lone defense lawyer. He has never seen the clients that are waiting.

With the members of the Floating Court aboard, the Cutter backs away from the wooden pilings of the wharf at Seward, turns about in the narrow harbor, then finds a passage down the long neck of Resurrection Bay, one of the great natural harbors of the world.

Out in the stormy waters of the Gulf of Alaska, the cutter heads south and west to Kodiak. Later it feels its way through the picket fence of islands dropping from the Alaska mainland, slips by the forlorn masts of a passenger ship thrust above the rolling waters, and makes the passage through the Unimak gateway. Ahead are the small towns and canneries along Bristol Bay.

When the cutter anchors far out from some village that has been forewarned by radio, the party goes ashore and sets up court in any convenient building. Any large, heated room with plenty of seating space will suffice. Justice has been dealt out in cannery sheds, in private cabins, and in the back of a trading post. The favorite is the schoolhouse.

The handful of children get a holiday, and the judge sits naturally behind the teacher's desk. The accused, the prosecuting lawyer, the defense, and all the other court attachés fall in line down the aisle seats. The villagers fill up the empty seats and crowd against the cleaned blackboards.

Despite the informal setting, an air of strict formality prevails. A death sentence can be handed out in a schoolroom just as chillingly as in the courtroom of the large Federal Building in Anchorage.

A fisherman sentenced to four years in McNeil Island Penitentiary feels no less the impact because the sentence was pronounced from a rocking chair in a tiny cabin.

The people crowded into the tiny, improvised courtrooms see no gay scene enacted. This is the law, and the attitude of those watching is one of respect. The trappers, fishermen, Aleuts and mixed-blood natives take part in the scene with a grim intensity. This one day in court may have been the object of waiting speculation for ten months past.

With the cases in the Westward country completed, the cutter turns about, points into the far west and drops down, island by

island, along the weather-beaten Aleutian Chain.

The wide sweep of lonely rock is a collection of fourteen large islands and fifty small islands, plus an uncounted number of islets and sunken ships. All of them are cold and barren, a vast looping swing of desolation reaching 1,000 miles from the Alaska Peninsula out toward Russian Siberia.

A man who has lived and suffered in this most remote section of the world can safely curse the islands without fear of reprisal. It is a region of abject misery, the butt of a near-blasphemous remark that claims the islands were mud snapped from the fingers of God's hand at completion of Creation.

The islands are blighted, heavy with the hand of God and the curses of seamen who have been forced to find passage through uncharted waters. Because of the horrors of war and the threats of war, a few of the islands are embraced, fortified and defended.

But take away the guns and the grey warships and droning planes, and the land begins to wither.

This is where the law comes to 400 Aleuts and a handful of whites.

The cutter bucks and tosses in the shallow waters of the Bering Sea, and always within sight are the orphaned islands. Plumes of feathery smoke whip from many a mountain top, fed by a smouldering volcano. Desolate, treeless, the straggling procession of rock and black sand and brown grasses can be seen dimly through the rain clouds to the left. At night they can be almost felt in the cautious forward movement of the cutter. They sit low in the water, a constant menace. The ships that have been lost in these currents have gone beyond the counting of the Coast Guard.

The cutter slips into remote bays that could not be visited by plane. It keeps going in everything but suicidal weather. And the court party aboard hangs on, dragging through sea-sickness, waiting the end of the interminable voyage.

Sometimes the ship itself serves as a courtroom when ashore there is nothing adequate for the large party.

When it is necessary to stay aboard the cutter, the deck is used in preference to the tiny officers' saloon. The open deck of any ship in Alaskan waters is never conducive to long, weighty arguments. Winds are chilly, and the drenching rains disagreeable, persistent, and depressing.

The off-duty crew of the Coast Guard huddle around, interested spectators.

The cases that clamber up the ship's ladder and stand before the judge differ from those that face him on the mainland. The accused

are of a different type physically, and their motives differ. White people back on the mainland of Alaska commit crimes for the same reason as do whites in the States. But out here in the bleak islands, the natives commit crimes for the same reason that has always crushed in on natives — too close contact with whites, and total inability to handle liquor.

A white man can become drunk and be nothing but a disgusting nuisance.

A bottle of whiskey can change an Aleut into a potential murderer. A woman who has shared a lifetime of living under the grey rain clouds with a harmless native can die in five minutes' time from a flurry of senseless blows delivered in a drunken frenzy.

Invariably the Judge will look with sympathy upon the natives. The two hundred years they have been in contact with white men have been nothing but an endless chain of disaster and tragedy.

When the Russian sailing ships first overhauled the islands and the scurvy-ridden white men waded ashore like bedraggled vultures, the Aleuts numbered 25,000. Forty years later only 2,000 remained alive, slaves to the Russians.

In one gory massacre that tinged the Bering Sea, 3,000 defenseless Aleuts died. One infamous Russian named Solovief tied twelve Aleuts in a tight line, then discharged a musket pointblank into the first man. The musket ball penetrated back to the ninth.

It is difficult for men seeking to enforce the law to become incensed at a band of people facing extinction. Tuberculosis and liquor are killing off the natives of Alaska. A vast majority are affected either by one or the other.

The judge uses care and common sense in handing out sentences. There are Alaskans who believe a native who deserves punishment will actually benefit by a year in the penitentiary. In that year he will receive good food, shelter, treatment for his tuberculosis, and medicine. Best of all, he will be cut off abruptly from liquor.

Sentences that might give a gleam of hope to a white man are automatically death sentences for Aleuts. Twenty years in the penitentiary will never be completed, for death from tuberculosis will come sooner.

Bringing the Floating Court out to the people in remote areas of the islands has always had a good effect. It ties in tiny communities to the mainland. The arrival of the Coast Guard cutter gives them a sense of really belonging to the United States. It helps keep order in the desolate region. Candidates for naturalization, faced by a long, time-wasting and expensive trip to the Federal Court at Anchorage, would be lost as

citizens if it were not for the coming of the Floating Court.

The Coast Guard cutter creeps on down the chain, past Umnak, Amukta, Atka and Adak. Past Amchitka and the Rat Islands, with the wind blowing, the cold rains lashing out, fog swirling in terrifying blankets. With the passage of a day or a day and a night, the cutter seeks anchorage, and a small boat bobs toward the shore, lost against a background dull brown and half-hearted green.

Drunkards, wife-beaters, thieves, murderers — the Floating Court seeks them out, and the judge sits in judgment, and the accused waits respectfully while the wind from the west cuts viciously across the open deck.

The law in the Aleutians. The ship that fought its way out to the chain of islands to seek a man waiting to hang.

The Floating Court.

THE MISTRESS OF CKU

(Continued from page 44)

matter nobody knew exactly when Lena's child was born.

In Lena's albums I noticed several photographs of the old wireless station, and faded snapshots, usually out of focus, of operators sitting at the 'phones, lounging outside the shack on summer days, or tinkering with boats and fishing gear down by the shore.

"You may have any that you want," Lena said indifferently. So I put aside a picture of the station for a souvenir. Then, in flicking over a few unused pages at the back of the second album I came upon a snapshot that arrested me. It was tucked away between the leaves as if forgotten, or perhaps to preserve it from fading, and it showed a young man leaning against the doorpost of a much-weathered wooden house. He was dressed as if for a shopping trip to Cod Harbor, wearing the absurd high collar, the long tight jacket and peg-top trousers of, say, 1914. His figure was strong and lean. His cap was in his hand and a wind was ruffling a mass of curly hair badly in need of a barber. He was smiling. It was Mark O'Hare.

"What became of him?"

"He was drowned on the Labrador, years ago."

"May I have it?" I said.

"No," she said quickly. "Not that one." I looked up and met her eyes, and saw in them a strange warm glow. It passed as quickly as it came. In a moment her eyes were like that ravaged face, expressionless. But I knew.

S. S. SAN PEDRO

By JAMES GOULD COZZENS

You are about to embark on a strange and terrifying voyage. James Gould Cozzen's haunting story will draw you into a private world known only to the passengers and crew of the San Pedro — a world in which an angry sea creates a mood of fear and anxiety.

Listen to the crashing waves pounding on the San Pedro's weather decks, to the staccato bursts of the radio operator's SOS, the shrieking wind that splinters wood and shatters glass along the exposed companionways . . . Huddled groups of women and children in the main lounge . . . the fearful chant of the Negro crewmen rising from the engine room . . .

And amid the terror and confusion echo Dr. Percival's prophetic words, "But you do not float quite level". . . .

I

JUNE 7th, Friday, in the morning, the twin-screw turbine liner *San Pedro*, seventeen thousand tons, lay at her Hoboken pier. To sail at noon on Brixton & Heath's Brazil-River Plate express service, she bore a million dollars in gold for the banking houses of the Argentine. Lashed on her forward well-deck, wedged in number one and number two upper holds, were automobiles, crated, for Montevideo. She carried two thousand tons of cash registers and baking-powder in tins, of cotton shirts and bath-tubs, of children's toys, agricultural implements, and a sealed consignment of machine guns for the government of Paraguay. Coal to bring her out and back loaded her down, overflowing into shelter-deck bunkers forward. Between ten o'clock and half past eleven she took on board one hundred and seventy-two passengers.

Aft, they had a boom out. Trunks were assembled by the half-ton in a corded net on the wharf floor. The boom picked

them up easily, swung them into the blaze of the sun. They dropped down number six hatch to the baggage rooms. Leaning on the rail of the light after-bridge, where he could watch from on high, waited Mr. Bradell, the senior second officer. Mr. Bradell's white-and-gold stood out clean on the heat-dulled blue. A seaman, also white-clad, scarlet semaphore flags thrust under his arm, waited with him, though they would not cast off, Miro knew, for almost an hour.

Miro, first quartermaster, was in direct charge on deck. Miro was Brazilian, coffee-coloured from the intense sun and his mixture of bloods, Indian and Negro. Clear and cheerful-eyed, his sound white teeth flashing, his head erect, covered by a mat of strong black curls which sweat had dampened, he was watching paternally over Packy, the big Jamaican Negro at the winch. Packy was dead drunk, unable to speak, but he remained mechanically precise. He and the winch met an abysmal level of brainless strength. Like boom on its gooseneck, Packy pivoted blindly on the small hard point of habit. Like the boom, he described invariably the same controlled semicircles.

Miro stayed behind him in case he should fall unconscious. He was the only person who could manage Packy, and managed by Miro, Packy was perfection. The quartermaster told him from time to time, in the rich chant of the black lingua franca of the islands. It was equivalent to oil in Packy's bearings and Packy was all right.

Confirming this, Miro shot his eyes up to the white skeleton of the after-bridge, thin on the blue, an eloquent glance to Mr. Bradell, who answered it with a slight mute nod. Miro's whistle shrilled out then, the winch gasped and clanked, the shadow of the boom went swiftly over, the empty net collapsed on the wharf floor. Things were tight, smart, going as they should go.

It was, in Miro's idiom, a matter of *tela*. Integrate with the Spanish sense of tone, texture, woven firmness was the untranslatable value of a plan, a sustained argument underlying a mode of behavior. It was wide enough to include that beautiful gift of the white man, the disciplined co-operation, speed, and precision of people quick and certain about their duties. This abstraction was the last, perfect pleasure, epitomized by Mr. Bradell in attention alert and quiet above; but, in addition, that a man might know he was good flesh as well as blessed spirit, there were the white uniforms against the sky, the sharp stripe of colour in the rolled signal-flags, the smell of hot tar, hot metal, hot salt, of steam

and oil and warm wet hemp.

Miro blew on his whistle, jubilant. From his pocket he took out a big gold watch covered with engraved scrolls, a piece of a ruby set on top, the stem fastened to a gold fob, and its magnificence testified to him against the rightness of the world. He worked long and saved, he was quick and quiet, he did not do every foolish thing he thought of, and in the end, with his own money, he could buy such a watch. He looked at it now and noted that it was exactly eleven o'clock. The tugs, he saw, were already off the end of the pier, and with the pleasure of going so soon seaward, he put the watch carefully away, happier if possible than he had been. To Packy, he began to sing, throaty and soft, "Hail, Mary, full of grace. . . ."

At five minutes past eleven Miro's intelligent eye caught the flicker of the signalman's flags, gay against the serene heavens, answering the navigating bridge. Mr. Bradell turned. He came handily down the ladder, crossing over into the shadows. To Miro he said, "Mr. Fenton will stand by here."

The fourth officer was even then descending from the promenade-deck. Mr. Bradell spoke to him a moment before he mounted quickly out of Miro's sight.

Anthony Bradell, passing the smoking-room doors, avoided the approving glances of two girls. His brown face, at once too thin, too bluntly shaped for any handsomeness, looked none the less like the passenger's idea of a navigating officer. He knew the girls were still watching him as he climbed again to the boat-deck. From the bridge end the quartermaster on duty there hailed him as he came closer. "Captain Clendening is in his cabin, Mr. Bradell."

Anthony passed the windows of the wireless-room, saw the first and second operators playing checkers, and raised his hand to the redheaded one. At the passage-door forward he reached in and knocked up the hook which held it ajar. On the captain's door he rapped sharply.

In Captain Clendening's cabin an electric fan vibrated. A tepid shaft of air twitched left to right in a slow arc from the high corner. The captain's radio, muted down, recited intricate directions for some sort of cooking. He must have forgotten to turn it off, not noticing.

Heavy in his white-and-gold, Captain Clendening sat in the swivel chair, back to his desk. He was feeling the terrible waterside heat, Anthony decided, for the captain looked obscurely pale. Wind, tan, years of exposure had given his face a permanent rich colour, but this lay now over his

cheeks like a surface veneer. Clinging to the sides of his head, his hair, usually a harsh white fur, looked weak and damp. His old blue eyes, always marred by a droop on the left, were unnaturally listless. An early injury to his jaw — Anthony had learned that it was from a thrown marlinespike — made itself felt more and more as the captain grew older, and most to-day. His right brow arched up and round and steep; the left lay flat. The left corner of the mouth sank in a lump outstanding toward his stubborn chin. Over his mouth, strongly set even in this sag, he grew a short moustache, white, like the fur along his head. He looked at Anthony with an obvious sharp approval.

"Mr. Bradell, our senior second officer," he said, addressing the man on the settee along the wall. "Only sailor on board. God help him. Had his master's papers five years. Just waiting for me to die so the company will have a ship for him." His voice rumbled authentically, but the unwieldy humour was flattened, almost exhausted. It would be impudent, as well as unthinkable, Anthony admitted, to suggest that Mr. Driscoll, the chief officer, be allowed to take the *San Pedro* out. Fortunately, ignorant of his thought, Captain Clendening continued: "Bradell, my friend Doctor Percival wants to look the ship over. You can show him about I guess. Fenton get aft all right?"

"Yes, sir," said Anthony at once. He was blank with astonishment at the inopportunity of the request and he turned sharply toward this man for whom the captain was willing to upset all reasonable routine.

Doctor Percival sat quiet, looking back at Anthony with an accurate, absorbed attention. Doctor Percival's tight face was fleshless, almost gray. His lips sank in, rounded over his teeth. They were lips so scanty that you could see the line of the teeth meeting. His eyes, red-rimmed, lay limp in their sockets, appearing to have no colour at all. Doctor Percival's intense pale gaze come out of the holes covered with soft, semi-transparent lenses. His head, one observed, jolted, was utterly hairless, and a pale reddish star, a mark like a healed wound, lay across the crown. Every modulation of bone showed through a sere leaf of old skin.

Doctor Percival recognized Anthony's instinctive recoil from this fearful face, and just as obviously prepared to overlook it, indifferent; but he was betrayed by a sudden muscular movement. The whole hollow countenance winced a little, the lips twitched wide in a grimace most like a broken and derisive smile. Anthony stood frozen, for Doctor Percival's eyes denied the expres-

sion any significance. It was involuntary; it might, Anthony saw, happen again at any moment. Doctor Percival, with a dignity terrible and silent, held out a gray glove whose palm was dark with moisture. Anthony took it in his own bare brown hand, which he closed hard on the slight, cloth-covered fingers. It was a grip half iron and bone-breaking, but Doctor Percival did not appear to notice. Anthony levelled his gaze out, made his brown eyes look straight into Doctor Percival's colourless ones, and said: "Glad to show you around, Doctor Percival."

He turned at once and opened the door. If he did not feel well, the captain had seen more than enough of that face. Thinking so, Anthony was embarrassed to realize that Doctor Percival somehow understood him, as though he had spoken every word aloud. Doctor Percival was shaking hands with the captain. He said in an exact, highly educated voice: "Take care of yourself until I see you again, John. There is nothing you need to do now." He put his shabby black hat on, stepping out into the passage. Captain Clendening merely nodded. "Good of you to come down, doctor," he said. "Go aft when you finish, Bradell," he added. "Don't like to leave that boy there alone."

Doctor Percival had turned, defeating absolutely Anthony's desire to bring him out on the sunny deck. They went together down the inside stairs at the end. Anthony asked carefully: "What would you like to see, sir?"

He attracted to himself that acute gaze. "I really do not know," Doctor Percival confessed. "It is some time since I have been on a ship —" It was coming, Anthony saw. The broken smile made a kind of irrelevant joke of his last words. Anthony tightened his lips, expressionless.

In the silence ensuing, Doctor Percival, his voice low, said: "But you do not float quite level, do you?"

Astonished, Anthony noticed for the first time that they had, in fact, a slight port list. "We straighten up when we get under weigh," he explained. "We can correct it with the ballast-tanks."

"No danger of tipping over?" asked Doctor Percival.

"Oh, no," said Anthony. "When we're heavily loaded it takes a little adjustment."

"Many passengers?" asked his companion. His voice faded to a husky whisper.

"I don't know exactly," admitted Anthony, resisting the natural temptation to speak low in return. "I should say a hundred and fifty or more."

"And how many men to run the boat?"

"You mean officers?"

"Altogether."

"Oh, we have a crew of two hundred odd."

"Then you carry perhaps four hundred people? It must be a great responsibility?"

Anthony said: "We try to take care of them."

They had been advancing through an alley-way, going aft, which led them out by the purser's office in the main entry. Here it was crowded, confused and noisy.

"The purser's office," Anthony explained needlessly. "The lounge, the public rooms, and so on above. The dining-room is below, there."

Doctor Percival nodded slowly. He looked about him with meticulous attention. He might have been afraid that he was going to overlook something of real importance. "These are passengers, I suppose?" he said.

"Mostly," agreed Anthony.

"Ah," said Doctor Percival. Anthony snapped his eyes away, detecting the start of that horrid trembling about the mouth. Doctor Percival, he knew now, could not continue speaking until it was past. Anthony had time to notice again the two girls who had admired him aft. One of them was going to smile this time, so he looked back to Doctor Percival. Other people had begun to observe them, considering Doctor Percival's fleshless face and shabby clothes with a sort of electric consternation. Anthony exerted a slight pressure on his companion's arm. "We can go down to the dining-room," he said.

"It would be interesting to see them all eating," Doctor Percival agreed.

"Oh, they're not eating now," answered Anthony. "They don't serve luncheon until after we sail." Anxious to get Doctor Percival out of the lobby, he had been prepared to assist him downstairs. The firmness of the man's step abashed him. Doctor Percival, Anthony realized, was not exactly old. He was simply not young. And far from being weak, he had an unexpected inert strength. His steps fell heavy as stones, despite his slight appearance.

"This is the dining-room," said Anthony.

"Ah," said Doctor Percival, "that is interesting. Would it be possible to see the machinery?"

Anthony hesitated, at the dining-room doors. Here the chief steward was assigning tables to a line of people waiting, and all these seemed to turn at once, attracted by those steps on the stairs. They gaped at Doctor Percival. "Yes," said Anthony, deciding to risk Mr. MacGillvray's annoyance, if only he could get his companion out of the way somewhere. "We could stop in a moment. We could look at the engines from above. They're pretty busy now, of course."

They went down the alleyway.

"We just step in here," Anthony said. "I'm afraid you'll be pretty warm, sir. Would you like to take your overcoat off?"

"No, no," said Doctor Percival. "I don't feel heat."

Anthony twisted the iron handle. Up to them almost overwhelming, came the hot oily breath, the surge of sound in the engine-roomshaft. Anthony closed the door and they stood together on the landing outside the chief engineer's office. Anthony glanced in fleetingly, saw Mr. MacGillvray sitting at his desk, the shirt on his back soaked with patches of sweat, his sleeves rolled up on his big freckled arms. He was busy with some papers.

Doctor Percival put his gloved hands on the rail.

"That's dirty, I'm afraid, sir," warned Anthony, raising his voice. "There really isn't much to see. They're warming up the turbines now. Those are the turbines there, those big green things."

"Ah," nodded Doctor Percival. Anthony's face hardened, but he held his eyes unwavering. "They supply the power, I presume," Doctor Percival said. His harsh whisper was entirely clear, neither lower nor louder than it had seemed outside.

"Of course, there's an astern turbine, too," Anthony shouted, "Not much to see —"

The chief was coming out of his office. He paused surprised, and stared at Anthony coldly. "Just showing a friend of the captain's what we've got," Anthony said. "Doctor Percival, this is Mr. MacGillvray, the chief engineer."

Mr. MacGillvray gave him one steady look. He put out a hand with enlarged knuckles covered by loose freckled skin and hosts of pale hairs. He closed it like a trap on Doctor Percival's glove. "Sorry I haven't more time," he said briefly. Disturbing his resemblance to a mild and friendly bloodhound, his face began to harden. It hung free from the cheek-bones, but stiffly now. In the folds, stubbed with two day's blond beard, his mouth was usually lost. Now his lips pouted out solidly. Pale china blue, his eyes peered with a candid dislike beneath his big brows. Even the skin of his forehead, white from three decaded under electric lights, coloured a little in gathering irritation.

Doctor Percival ignored this change. "Are they very powerful?" he inquired huskily. He made a fragmentary gesture toward the turbine cases.

After a little while Mr. MacGillvray roared: "Oh, we get twelve thousand shaft horse power." He started brusquely to go down the steps. Then he halted. He made it plain that he considered this visitor an emergency

requiring his presence. He waited while Doctor Percival neither said anything nor moved. Finally Mr. MacGillvray raised a hand and shouted: "Mr. Forsay! Ask can we try!"

Below, a head, in a dirty white cap, which had been studying the micrometers tilted up a face and yelled back: "Ask to try, sir." It turned then and bent over the desk toward the bridge telephone.

"What is it you are going to do now?" Doctor Percival asked.

"See if we work," said the chief bluntly.

"Try away, sir!" sang up the voice.

"Port engine, Mr. Forsay!"

"Port engine, sir."

"They do always work, I suppose," observed Doctor Percival. He removed his hat and Mr. MacGillvray almost stepped back, seeing the hairless skull and the jagged reddish star. "Never know till they do," he said swallowing.

The three of them stood there, staring down in silence, as though they awaited a sign or a miracle. A bell clashed out; simultaneously signal-lights winked red. At once, like the first man breathed out by God, the *San Pedro* was coming alive. From her own boilers the unspeakable breath of superheated steam inspired her. Strong as ten thousand horses it broke out in the steel vitals of the port turbine. With stunning impact, it ricochetted, smashing off the stationary vanes. It impinged like a hundred sledge-hammers on the converse rotor blades. Now, you might think, the *San Pedro* contracted its mighty muscles and girded its loins. The shaft-barrel, locked in the ponderous triple grip of the balancing pistons, steadied to a frustrated quiver. It strained titanically. It yielded. Twisting their film of oil to a lather, the journal-bearings revolved. The great thrust-bearing braced in obdurate mastery. Far astern, dim in the water beyond the hull, over went the big blades of the port-propeller. The *San Pedro* winced ahead in her moorings.

Mr. MacGillvray turned his eyes coldly on Doctor Percival. "They work," he snapped, and while he spoke Doctor Percival's face twitched, the mouth broke to pieces. Mr. MacGillvray stared at him.

"Port engine okay, sir," shouted up Mr. Forsay.

"You a passenger?" asked Mr. MacGillvray, paying no attention.

"No," said Doctor Percival. He opened the door himself and stepped into the alleyway.

"Listen!" Mr. MacGillvray roared to Anthony. "Don't you know any better than to bring these dumb-bells in when we're warming up, son? Down here, we work. And furthermore, I don't like your friend. Now get out!"

Anthony stepped, flushed and warm, into the alleyway, too. He closed the door. Doctor Percival was looking at him with absorbed colourless attention, and Anthony said, flustered: "The chief's pretty sharp-tongued. He doesn't mean anything though."

Doctor Percival whispered: "I do not blame him. He has a great responsibility, after all, keeping those engines. You would be entirely helpless without them, wouldn't you?"

"We'd be in a bad way," Anthony admitted. "Did you say you wanted to go ashore, sir?"

They came up the stairs by the dining-room and through the press of the main entry. The third officer was at the head of the gangway. He looked at Anthony and then at his companion and whistled soundlessly. "Ready to put off, Mr. Bradell," he said.

"Yes, I must go," said Doctor Percival. A light somewhat more distinct came into the pale holes of his lensed eyes. "The Captain," he said very low to Anthony, "is an old man, Mr. Bradell."

"What did you say, sir?" asked Anthony, taken aback.

"People grow old, Mr. Bradell. They break down, they wear out."

"If you consider him worn out, sir," said Anthony sharply, "you're wrong. You can ask the ship's doctor about that."

"I have no interest in the opinion of ships' doctors," whispered Doctor Percival. He closed his eyes a moment. "I am merely mentioning a fact."

"It isn't my place to discuss anything like that with you, sir," said Anthony.

"This is not a discussion, Mr. Bradell," said Doctor Percival.

"I am afraid I must go," said Anthony.

"Yes," said DoctorPercival,unannoyed, "you must. So must I."

"Second gong's gone, Mr. Bradell," called the third officer, impatient.

Doctor Percival made no effort either to thank him or to shake hands. He had not halted a moment while he was speaking. Now his unhurried progress simply bore him on, leaving Anthony behind. The sun, slanting almost perpendicular behind the edge of the wharf roof and the *San Pedro's* side, lay hot on the slope of the gang plank. Doctor Percival's black figure moved there, passed on; was lost in deep shadows ashore.

The third officer whistled again, audibly this time. Anthony turned aft to take over Mr. Fenton's charge.

In the sun of the deck below he passed Miro and the carpenter's mate busy with the hatch covers. At the top of the ladder Mr. Fenton touched his cap smartly. The semaphore flags awoke on

the navigating bridge. "We'll cast off," nodded Anthony. Mr. Fenton said: "We've got quite a list, haven't we?"

"Straighten it up under weigh" — Anthony started to say, but the great rising roar of *San Pedro's* whistle thundered into the sky to drown him out.

II

Steady and strong through the infinite ocean twilight the *San Pedro* maintained her seventeen knots. The vital quiver of her engines gave her a mounting wave of vibration, like a piano feeling the pedal. Her warm untroubled breath trembled up her shafts and ventilators. She was calm in the lucid radiance of her early lights. Around the dining-room a whole half-deck of her stirred with more intense activity. In the balcony the orchestra was gathering; by the buffet the chief steward was checking the flowers on many tables. He made a sign to his assistant that the doors might be opened when he heard the gong. Aft, the smoking-room was murmuring, expansive in crowded comfort; ice rattled in the bright bar; mild air moved in the doors open on the deck behind. Seen from here, the smoke filled mast with the hidden glow of the running light, the booms laid down, the dim sunset radiance remaining on the steerage superstructure, all rose and fell together gently. Astern, the quiet ocean, neither blue nor black, extended in limitless ease to the faintly coloured horizon, darkening now to evening at the end of the *San Pedro's* steady white wake.

On the navigating bridge, Mr. Eberly, the junior second officer, had the watch. A helmsman was planted at the wheel. A quartermaster with folded arms stared away into the dusk behind him. In the chart-room behind, Captain Clendening wrote the night orders under the glow of a green-shaded lamp. Calculations from the wireless-room informed him of the vessels to be met or overtaken before morning, and the approximate times they would come abreast. He noted them down one after another as a caution to the watch officer. Many of these ships he knew; on two of them the masters were old acquaintances. Thinking about these friends, he wrote more slowly. The overwhelming monotony and weariness of the sea weighed him down. Bound north, bound south, the same ships, the same men were always passing. On his own ship, when he went to dinner, passengers impossible to distinguish from a thousand others, doubly regimented by what the company considered importance, would be at his table — all the same; only their names

would be different. In many cases the names might be the same and he must recall previous voyages, details of personality and business. He pressed the buzzer. The quartermaster came, took the sheet and posted it on the bridge board. Muffled, the metallic throb of the hammered dinner-gong rose, but Captain Clendening remained motionless, wondering how many more voyages he would be good for, and what would be left then but death, so slow, so horribly swift.

Below, on the engine-room shaft, Mr. MacGillvray sat in his office. He was vigorously scrubbed and shaved. His uniform coat was buttoned neatly over his round belly. He wore a low stiff collar and a black silk tie. While he glanced at the afternoon reports he cleaned his fingernails, digging slowly and methodically with a pocket-file. Placid, clean, and comfortable, he was pleased at the thought of a tableful of new people who would presently await him in the dining-room. He took time to rehearse one or two of the suitcase anectodes which had served him well in twenty trips. All the while up to him poured the fine steam and steel symphony of full-ahead. His big ears, with the pale blond hairs growing out of them, cocked to it invisibly, he was exhilarated by the perfect correctness of its blended noises. In his mind's eye this peace of good performance took the envisoned shape of the long submarine shaft alleys, their spaced electric lights winking on the great shafts revolving. Liquid with oil, brighter than silver, they spun serenely on their bearings, ninety times a minute.

The dinner-gong aroused him and he arose contentedly, giving his nails one last critical inspection. He stopped and waved his hand to the watch officer below to show that he was leaving. Then he pulled in his stomach as far as it would go, straighted his shoulders. His face began to beam with urbane anticipation; and out he went sedately.

In the fire-room, like almost heroic figures against the hell of the swung-open doors, the clack gang stood to its furnaces. Wheelbarrows from the bunker chutes rattled on the steel flooring. Covers rang successively shut. The chief fireman swigged down a half-pint of tepid tea, retaining some of it to spit sizzling on the hot iron. Swinging his gorilla arms, rolling up his eyes, the crazy man called Quail balanced his shovel handle and began to intone hoarse organ notes which suddenly merged into the "St. Louis Blues." The Haitian Negroes simply stared at him, but those from the Barbadoes and Jamaica had picked up the words and felt the long sad pull of the

music. They wiped their foreheads and raised their voices. The chief fireman said: "Never mind that, Bo! All you got to do is work." But there was no sense in trying to tell Quail anything. The only things he could understand, he knew already — food, liquor, and shovelling. Just under the roar of the fans, the forced drafts, and the clamour of the moving machinery their chant rose in a musical thick moan, a muffled lament fading between the great over-jutting boilers. The chief fireman, his eyes sternly on the dials, gave way after a moment and moaned with them.

In his cabin Anthony Bradell was shaving. His face was half-covered with lather and he held his razor motionless from time to time, listening to Miro, who stood stiffly in the corner at a sort of attention. Miro continued: "Six four are twenty-four; six five are thirty; six six are forty-two —"

"Try again," grunted Anthony.

"Thirty-six, sir," responded Miro, inspired. He had been many months on the multiplication tables, for he could see no reason to hurry. Mr. Bradell thought a quartermaster ought to be working for a third mate's license, but Miro knew it would be useless to him, since he meant to remain in Brixton & Heath's employ as long as Mr. Bradell was on a Brixton & Heath ship. The company could never advance anyone with Negro blood. Miro understood this perfectly and it did not trouble him, for he had no desire to be advanced. Life gave him now everything he wanted and penalized him not at all. He even enjoyed trying to learn mathematics, not through any desire to determine latitude by meridian altitude, but because such activity was *tela;* something stern and difficult to be done, unspoiled by any completion or end in view. In time, if Mr. Bradell's patience should seem to wear thin, he would make an effort for Mr. Bradell's sake and submit to examinations. He was not alarmed at the possibility of passing. Mr. Bradell would not want him to stop there. The requirements for a second mate's papers might legitimately be made into the work of centuries. Miro could, he was calmly sure, never learn anything about longitude by chronometer. Deviation of the compass by an amplitude or an azimuth would be certainly impossible. He must be old, probably dead, before he satisfied Mr. Bradell about them. Concluding his recitation he smiled eloquently and said: "I will study them again, sir."

"It will come easier," promised Anthony, who thought he might be discouraged. "Better turn in now. You've had a hard day."

"Good night, sir," agreed Miro. He was happy to have made so

little progress. "Thank you very much, sir."

There was starlight on the forward deck. Here Miro leaned a moment on the rail, feeling the moist wind in his face, watching the soft sea break open about the *San Pedro's* advancing stem, filming up her prow and falling off. She was constructed with very little freeboard, so the water was close and fast. He noticed that she still listed slightly. This displeased him. As they said in the islands, where they had picked it up from the Royal Navy, it was not "tidily."

He entered the door at last and went to find Packy. As he expected, Packy was half off his bunk. With a tolerant shove of his foot he pushed Packy securely against the wall, for he expected it to blow up before morning. Then he bent down and searched underneath until he found the corked gin bottle. This he took, to lock in his own box, so the boatswain would not find it and throw it overboard. Packy would need miserably one stiff drink sometime during the forenoon. In a position to bargain with him, Miro could force Packy to assign him all his money. Then Packy, ashore in the south, could not get mixed up with some woman who might make him miss the boat.

In the quartermaster's bunkroom Miro stripped to his underwear, wrapped himself in a blanket, and lay staring up in the dim light. Contented he recommended himself to the Cuban Virgin of Cobre, to San Juan de Matha, and to San Pedro Tomas, all of whom had kindly superintended men at sea.

Left alone, Anthony Bradell finished his shaving. A fresh uniform lay on his bunk and he considered it without pleasure while he put away his shaving things, resorting his cabin to its brutally bare and immaculate good order. It was an idea of the company that some officers not on duty should go down after dinner when the passengers were dancing in the widened waist of the promenade-deck and make themselves agreeable. On most of the company's vessels leadership in this fell conveniently to the chief officer, who stood no watch. Mr. Driscoll of the *San Pedro* was not a success socially. Captain Clendening had selected Anthony instead. He did not, he told his senior second officer when he gave the order, know what the hell the sea had come to, but the *San Pedro* might as well make as good a showing as possible. Anthony could leave at ten o'clock, and he needn't come on to the morning watch until four bells on such nights. Mr. Fenton, who acted as his junior watch-officer, was perfectly competent.

Anthony agreed about his fourth officer's competence. He did not consider sleep precisely a vice, but any concern about it failed to fit in with the efficient asceticism he had brought himself to practice. He would continue to be called as usual.

The captain, perfectly aware of this, added in a better temper that Anthony would report to the captain's cabin at ten. "First thing you know," he explained with a grimly bawdy sardonicism, "you'll be up on the boat-deck with some little piece in skirts."

It was his method of chiding an exaggerated stiffness in Anthony's attitude. He drove the point home by pulling down from the small row of books the Revised Statutes. He bent the volume open to Section 280 and asked him ironically to consider the fate of the erring officer ". . . who 'during the voyage under promise of marriage, or by threats, or in the exercise of authority, or solicitation —' that includes standing around in uniform, boy," he interpolated, "— 'or the making of gifts or presents, seduces and has illicit connection with any female passenger, shall be fined not more than one thousand dollars, or imprisoned for not more than one year . . .' Or both," he added. "Hardly ever worth it."

Anthony agreed with composure. Like himself, the captain was an inarticulate man. On the rare occasions when he chose to soften his formal attitude he could resort only to this gruff and tortuous humour. It expressed for him a paternal affection, of which his long training at sea made him instinctively avoid any show. Anthony, who was more attached to him and respected him more than any other human being, understood. Captain Clendening, knowing he did, put the relationship away with the book, snapped closed and returned to the shelf. "That's all, Mr. Bradell," he said. "I'll expect you to stand by below on quiet evenings."

Anthony said: "Yes, sir."

He had been doing it for over a year now. By degrees his customary thoroughness made him an adequate dancer, but it was merely a matter of discipline. The fact remained that it was a silly thing for a seaman to be doing.

To-night he considered with positive apprehension those two girls who had first seen him aft and then again with Doctor Percival in the entry. They would be enthusiastic dancers. He could only hope that during the afternoon they might have attached some desirable males who would monopolize them.

The watch had changed and Mr. Eberly, coming belatedly to

his quarters, stuck in his round face and said: "Going to knock them dead, Bradell?"

This was perhaps the two hundred and fiftieth repetition of that question, so Anthony didn't think it needed an answer. Mr. Eberly usually came down himself and liked it, so Anthony said: "You'd better get going. You might miss some of it. Couple of kids I'm going to see you meet."

"Thanks," said Mr. Eberly. "Dumb-looking lot of women on this trip."

Dimly from the lower deck dance music beat up now and Mr. Eberly withdrew. Anthony, severely non-committal, went out. At the wireless-room he paused. "What do you get?" he asked, standing into the light of the door.

Morris, the second operator, was on duty. A cigarette sagged out of the corner of his mouth. One of his head phones was pushed up, resting against his reddish hair. The other dug tight into his left ear. "Plenty," he grunted. "Bad weather south. Force seven and getting worse. We'll catch it, I guess. Had the *San Pablo* for a few minutes. The old man wanted to know where they were. Finally got a QRN off them. You'd think they were in China. Tell your girl friends they'll all be sick tomorrow."

"Right with me," said Anthony. "Hurry it up if you can."

"You're just a minor error," sighed Morris. "I wish I could see some women without a grill to protect them."

Anthony moved down the deck. The *San Pedro's* funnel was steaming against the stars. He felt the warm blast of the engine-room shaft, and then the mild ocean air, as he turned in the stairs. Japanese lanterns had been strung along the deck. He advanced into this dusk, standing near the orchestra in the corner. The two girls, who had gotten into elaborate dinner dresses, noticed him at once, but the press of people dancing interfered with their advance. They managed it gradually around the edges, arm in arm, until they stood beside him with an appearance of accident so preposterous that Anthony groaned inwardly and gave way. "Nice evening isn't it?" he said.

"Do you run this ship?" inquired the blonde one engagingly, "because if you do, I wish you'd fix it."

"It's completely cockeyed," her companion informed him more calmly. "It doesn't sit straight. You don't notice it much until you try to dance. Then you just slide over to the rail." Her eyebrows rose miraculously slim and black. She used a heavy warm scent, some modification of the patchouli Anthony associated with the segregated districts of

the southern ports. She ought to be spanked, he decided; but he said in the manner he had developed for the passengers: "I'll speak to the captain about it. I wouldn't be surprised if he had it fixed by morning."

He could dance with her, if he liked, she announced negligently. "Clara won't mind. There comes her brother. If I only knew your name I could introduce him to you, couldn't I?"

Anthony met a frail, blond young man with a minimum of mild chin. The name proved to be Mills. The girl called Clara took her brother's arm and said: "Come back to the smoking-room when you finish and have a drink. That means you, Mr. Bradell."

"I'll be delighted to come back," Anthony said stiffly, "But I'm afraid it isn't customary for us to drink."

"The custom should be changed," said the dark girl, "But you do dance?"

"You don't know my name," she added, fitting herself to him with graceful completeness and precision, "It's Marilee." It would be, Anthony decided, morose. "You have only one name, I suppose," she went on. The wan warm scent of the brothels of Rio enveloped him. "What would I do with an extra one?" he asked. Her hair came up against his gold epaulet, her lips parted slightly. "Does your sweetheart call you Bradell?" she inquired. "This music isn't bad, considering what makes it. You'd have quite a nice little boat here if you could only get it to stand straight."

"It takes you there and back," answered Anthony.

"You dance divinely, don't you?" she said. "If we only had decent music and a decent floor you'd be marvelous. Am I going to like Buenos Aires?"

"No way of knowing," said Anthony.

"You mean you don't know what I like. That's odd. I feel as though I knew all about you — er —, Bradell."

This was more than his painfully developed passenger manner could handle, Anthony admitted, provoked. As to what she liked, if her dancing were any indication, that wouldn't be hard. His mind supplied it, curt, unprintable. He remembered, not with a pleasure in its rigidity, his duty to the passengers. For seeing that this Marilee creature enjoyed her trip so much that Brixton & Heath's competitors didn't get her return passage, he supposed grimly, that he was responsible. In his customary pride of self-control he said: "The name is Anthony."

"Too late," she answered. "I like Bradell better. There! There isn't any more. Thanks, loads, Bradell. Let's get a drink."

She detached herself from him

with a soft reluctance, sliding an arm through his and turning him aft. "Everyone will think I've made a conquest," she said. "Only you and I will know how false it is."

At least, Anthony realized, he was being spared the worst feature of this busniess, which was having to say something. She was apparently considering his silence, for she asked now: "Have you really a sweetheart somewhere you're afraid you won't be true to? Or do you just hate women? Or are you queer?"

"Just queer," said Anthony briefly.

Her laughter spilled around the corner. "Bradell," she said, "I don't believe it."

"Don't believe what!" he asked embarrassed.

"Queer." She laughed again.

Anthony went scarlet. "You're pretty loose with your language, aren't you?" he said impotently.

"Awful," she agreed. "I have to be to make any impression on you, Bradell. How can I help where I lose my heart?" She brought him into the smoking-room, up to a table where the blonde girl and Mr. Mills sat drinking. "I expect I'd better get back," Anthony said.

"Sit down, Bradell," said Marilee, "or I'll scream."

She easily might, Anthony decided. On the whole it might be simpler to sit down. She ordered a stinger. "A split of vichy," Anthony answered Mr. Mills question.

"I'm glad to see there's no drunkenness among the ship's officers," Marilee sighed, leaning forward on her elbows. "You aren't drunk, are you Bradell?"

Miss Mills seemed to think this was funny, but her brother looked thoroughly disapproving. Anthony was surprised to see how disreputable Mr. Mills's absence of chin made disapproval. He couldn't share it as heartily as he wished. "Only speak lower," he requested. "Tomorrow the captain will be asking me whether there's so much smoke with no fire."

She, personally, said Marilee, would reassure the captain. Nothing she had ever seen was so proper as Bradell. "By the way," she went on, frowning, "who was that — er — old gentleman in black I saw you with?"

"A friend of the captain's," Anthony answered, startled.

"He's not on board, is he?"

"No. He went ashore."

"That's fine," she nodded. "I thought I saw him to-night. He gave me the willies. I'm not fooling you, Bradell. I darn near marched ashore. I'll bet I'll see him in my dreams. You don't suppose he was dead do you?"

"Certainly not," said Anthony, staggered. "His name's Doctor Percival. He —"

"Never mind. I don't want to hear any more," she said sharply. "He ought to be buried. He hasn't any business scaring me to death. Bradell, I don't like to meet corpses walking around. It means something awful is going to happen to me."

"Don't be silly," said Anthony with unconscious directness. "I understood he wasn't well. That's why he looked —"

"Keep still, Bradell," she begged, "I know all about that. One more dance and I'll let you go — for to-night."

He arose and she came and took his arm. Outside she drew him a minute to the rail, gazing down at the lights on the flying water, the dim white crests of the outrushing hull waves. "Looks cool," she remarked.

"Keep out of it," said Anthony. "It costs us a lot of money to stop."

"I'll keep out of it," she agreed. "God, Bradell, I'd hate to drown. No fooling."

Anthony approached the wireless-room again. Couch, the night operator, was just relieving Morris. Morris stepped out on deck. "Hi, Bradell," he said. "Look where you're taking us."

They both glanced up at the thickening sky, starless now. Underfoot, the *San Pedro* was beginning to feel the sea. Her smooth fore-and-aft motion swung off-centre deliberately, beginning a roll. From the starboard bow an occasional faint crash of jostled water reached them.

"Better put the cork in," said Morris. "They're going to shake us well before using."

"Maybe not," said Anthony. "We're headed pretty well out. Taken your Mother Sills?"

"And expected to live," nodded Morris. "Hold on a minute. Going to see the old man? I got the *San Pablo* again. Maybe he'd like to hear they have nothing to report. "Couch," he called, "let's have that last bridge report." He reached through the window. "There you are," he said. "Get it to Garcia."

Anthony went forward. The wind, coming up, made the passage-door hard to open. The captain was lying on his berth, magazine in his hands, the reading-light in the corner on. A half-consumed cigar was locked in his teeth. He had got into his pajamas and a brilliant silk dressing-gown. The light above and behind him cast deep shadows over his eyes. He had his radio on, very quiet, and a low throb of dance music from New York filled the cigar-hazed air. "Where's the *San Pablo?*" he asked. Anthony handed him the slip. "They ought to be farther along," the captain said fretfully.

"Want them for something, sir?"

"No, no." Captain Clendening threw the magazine aside. "What good are they?"

The cigar had gone out. "Light, sir?" said Anthony, picking up a matchbox.

"Never mind, boy," said Captain Clendening. "Smoke too much. Something wrong with my guts."

"Suppose I fix you some bicarb, sir?"

"No good." Captain Clendening ran a hand irritably through the white fur above his ear. "I've got to take care of myself, I guess." He was silent a moment. From New York the foxtrot beat on, smooth and sweet. "Nice music," he said, noticing it. "How's it out?"

"Blowing up, sir."

"I felt it," he nodded. "Where do you suppose we get this list from? Ring up the engine-room and see if we're making any."

Astonished, Anthony took the engine-room telephone.

"Captain wants your bilge soundings," he said. "Ring back."

We've got a good load, sir," he continued.

"I guess so," said the captain. "Saw we were wetting our marks."

"Not much, sir," protested Anthony, astonished again. "Nothing much. That's the wharfinger's fault. He —"

"Don't you believe that, boy!" roared Captain Clendening. "Don't let me hear you say things like that. You're a sailor, not a steward."

Anthony coloured a little. "I meant," he ventured, "we seem to have to take what we can get, sir."

Captain Clendening kerded his head, twitching his moustache. "Don't feel well," he said more mildly. "You mustn't pay any attention to it. Felt like snapping some one's head off, and you were here, that's all. Great thing to have your youth, boy. You can't keep it, but you ought to think about it sometimes. No point in sleeping through."

The telephone buzzed. Anthony took it up. Turning from it, he said: "They're dry, sir."

"Well, tell them to pump out number two port ballast-tank before morning. Got to straighten us up. God knows what could happen, running into a gale this way."

Anthony returned to the telephone. He must have shown his amazement at concern so exaggerated, for the captain's low left eye winked in a sort of embarrassment. The sagging lump on that side of his chin stood out more. He grunted: "When your insides go bad on you it shakes you all up. Just little things. They all get together and you — all of a sudden you see you aren't going to live forever. I'm damned if I know why anyone at sea to-day

wants to live at all, but you do, you do." He bit the dead cigar, the stiff bristles of his moustache touching it. "You don't like going out, boy. Sort of cold. Sort of lonely. Well, we all got to do it."

The bright blaze of light in the corner, the smoke-filmed air, the harsh photographs of ships — former commands of Captain Clendening's, some lost in the war, some broken up — and especially the captain himself, his hard face puffy in a relaxed brooding, his lumpy form bent a little under the gay silk of the dressing-gown, repeated louder than his words: cold, lonely, old. "They break down," Anthony remembered, "they wear out."

Now at this bleak moment, the dim contented blare of dance-music fluctuated, feeling the stronger atmospherics. It sagged like a long thread, dipped down, and the mighty ocean covered it in silence. It drew taut again, came fleetingly into earshot, and then it parted. The *San Pedro* drew away in the immense abyss of the winds, in the caverns of black water. Only, the *San Pedro* was built for stress; the great turbines turning could never grow tired; the renewed watch above was always sleepless. Men, it seemed to Anthony, were not well made for living. Energy, power, the vital confidence, grew low as the void grew larger, the ocean mightier and more immense. Eyes wore out with watching; they neither saw nor cared finally —

The *San Pedro* lurched, put her prow hard into rising water, shook from stem to stern. Spray fanned up, curved with the wind and fell in a rippling tap on the starboard ports.

"Took a deep one," said Anthony, rousing himself.

"Turn in boy," said the Captain. "We'll have a wet night."

"Suppose I take a turn around and see that all's secure."

"No. Driscoll did it. Get sleep, boy. Turn in. Forget about it. May run out by morning."

"Why don't I ask the Doctor to step in a moment, sir? He could give you something for your stomach and you'd get a good rest."

"You saw my doctor here this morning," said Captain Clendening. "He knows all about me. He said I ought to be careful. But there wasn't anything to do. I expect I'll rest all right, boy. I'll rest."

III

Miro had to drop his oilskins. He caught the hand-rail on the wall, extended the other hand and found Mr. Bradell's shoulder. He shook hard. "One bell, sir," he announced. "Thick weather. Gale from south. Sea High. Temperature, forty-seven."

Anthony sat up at once, swung his legs out and rubbed his eyes.

"Wet on the bridge, sir," said Miro. He held on to the rail.

"Let's have a light," Anthony said.

The *San Pedro*, with a sort of wanton fury, must have shouldered a hill of water off her bows. She shuddered distractedly, she seemed to jump up and down. A hundred sharp sounds of her rebelling frame rose in chorus. Like resolutely planted kicks the throb of her engines hit her behind. Caught thus between two hardly resistible forces, the *San Pedro* staggered sideways, the floor tilted, the wall receded. There was a vindictive crash of water, a sort of double jolt as her screws approached the surface.

"Plenty rough," yawned Anthony. He threw a towel into the basin, held on tight and let the water soak it, flung it, one handed, over his face and head, mopping.

"I put your coffee in a bottle, sir," said Miro.

"Pull out my old uniform, if you can," requested Anthony. Water shook from his hair and his face shown. He took the bottle. The coffee he gulped in precarious scalding swallows and it flooded his stomach with a fine hot exhilaration. Bracing himself on the bunk edge, he dressed, putting a sweater on under his uniform coat. "Been like this long?" he asked.

"Not so bad," answered Miro. "It got worse, ten — twenty minutes ago. We don't come back very well. Glass gone on the port promenade, a steward told me."

Anthony stamped into his boots, jerked the leather strap at the collar of his slicker and pulled the waterproof hood over his uniform cap. Above, in the warm chart-room, he paused and initialed the night orders. "No change in course," he said.

"It does not seem so, sir," said Miro. He caught Anthony's arm in one hand and the table edge in the other.

"Thanks," nodded Anthony. They came out.

Mr. Fenton wasn't up yet, but the helmsman had been relieved. Mr. Sheedy, the extra second officer on the mid-watch, grunted with obvious gratitude. "This course is south fourteen degrees east," he said formally.

"South fourteen degrees east," Anthony echoed. He stepped deftly against the roll and came next to the engine-room telegraph.

"Say this is a rotten blow," announced Sheedy. "We're listing plenty. Do you notice?"

"Partly the wind," said Anthony.

"And partly wet water. Why don't you ring up the old man and ask him to let you point off a bit? We get it square in the eye."

"Blow over in a minute, perhaps."

"Carpenter's having a bad time with the port half-door. Can't get it secure, poor devil. Driscoll's up too, or at least he was, but he didn't call the old man. I hear we broke some glass just now."

Fenton came out, wincing, "God, I cracked my elbow a hot one," he said, stung out of the formalities of bridge etiquette. "What is this, a circus?"

"So long," said Sheedy.

Fenton touched his hidden cap brim.

"I'll step out, Mr. Fenton," Anthony said. "Quartermaster, take a look around starboard." He made his way to the door and let himself on to the open bridge gingerly, moving down the rail almost hand over hand to the shelter at the end. Breathing hard and dripping, he looked forward and the dim radiance of the running light, the glow from the bridge, showed him they were taking it white over the bows every other minute. Fine for those automobiles, he thought. I hope they packed them dry. Growing accustomed to the darkness, he could make out the deck below, and judged that no lines were rigged. It made him wonder what Mr. Driscoll could be doing. He turned and stared aft, but he couldn't see beyond the dim shape of the first lifeboat. Something must have happened to the light over the stairs. Bending a little he pulled himself back to the door. Inside he drew off his dripping gloves and went to the telephone.

The minute's long silence broke in his ear with a clean click. "Navigating bridge, sir," he said. "Bradell speaking."

"Well, boy?" came Captain Clendening's voice.

"Permission to change course, sir? Pretty wet forward."

"Do what you want. Shall I come up?"

"No, sir. Nothing wrong."

"Half-speed, Mr. Fenton," Anthony requested. "Half-speed, sir," agreed Mr. Fenton, snapping over the telegraph.

"Helm!" said Anthony. The helmsman glanced over his shoulder, stood aside, fastening both hands on one spoke. Anthony stepped in and took it. He drew the wheel right, hand over hand. The electric tell-tale went to half rudder.

"Port full ahead, Mr. Fenton!"

"Port full ahead, sir."

The *San Pedro* gained steerageway, came staggering over. She buried her starboard bow and the white water thundered down. She tilted up and rode the next one. "Two-thirds, Mr. Fenton."

The tell-tale went amidships. Anthony bent his face into the binnacle light. "The course is due south," he said. "Look alive! Nothing off." The helmsman stood on.

"Well," sighed Mr. Fenton, "I guess the worst is over."

At six o'clock, dawn, delayed, was pale on the forecastle. Miro relieved the helmsman. Anthony had attempted full ahead twice, but they made wet work of it. Captain Clendening, up to the ears in his bridge coat, appeared now. He returned the salute of the watch incompletely, holding on to a window and staring out forward. He stood so long, swaying loosely with the movement of the ship, that even Miro at the helm began to watch him, apprehensive.

"What are we doing, Mr. Bradell?" he said at last. "About two knots?"

"About five, sir, I think."

"List is worse," he said. He came and stared at the clinometer. "Anything shifted yet?"

"Not that I know of sir."

"Where's Mr. Driscoll?"

"I think he's still below, sir, at the half-door. They were making quite a lot of water."

"I want to see him. Look up the chief officer, Mr. Fenton."

His face in the strengthening light was so haggard that Anthony said: "Take some coffee, sir. The vacuum bottle's full in the chart-room."

"Don't want it now," he answered. "Turn out the morning watch, Mr. Bradell. I want to heave to and find out what's wrong with us. What would you say we need for steerage-way?"

"I guess one-third, sir."

"All right. Helm! Mind your rudder. Get on, Mr. Bradell."

Anthony supposed it was ten o'clock when the fore-and-aft bulkhead in upper hold number one stove. Two cased automobiles shifted fifteen feet to port, knocking down the wall of the port bunk-room. The wedges probably came loose when they had lain-to while wind and sea on their port quarter shook them so heavily. That helpless half-hour had been a little worse than futile, then. He went forward with Mr. Eberly. The junior second officer said: "Well, maybe the old man will feel better now. We got something wrong here all right."

Anthony understood Mr. Eberly's attitude but he understood too Captain Clendening's earlier exasperation at their failure to find anything which would account for the list. He said nothing now, viewing the bunk-room attentively. In the working alleyway there was water over his ankles. At the half-door Mr. Driscoll was still busy in a grim, conscientious silence. He had several seamen with him and they were trying to tighten the dogs with a persistence which had become, considering the simplicity of the task, merely maddening. Anthony had an impatient desire to get at that job himself and

finish it up. It was too senseless. They had been working there on and off for eight hours without effecting a change. To avoid any officiousness he turned back to Mr. Eberly and said: "We'd gone over pretty far to make them slide. This sea will have to go back down before we can do much. I don't believe they'll move again."

"Say listen, white man," rose a querulous voice from the firemen's forecastle beyond, "how we sleep?"

"Pipe down!" called Anthony sharply.

"We got water, mister."

He went up the passage. "Oh," he said, "you have a port out."

The bunk-room was running underfoot. Two electric bulbs burned, and sickly morning light came with the recurring splashes of water through the broken port. A strong smell arose; wet wool and bedding, old sweat. Wrapped in blankets, like lively mummies on shelves, forms stirred, white eyeballs rolled in the shadows. The crazy man, Quail, caught the iron bunk post above, swung himself out and down with one arm, like a chimpanzee. He landed squatly on his feet in the shallow water. "I want to be home," he moaned. He beat his great swinging fist on his chest; his voice rolled and boomed from the depths. "I got those home-again blues." His conical skull swayed from side to side. "Home," he chanted, "knock on the door!"

"Lay off, nigger," snapped Anthony. "I'll have the carpenter in."

"Quail, he think he swim. Long way New York, Quail." Laughter exploded richly in the bunks.

"Quail, he feel water, he fear soap to come!"

Quail held on to the post. "Home, just as before," he moaned. "Home again, to roam no more. . . ."

Most of the late morning Mr. MacGillvray had a crew on the ash-ejector valve. It must have worked loose during the heavy weather while they were heaved-to earlier. By noon they had it tight again, but the water was pouring smoothly into the stoke-hole by the bunker chutes. It slopped around the dog box and washed back and forth on the plates. Perhaps a bunker-hatch cover had gone and Mr. MacGillvray suggested this to the bridge. He did not know whether they had done anything about it or not but he had started a pump at half-past ten and still needed it. In fact he would have used all his pumps but he had been ordered to empty the rest of the port ballast tanks. Meanwhile he was clearing his bilge by not more than a foot an hour and the whole place was in a mess, with pressure falling off. It was useless to tell the fire-room to shake her up.

The men worked resentfully with a psychological slowness in a flooded stoke-hole. Mr. MacGillvray wished loudly and audibly to God that they were on oil, independent of firemen with wet feet and trimmers who were constantly losing their rakes in the shallow water.

It was the only public concession to the annoyances of the situation, which were, to his mind, many. Among other things, he wouldn't get to luncheon and he had a nice crowd at his table, including two good-looking women who called him chief and knew a funny story when they heard one — well, that was the way it always worked, and probably they were seasick anyway. There would be plenty more meals when they got south and had nicer weather. At the moment it was still remarkably rough. Much rougher than there was any need for it to be, he decided, having gone above a moment for the purpose. Most of it was the half-witted way they handled the ship.

Half-past three, declared the clock on the stairs which Anthony had just passed, moving down the port alleyway of the C deck. He was going aft to find out what had been done five minutes before by a green sea taken broad on the quarter. It pooped them with a shock like a hill falling overboard. Anthony could not figure it out — how, in view of wind, weather, and the *San Pedro's* course, it ever got there. He was extraordinarily tired. In this state, the ocean became almost personified; a purposeful malicious agent, driving its heavy assaults to the unexpected and unguarded points. At the *San Pedro's* heavy stagger, Captain Clendening went out and looked aft. Obviously a boat had gone from the steerage superstructure, for one thing. The supports of the after-bridge were twisted. White water cascaded endlessly off the poop deck as the fantail shook itself free. You could hear the descending crash all the way forward. He said without emphasis: "Find out what carried away, Mr. Bradell."

Anthony went, smartly as he could make his aching legs move. He was certain that it would prove to have been particularly, wantonly, destructive. The steerage passengers were probably in a panic. In fact, there was no reason to suppose they hadn't lost a few people overboard. Anthony reviewed these possibilities in a stupor of resentment. A figure was approaching him in the alleyway and he faltered a moment, trying to calculate by the lethargic lurch of the tilted floor whether to pass right or left.

"Hello, Bradell," she said. "Such a nice day, isn't it?"

She moved a little with the shift underfoot, and managed, in-

tentionally or not, to block the whole alleyway, so he had to halt. "Sorry," he said, "I've got to get aft."

"Listen, Bradell," she said. "Do something about this. Clara and tons of people are sick as dogs. And I can't even get a bath. The bath-steward says we aren't level enough. I'll be positively filthy if it keeps up many more weeks." She regarded him with clear good humour and he saw that her eyes were blue. "You don't look well, Bradell," she continued critically. "Have a sleepless night? So did I. I couldn't get my mind off you. And the food is atrocious, such of it as stays on the table. It was bad enough before."

"Sorry," repeated Anthony. "Don't worry. Everything is all right."

All the woodwork creaked and cried out with the roll. She put a hand on his arm and said: "Good Lord, is it as bad as that?"

She seemed obscurely to cling to him, impeding his thought as well as his progress. He felt too tired to shake her off, so he said: "No danger at all. Everything is all right."

"Listen, Bradell," she begged. "Tell how bad it is. I'll be simply furious if I find out afterward we almost sank and I didn't even know it. A girl has to have some kick out of life."

"Everything is all right," said Anthony looking at her.

She frowned a little, tightening the fingers on his arm.

"I thought at first there couldn't be anything wrong," she admitted, "because so many of the passengers were scared. Listen, Bradell, why don't you say it's the worst storm you've seen in ninety-seven years at sea, or something?"

"I've got to get aft," said Anthony.

She moved, backing against the white-panelled wall, extending a lax arm on either side of her to grasp the hand-rail. She murmured: "Good-bye, Bradell."

He passed her. Although he did not look, he could feel her still there, her dark head up, leaning against the wall mutely, her blue eyes on his retreating back.

In the wireless-room, Smith, the first operator, regarded Morris without favor. Morris was on duty. He had, as usual, the phones pushed off one ear. A cigarette nodded up and down as he hummed to himself. His tobacco-dyed forefinger kept the key in a vibrating, whining chatter—QSU—QRN—QRU. . . . The *San Pedro's* WPRV went on to the end. He locked his hands in the back of his head and sucked at the cigarette.

"Who was that?" asked Smith, still sleepy.

"*San Pablo*"

"We aren't reporting anything?"

"Having a fine time. Wish you were here. Want me to write a poem, or tell 'em the one about the stuffed monkeys?"

"It doesn't feel so good to me," said Smith. "Where did we get all this water?"

"Elephant charged the camera," admitted Morris, "but I dropped him at twenty paces. He's in the wastepaper basket."

"Funny boy, aren't you?" marvelled Smith. "Are we all right?"

"As advertised," agreed Morris. "These magnificent vessels are unsurpassed in comfort and luxury. Having been especially constructed for tropical voyaging, the ventilation of every room is perfect — just feel it," he invited, turning up his collar. "Running water too," he added, "in every room now. Some with baths."

"Don't, I'll die!" grunted Smith.

"Appetizing meals to delight the keen appetites aroused by the bracing sea air —" He seized a partly consumed ham sandwich from the plate beside him. "Do take some more caviar, count," he urged. "It will only be thrown out."

"Say listen," said Smith. "Is that all we get to eat?"

"That? You don't even get that. That's mine. Try and find another. While you were absent they procured five tons of sea water somewhere at great expense and put them in the ranges. Didn't they consult you?"

"After the applause dies down, let's see the bridge orders."

"Help yourself," said Morris cordially. "The old man keeps wanting to know where the *San Pablo* is, as if I give a damn! When I get them, he doesn't want them for anything. Their lad told me for God's sake to leave them alone. That shows how little he's been out. Nothing like a valve transmitter in unscrupulous hands, I always say. We'll bother them, if you want to know, from thirty-five to forty-five on twenty-one hundred continuous every hour for the rest of the night."

"What's the idea?"

"Oh, just a little thing I tossed off while I was waiting. It isn't finished yet, of course, but the old man certainly liked it."

"Listen, I'll relieve you now. Like a good sport, go down and get me a sandwich, will you?"

"Wrong," protested Morris.

"Listen, have I got to order you?"

"No, no, don't feel that way. Accidents happen."

"Go on, get up. You got a drag down there."

"Say, you certainly presume on your white hairs, Lord Algy," groaned Morris. "All together now; American Marconi Company, I love you!"

The narrow promenade around the fantail had lost a long section of rail. On the port side the third-class pantry had been flushed out clean. The door was carried away; every detachable object was swept through with the rail. For the moment it would be simpler to assume that no one had been on duty there, Anthony decided. He continued around the stern. Not a square inch of glass was left in any exposed window. The stewards would have to rope off the unprotected deck, and looking for them, he put his shoulder against the starboard entry doors.

Inside, the constricted stairs came up to the third-class lounge. Furniture consisted mainly of benches fastened to the walls, but there was a big table. This had been torn out of the pin of the staying chain, overturning and scattering newspapers and old magazines on the linoleum, shining with dirty water. Forty faces, black or palely negroid, lifted to Anthony. The high, miserable storm of voices quailed a moment. Then the sight of his uniform cap drove up a louder wail; partly hysterical relief at finding they were not alone in the world, partly fresh panic at the appearance of authority, in most of their minds associated with disaster and unreasonable suffering to come.

Anthony endeavoured to ignore them, but his rapid and accurate eye included them all. Some sat paralyzed, bundles of their poor possessions done up in sheets resting at their feet. Others had gotten inefficiently into life-belts. One group appeared to be praying, led by a monstrous woman with a moustache. More practical, another group had procured several bottles.

"Steward!" Anthony called.

Not understanding him, most of them joined in, too; a general lamentation. The old woman with the moustache shrieked louder. The people with bundles laid hold of them. A man with a bottle tilted it up as far as it would go.

"Pipe down!" shouted Anthony. "Shut up! You're all right." He realized that they did not understand him. "No hay periculo! Basta! Basta!"

That exhausted his Spanish, but they understood at least that he was trying to talk to them. With appalling suddenness, a silence fell, marred on the edges by stifled groans and sobs. They swayed visibly toward him, all eyes fastened to him, all waiting for him to perform some miracle and save them.

"No hay, periculo," repeated Anthony. "Eata bien."

His broken Spanish was worse than nothing. It frightened them more. The uncertainty of his accent, the inadequacy of his words made everything he said improbable, sinister even. They were clearly cut off from the people

who had them in charge, who had brought them to this extremity and alone could deliver them. The moaning swelled up again, and Anthony shouted: "Doesn't anyone speak English?"

White under his black skin one man said nervously: "What would you like to say, senor?"

"Tell them to go back to their staterooms."

"No, no, mister" he wailed. "No, no, Room full of water. People sick, People scared. No, no."

"Tell them."

"No, no," he groaned. "Ship sink. People drown. Leave those here mister."

"Where's your steward?"

"What did you say, mister?"

"The steward!"

"No, no, mister, No, no."

"Where is the man with the white coat?" Anthony shouted.

"Some gone. Some sick in room. Some under bed."

"Where?" snapped Anthony. "Show me."

"No, no. I stay here, mister. No, no."

Anthony did not move, but simple savagery must have shown in his face, for the man cowered away into the corner, backing against people who parted struggling to keep far from Anthony. Their shrieks swelled up again. The whole frail fabric of human relationships melted now in a mess of paralyzed muscle and brain and will. More shocking than the most murderous resistance, they became simple dead weight. They were lumps weighing some hundred and fifty pounds, too yielding to grasp, too misshapen to handle. Anthony stood dark-eyed and stiff-faced. He wanted to plant his feet in these quivering gelatinous heaps. He was shaken to the bottom — indeed there was no bottom, only the unthinkable abyss of human impotence opened under him. His brain, suspended over it, counselled him merely to kill, trample them down, destroy them, before this shocking contagion destroyed him. The blood beat up and filmed over his eyes, and he was saved by a quick idiotic irrelevancy. He recognized that he was seeing red; that there was such a thing, no figure of speech, but a bloody mist. The childish surprise of it unsprung his nerves. He turned stiffly, grasped the rail of the stairs, and, putting one foot before another, descended. At the bottom his voice came like a croak, but he cleared it and shouted: "Steward!"

A figure appeared uncertainly at the end of the little passage. "Where are the others?" Anthony asked.

"In the pantry, they were," faltered this man, glassy-eyed.

Three, maybe four, men gone, swept off and smothered some-

where in the broken wake, was a fact, literal and sharp. At once the misery of wetness and fear, the noise above, like animals crowded in a dangerous pen, became a simpler thing, pitiable. If, a moment ago, Anthony could have wished them all scoured out by the hard sea, buried away and obliterated, now he felt only their wretched humanity, their common helplessness against the inhuman ocean.

"Poor devils," he murmured. The man's enormous eyes looked up at him. "All right," Anthony said. "We can't do anything now. Buck up!"

The man opened his mouth and no sound came out, but he finally said; "Yes, sir."

"Unlock the passage-door there. I'll get some men down to you. Everything is all right. Go upstairs and don't let anyone out. Half the rail's carried away."

"Yes, sir." The steward spoke more securely. He at least had the outlines of discipline, however irregular, or casual. This framework propped him up a little, made him firm enough to grasp. Once grasped, the current of command galvanized him. His chin rose, his shaking ceased. "Yes, sir," he repeated quickly.

"Look alive," said Anthony. "We'll probably be out of this before dark."

At nine o'clock, Mr. MacGillvray and his fourth engineer finished work on the extra pump. Designed for blowing ashes or supplying water to the deck firelines, they turned it on the stubborn making bilge, broke the joint connection and fitted on a screen filter. That raised their available horse power to about two hundred. As there was never anything wrong with the gear in an engine-room ruled by Mr. MacGillvray, the pumps were better than seventy per cent efficient. Together they sucked up a ton of water a minute, heaved it thirty feet from the level of the fire-room plates, and dumped it over the side.

The chief viewed this arrangement, satisfied. He did not know where so much water could be coming from, but he was, he felt sure, more than a match for it. He would have his bilges dry before morning. If it came to that, he could and would pump out the whole blasted ocean. He'd have no dirty water in his department.

Presently he went above to clean up. Soaping his big hands he felt rather grumpy. As he got older he tended more and more to regard sailors, deck officers, as a not very necessary nuisance. If they ever developed a tenth of the efficiency he demanded and received from his personnel, from his main plant, from every fitting and auxiliary, there might be some sense in shipping. As it was,

you took the finest turbines made by man and put them in a tin scow run by a lot of damn fools who filled it with water, ran it on its side and near shook the lagging off. He was tired now, but he certainly wasn't turning in until they got a grip on things. Though the sea was moderating, the *San Pedro* rolled heavily. The list was to twenty degrees and he didn't believe what water he had below was doing it.

Returning to his office, he put on his uniform coat and settled at his desk, his hands folded on his belly, his porcelain-blue eyes brooding. He was there when the alleyway door opened and he saw that at last the captain had come below. Mr. MacGillvray got to his feet. Mr. Bradell had entered with the old man. He stood at his elbow, as though he were helping him to walk, and the chief noticed that Captain Clendening moved heavily, without determination.

"Evening, captain," he said shortly.

"How is it?" said Captain Clendening at last.

"We're all right," Mr. MacGillvray nodded. "Got three pumps on. Have us dry pretty soon. Can't we do something about this list? Throws my lubrication off. Burn out a bearing somewhere, I wouldn't be surprised." Actually he would be stunned with surprise. He had an extra-sense for developing friction; it would be a clever bearing that burnt out in his engine-room.

"Where do you think the water's coming from, MacGillvray?" Captain Clendening asked.

Mr. MacGillvray pulled his loose chin. "It's black water," he said. "Must have come through the coal. Don't suppose we sprung a plate?"

"I don't know," said Captain Clendening. Mr. MacGillvray looked at him sharply. "Aren't you trying to find out?"

"Since about four this morning," interposed Mr. Bradell, "we haven't done anything else, chief."

"Now, if I were you, son," said Mr. MacGillvray, "I'd get myself in overalls and poke about the port bunkers. You can get in from the shelter-deck. Take an electric flash-light and keep it dry —"

"I'll give Bradell his orders, Mr. MacGillvray," said Captain Clendening.

"Just offering a suggestion," said Mr. MacGillvray, his mouth pouting out from the hanging folds of cheek. "Seems to me about time something was done."

Captain Clendening's lumpy jaw sagged down and forward. His moustache stiffened. "By God, sir," he roared, "I'll have you understand, Mr. MacGillvray, that I am in command of this ship. When I want your sugges-

tions, I'll ask for them!"

"Very good," snapped Mr. MacGillvray. "And now I'll step below, with your permission, and get on with more important matters."

He turned his back on them. The clear snorts of his breathing sounded above the roar of the engine-room shaft for a moment. He stumped down the steel steps.

Captain Clendening swallowed audibly. "Boy?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Anthony.

Captain Clendening made an uneasy gesture. "Go down, boy," he said. "My apologies to Mr. MacGillvray. Sort of nervous, boy. Guts are no good. Got to take care of myself. Tell him I appreciate his hard work. Tell him I rely on him absolutely and I hope he'll see fit to overlook my — my —" he faltered — "— my language, that is."

"Yes, sir," said Anthony. The captain's mouth worked a little and Anthony hesitated, not knowing if he were finished.

The captain's eyes came back to him, focused harder a moment. "Mr. Bradell!"

"Yes, sir."

"Perhaps you can tell me who is in command of this vessel?"

"You are, sir," said Anthony, dumbfounded.

"Thank you. When I give an order, I want it obeyed. What are you standing here for? Look alive, sir!"

IV

Miro had gone below when Mr. Bradell told him to turn in. Wind, weather; noise, no matter how relentless; discomfort very severe, he could ignore when he was ready to sleep. Now, long past midnight, he knew no such thing had disturbed him. His eyes open in the dark, he was at once alert, roused from within. Believing that an angel watched over him, he recognized instantly what had happened. This invisible being, who saw all and knew all, had bent down suddenly. Her tall shadow fell on him, her great wings fanned him.

He was not perturbed, nor was he hurried, though it could mean only that danger had become at last real and imminent. Perhaps all day danger had been mounting, like fluid in a pressure tube. Now it had crossed a mark and its crossing touched off tremendous alarms. His inquiring physical senses assured him that to every appearance nothing had changed. Slow and steady, the hammer of the engines at half-speed and time continued; the *San Pedro* rolled sluggishly; water forward bumped and crashed. A sound of movement and still calm enough voices came from the working alleyway. All the greater reason to find out, if he could, what subtler or more sinister change had caught his angel's sleepless eye, made her

reach down and rouse him.

He had not taken off his boots, so he came at once to his feet. The occasional lights of the narrow wet passage, tilted badly by the list, burned dim in their heavy cups of misted glass. He proceeded aft to the working alleyway and saw to his astonishment a dozen men from the steward's department. The half-door, he observed immediately, had carried away altogether. The carpenter was there, trying to rig a new one of boards and canvas. It was not completed and only partly in place, so when they leaned far on the list the sea came right in. One had a momentary glimpse of their dull lights spilling into the void, winking on fathomless black swells almost under foot. Coming back enough to conceal this ugly phenomenon, the water already shipped, surged to starboard like a miniature tidal wave. It went above the knees of the carpenter and his mate, busy with their boards.

Mr. Driscoll had been absent a moment before, but Miro saw him now, buttoned up in his bridge coat, his face remarkably white in the bad light. He picked out Miro in the shadow beyond and said: "Quartermaster?"

Miro answered, greatly relieved to find the chief officer in such alert charge.

"See if you can rout out some more men here. Get a lot of men. Any men you can." Mr. Driscoll supported himself with one hand on the clammy wall as the *San Pedro* went over and the half-door framed the black sea like a steep floor. "Wait," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Report to the bridge first. Tell the captain that the situation doesn't seem to improve. You might ask if it would be possible for him to step below here a moment. I — er —" He became conscious of the deadly silence of the men listening. "Hurry up," he jerked out. "Get on with it."

Mr. Driscoll then, was worried, too. Miro, in point of private fact, had small respect for Mr. Driscoll as a seaman. He did not believe now that Mr. Driscoll knew what ought to be done, nor even how to go about whatever substitute for the right thing he might have in mind. Mounting the inside stairs to the chart-room, Miro decided to report to Mr. Bradell first. Mr. Bradell could tell him what to do, and once sure himself, he might discover some way to modify Mr. Driscoll's designs.

He found this intention defeated, however. He appeared quietly in the door, and was dismayed to see the wheel-house almost crowded. Both Mr. Eberly and Mr. Sheedy were standing by. Young Mr. Fenton and the third officer were close together in the corner. The fifth officer, Mr. Eberly's junior, balanced

himself restlessly with the roll, looking at the ceiling. Mr. Bradell, his arms folded tight, the brim of his cap down over his forehead, stood beside the engine-room telegraph. The helmsman's eyes swung furtively from the binnacle to the rudder indicator and then sideways, as though appealing to Mr. Bradell.

Unnoticed in the door behind, Miro considered them one after another. They were all tired, yet they were all alert too, quiet and composed, but obviously mystified. One could deduce that they were here because they had been ordered up. They had not been told why, they had not been told what to do. No one spoke; they simply waited. It was, in its inept, mute, rather bewildered way, magnificent, and Miro appreciated this. Here was a very superior form of *tela*, a splendid, passive morale, the supreme ability to remain motionless and to appear calm; to stand endlessly ready for no one knew what.

Since Mr. Bradell had the watch, it would be impossible to speak to him. Miro hesitated soundlessly, considering to whom he should speak. At this moment the port door on to the open bridge moved and Captain Clendening came in.

His face under the electric light was positively lifeless, but it had a surface shine from the spray on it. His eyes were so far swollen that they seemed to wink craftily out of slits. He stood heavy and clumsy in his wet bridge coat a moment. All glances had gone to him, but they wavered now, went away. There was a slight simultaneous movement of lips and eyes returning to careful impassivity. Mr. Bradell never budged, had not looked.

Paying no attention to his waiting officers, Captain Clendening kept his face toward Miro. "Yes?" he said.

"Chief officer reports, sir," said Miro. "Mr. Driscoll wants to know if you can step below, sir."

There was a general restrained stir, but no other sound.

"No," said Captain Clendening. "Tell him to carry on."

The helmsman let his brown, nervous face turn. "Helm!" said Mr. Bradell. The helmsman's eyes jerked front.

In his gray-yellow face Captain Clendening's eyeballs flickered. A slight muscular contraction shook the thick cheeks. "Turn in, Mr. Eberly," he said. "Get some sleep. Won't want you after all." He jerked his head toward the third and fifth officers. "You, too," he said. "Turn in. Mr. Sheedy, report to the chief officer."

They all moved immediately in the grateful release of definite orders.

"Quartermaster?"

"Yes, sir."

"Find out from the wireless-room where the *San Pablo* is."

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Bradell?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you carry on a little longer?"

"Yes, sir."

Miro was out through the chart-room. In his ears repeated and repeated the mechanical "Yes, sir," "Yes, sir." It lost all alacrity, all smart and competent obedience. The phrase hammered and hammered. Under the senseless impact, the framework of observation — the vital initiative, the intelligence to see clearly and do quickly — cracked, crumpled to dust. Discipline, directed co-operation, ceased here to have any virtue. Habit betrayed the will and debauched the brain. Physically, the lips might stiffen with reluctance, the voice almost fail, but the mind in its extremity knew only one reply. To disaster, to stupid folly, to terrible peril which might yet be averted or resisted; to the advance of death itself, the mind acquiescent, drugged with a phrase, answered only, "Yes, sir."

Wet wind hit Miro in the face. Beneath his feet the deck tilted away. He caught a hand-rail; he saw the dim bands of the *San Pedro's* funnel stagger in the dark. He knew now that the *San Pedro* was certainly floundering, however slowly, and that most of those she carried might be lost.

Tuckerton, New Jersey. East Moriches, Long Island. All night rain has fallen on the Atlantic coast. Dawn is up, wet from the eastern ocean, but before six o'clock the sullen skies were breaking. Heavy smell of wet trees, wide wet meadows, and the warm damp earth spread everywhere; through country streets, silent, but brighter; into the quiet open windows of houses still asleep. There followed presently a thin noise of bird song. Over the edge of the world, just about level with the drenched treetops, poured out the sun. Its flat, enormous shafts struck resplendent across the eastern states. At Tuckerton, and at East Moriches, far higher than trees, slender and rigid against the fin dissolving blue, stood up the skeleton towers of the coastal wireless station.

Under them, in the power houses, in the offices and operating rooms, some of the lights were turned off. Shifts of operators and engineers changed. The great generators, not requiring relief, spun on, subdued; but there was a sound of released voices on the beautiful air outside. An early train had tossed off New York papers, and men walking slowly home to bed lit cigarettes, looked at them, and saw there was no news worth reading.

Inside, the morning reliefs were settling down. Outside, soundless, invisible, humanly indetectable, the serene, the golden June air swelled, grew full with rising volume; the racing, screaming whine of code communication; broadcasting voices clearly relayed; early music.

At seven-fifteen, into these crowded currents which carried the immense record of the awakened world, cut faintly the *San Pedro's* CQ — a thin plea, staccato with foreboding. From far off the Virginia Capes they were nagging at human attention; *everybody listen.* At Tuckerton, at East Moriches, the emergency operators stirred, attentive, mildly curious, as a half-hour silence settled. Just before eight o'clock came the S.O.S. By eight o'clock the Brooklyn Navy Yard was suspending all radio traffic. Over the whole of eastern North America the air was abruptly emptied and into this immense void the *San Pedro* called again, small and solitary; faded out; called once more, appealing this time to the Naval Compass Station at Cape May for her true bearings.

They heard it on the largest ships in the world; the white vessels of the United Fruit Co., many-decked Clyde liners, a dozen ships of the Caribbean and Southern trade, picked it up, calculating the scores of separating miles. Slow, dogged, steaming stockily, the Japanese freighter, *Toledo Maru* halted a hundred miles away and came heavily about; from the North Atlantic steamship lanes a moderately fast Cunarder broke, turned south forcing her draft; a German boat, farther east, bound for New York, turned too. Just over the horizon a small sugar tramp from Cuba came abreast, passed the *San Pedro,* crawled patiently on, not being equipped with wireless.

Captain Clendening's eyeballs were finely netted with scarlet veins. There was a silver stubble of beard over his square cheeks. Beneath his short white moustache his mouth opened and shut, sucking in the cool air. He held on to the shutter of the open wheel-house window, and the cumbersome seas, whipping up the tilted well-deck forward, staggering into the port half-doors, were gray with advanced morning. The *San Pedro,* resisting them, shook him back and forth on his feet, but he held on. He held the tighter, for he did not wish to turn around; he felt, insistent, the need to look back, to survey the boat-deck again, but he put off a moment while his head wobbled. "Got to take care of myself," he murmured, for he knew that he was very sick, ought to be in bed. In answer he held himself tighter, harder, while he did turn and look back. He realized then that

he could not see anything unless he went out on the open bridge end. There was, however, a quartermaster gazing at him. The man's eyes were dark, sad, deep as wells. "Order to abandon, sir?" he said softly.

Captain Clendening was stunned. He opened his mouth to roar, but his throat failed him. He could not believe that he had understood; that on his own bridge a quartermaster could be offering him a suggestion. He breathed harder, he held tighter, as though he were climbing a vertical slope. The situation was so outrageous and amazing that, still speechless, he wondered if it might not have been his imagination, for the man was saying normally, like any quartermaster: "Chief officer reports starboard boats impractical, sir."

He hesitated and Captain Clendening, his mouth tight, his eyes hard ahead, continued to look at him.

"Mr. Bradell asked me to say, sir, that port boats could be dropped in the lee and get off. May he reverse orders, sir?"

Captain Clendening studied him, studied his brown clear skin and melancholy liquid eyes, knew that he had noticed him often before, that this was a reliable man. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Miro, sir," answered the quartermaster. There was a sudden brightening of his eyes as though he were about to weep. They were all inordinately sensitive, these Southerners; particularly, intelligent ones; Captain Clendening knew. He modified his tone a little. "Don't you know how to behave on a bridge, boy?" he said. "Look alive and speak when you're spoken to."

"Yes, sir," said Miro.

"Well, what do you want?"

"About life-boat stations sir. Mr. Bradell —"

"I gave no orders about boats," said Captain Clendening, his voice thick in his ears. "What are you talking about?"

The man's deep sad eyes with the far-away glint of tears stayed on him steadily. "You will remember, sir," he said. His voice was mild, very gentle, but distinct. "You ordered Mr. Bradell and Mr. Driscoll to turn to the boats."

"I sent Mr. Bradell forward," said Captain Clendening. "What's he doing with the boats?"

"Yes, sir," assented the soft clear voice. "That was afterward. He has gone forward now, sir."

"Why didn't you report at once? I'll have no tampering with —"

He found, to his amazement, that he must have been interrupted. "I try to report sir, for ten — twenty minutes. I have been right here, sir. I do not think that you have heard me." The man's face was a still, tragic mask

with the small deep pools of the eyes. "Boats have broken on the side, sir. It is too —"

"Officers," said Captain Clendening, "will carry out their orders to the best of their ability." He extended a hand. "I want to go on to the bridge," he said.

Miro came close, more like a sudden close-up in a motion picture than ordinary movement. Miro's hard, neatly muscled shoulder steadied Captain Clendening. Very sure-footed, Miro calculated the movement of the ship, moving with it, and they were out, under the terrible white light of the pale sky. Captain Clendening shook off Miro's support, holding the rail and watching the concerted movement about the life-boats. His mouth was full of spittle, tasting brazen, or bitter, and he swallowed slowly trying to get rid of it.

Now some one else had appeared at the wheel-house door. Captain Clendening tightened his jaw and said: "You have your orders, Mr. Fenton. Be good enough to carry them out." The quartermaster was still gazing at him so, he added, enraged at last by the implacable sadness of the eyes: "Get that man out of here, Mr. Fenton. I'll have him in irons if he leaves his post again."

He heard Mr. Fenton's voice ". . . get some of them away, sir?" and it occurred to him that he might not have spoken aloud in reference to the quartermaster. He saw no use in repeating it. To Mr. Fenton he said automatically: "You will await an order for general abandonment. How are the passengers?"

"Mr. Eberly and Mr. Sheedy are in charge, sir. Women and children mustered up. All behaving well."

"Right," said Captain Clendening. "We'll have no *La Bourgogne* business here."

Still a third man had appeared. He recognized this one as from the wireless-room. He had in his hand several papers. His voice awoke in an animated drawl. "Yes, yes," said Captain Clendening sharply. He did not want to listen to this, so he took the scribbled reports from the young man. "Carry on," he nodded, anxious to get rid of them.

In the wireless-room Smith was at the key. "On the coil now," he said to Morris, returning. "When are we going to abandon?"

Morris lit a cigarette, propped himself in the tilted corner. He employed his free hand thoughtfully, scratching his red hair. "Nobody knows," he hummed, "and nobody seems to care."

"Listen," said Smith. "Don't wisecrack. I don't mind telling you I want to live. How's the old man?"

"He's all right," said Morris. "He looks pretty bad. You don't

lose your ship every day, now I come to think of it, but he's playing ball."

"What's he say?"

"Nothing," answered Morris, "which seems to me to be about right. They stove in another boat just now. Pretty soon we'll have to take off our shoes and stockings and wade; that is those not otherwise engaged. I'll flip you to see who does the Casabianca stunt. We'll count Couch out, since he wouldn't be on duty anyway. Where is he, having a quiet nap?"

"Out with Mr. Driscoll. He's had some experience with boats. Well ——"

"If he has, he's the only one," said Morris. "I could tell you a good joke, only it might upset you. Let's have a half-dollar."

"I'll stay," said Smith. "I'm the senior operator."

"You're sure hell on heroism," commented Morris, "but I've only one cigarette left, so I might as well drown. Furthermore, what did I happen to find but a quart of Bacardi, which will take away the taste of salt water something wonderful. I'll even give you a drink if you'll lend me your boy-scout knife."

"Now shut up!" said Smith sharply. "Don't get all worked up. Everything's all right. We'll float for eight hours at least and by three o'clock ——"

"You must have heard Mr. Eberly talking to the passengers," admired Morris. "That's the good joke I was going to tell you. He has them all down on the promenade-deck, and since they don't know him very well — some of them have barely met him — they think he knows what it's all about."

"And I suppose you know a hell of a lot more?"

"I know this," said Morris modestly. "If we don't stop leaning over the rail, we're going to capsize. Thank God I'm not a seaman; I'd miss all the fun of expecting it."

"You aren't so damn humorous," said Smith.

"Get off the key," suggested Morris, "and let me hand these boys a few sad brave remarks."

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Smith. "What juice we have we'll keep. Hang on, I got the Jap boat again."

He pencilled down letters in silence. "You didn't bring back any new bearings, did you?" he asked Morris over his shoulder. "They've got a ten-cent outfit with no direction finder."

"Shoot them something snappy for a come-on," begged Morris. "Don't be a Western Union messenger all your life."

"Shut up," said Smith. His key awoke, and Morris, reading it off, translated freely: "'Bad enough here old man position ship in hardly in hardly stay receive please hurry ——' That's

right," he applauded. "Probably they were wondering about that last part. Probably they didn't know whether to hurry or to stop and do a little fishing."

"For God's sake, shut up!" shouted Smith.

"Sorry," claimed Morris. "Didn't mean to spoil our last happy hours together. Well, before we get any more good news, I'll flip you two out of three for that space on the Memorial in Battery Park, the bottle, and all your cigarettes. Come on, boy, think of your lovin' wife."

Smith said glumly: "Well at any rate I haven't got that to worry about."

Morris's great grin of derision shone on him. "It would be horrible," he nodded; "I expect you couldn't keep your mind off her if you had one. Never mind, think of your children in all parts of the world, then. What'll it be? Heads?"

Mr. Eberly carried a revolver in his pocket but he found no use for it. On the appalling tilt of the promenade-deck one felt unpleasantly shut in, seeing only the pale heavens, the fast eastward drift of the melting scud to starboard; only the long jostling slide of gray water getting green to port. From above the dull sound of boots and men working, which was comforting. So was the undisturbed solidity of the ship. Even at this awkward angle the deck underfoot was firm as a rock; the steel walls, white-painted, the windows, the heavy doors, looked strong and normal enough.

Mr. Eberly had all the passengers on deck now; the women and children in one compact group forward, ready for the boats which he presumed would be first down. At the after-rail, by the closed stairs, Mr. Sheedy waited, holding frankly an iron stanchion. He was watching the big Negroes of the black gang, who had either come up anyway or been sent up. They gathered sullen, restless but impotent, about the hatch covers. They hadn't yet made any real movement to approach the promenade-deck. Mr. Eberly, moving with the aid of lines that he had rigged himself, passed up and down watching everybody; the groups of men smoking with affected calm; the confused herd of women where occasionally a child cried. He told them — he was careful not to do it too often — that there was absolutely no danger, and it was fine to see how they behaved; resigned, patient, doing exactly as they were asked. He had directed them to dress as warmly as possible, and he made sure that they had their ludicrous life-belts on properly. Some of them managed to regard their appearance as amusing, and fortunately they were too ignorant to make any protest about a delay

which Mr. Eberly himself found inexplicable, nerve-wracking. Once he went inside with unhurried calm, waited a few minutes, and came out. "Assistance longside in about an hour," he announced, with the well-sustained implication that he had been to the wireless-room.

Mr. Sheedy occasionally said, addressing the invisible deck aft: "Take your foot off the ladder, or you'll get a broken head." Then there was a faint stir, lasting only a minute; a slight acknowledgment of this obvious hint that some other people were not quite so calm. But they all knew, they had read or been told plenty of times, that the one real danger in matters like this was simply panic. Certainly they could see no other, now that they were used to the ship's position. They believed that men who understood the situation were doing everything possible to get them off quickly and safely; they had, in fact, nothing to worry about so long as they stayed quiet and did what Mr. Eberly directed them to do.

"Everything," asserted Mr. Eberly, who was still trying to explain to himself why Mr. Driscoll wasted so much time on the starboard boats when it would have seemed fairly simple to Mr. Eberly to let go the port ones, "is all right."

Driven by his consuming anxiety, he finally did find a reason. The captain must consider it wiser to try to get off as many of the starboard boats as they could first. The port ones might be handled somewhat more expeditiously if later it proved that they were pressed for time. The idea, he told himself, had much to be said for it. He was heartened, too, by the indication it gave of confidence on the bridge that they would float a long while. With the impassivity of good discipline he refrained from sending above to make inquiries which could only be useless and ridiculous. "Try to be patient just a little while longer," he requested earnestly. "I know this isn't very comfortable, but there's no danger. The sun," he added with a sort of cheerfulness, "will be out in a minute."

From the well-deck forward Anthony could see Captain Clendening's stubborn, hatless white head against the sky. It was the one human detail in the confusion of the *San Pedro's* superstructure. Insistently under Anthony's eyes the Negroes crouched against the cased automobiles. Their wide feet clung like stunted hands to the rivets of the deck-plates. Cords bulged out of their black necks; sweat trickled flashing under the wool on their skulls. Their enormous paws locked over levers; black hills of muscle humped across their straining shoulders;

their eyes rolled white, their thick lips contracted.

Anthony looked at them through a fluctuating reddish mist. Weariness tightened his throat in rhythmic cramping retches. He would have spewed out his empty stomach if he could. Both his hands he had to keep behind him so he would not break an hysterical fist on the black stencil of an Indian's head, outstanding with the maker's name on the side of the case.

After a while he realized that men and muscle couldn't do it. They would never get that case over the side. It must be wedged. He cupped his raw hands and screamed to the bridge: "Let me go below and make MacGillvray give me steam on the winches, sir!"

He couldn't tell whether Captain Clendening heard him, whether the old man could hear anything or understand if he did hear. The white head stubbornly held up, wagged a little.

Anthony turned. "Drop that. Get up number two starboard boom ——" There was no one, he saw, to whom he could safely delegate authority if he wanted intelligent action, but he picked out a man finally. "You," he said, "stand by to let in the valves. We'll get steam."

At the end, the Negro called Packy releaved his lever. His big hands pulled it out. One moment he poised on the tilted deck, his head sunk, his black jaw swung out. Water raced up to his feet; his shoulders balanced. The steel bar drove like a battering-ram into the Indian's stencilled profile. Anthony wiped his forehead. His voice was thin as water. "Lay off that, nigger!"

The wood had splintered at the terrible impact. Pallid sunshine from the aching white sky with the washed clouds moving fell through the broken boards, winked on nickel, on smooth cream-coloured enamel. That's an expensive car we're throwing away, thought Anthony.

He had removed his shoes to stand more securely. His feet, cold and wet in his torn socks, gave him a good grip on the slanting deck. The echo of the steel door closed behind him, and he forced himself to trot through the water in the alleyway. It caught his ankles and splashed at his knees; his unprotected heels falling hit his spine sickening jolts.

Under a raw, thin fog of vapour the engineroom depths formed an infernal swimming-pool. Like monster green hogsheads the turbine cages rose in a fantastic steel swamp. Incredible vegetation flowered; white piping; flattened out layers of openwork footways. Stair edged with brass rail plunged down, leading nowhere. Heavy tanks; pistons in a stiff paralysis of the final failure of almost all

the auxiliary systems; transparent oil-cups with the oil at an angle in them; everything seemed to have changed places in a mechanical anarchy. Below, water moved about regularly, swaying to the sluggish roll. The engine-room shaft echoed like a sea cave. Choking with a hundred tons of brine in their throats the pumps groaned up to Anthony. Electric lights fluctuated, winked on the dirty sliding surface, steadied as the *San Pedro* came back. Anthony stumbled down the iron slant of the ladder.

There was Mr. MacGillvray. He had the fire-room door tied back, and the lock-door beyond fastened, too. He braced himself between them, his eyes on the indicator dials and the bridge signal. Sometimes the water came almost to his waist. Vapour slipped out steadily above his head, licking the upper jamb. Anthony missed a step, scraped his shin open, saw the bright blood run on his foot before he landed in the water. "Chief!"

Mr. MacGillivray snatched his arm. Anthony shouted above the catch and gasp of the pumps: "I've got to have steam."

Mr. MacGillivray's cheeks were set into a cold calm. Unavoidably retreating, he had lost almost everything, but bitterly, step by step, he gave way in grim good order, contesting each point with the invading ocean. His obdurate old face was wary, undismayed. Anthony asked: "How much steam have you got, chief?"

Mr. MacGillvray's eyes came down from the dials. "Eighty pounds!" he shouted. "The centre boiler's just gone. Listen to it!"

Over came the *San Pedro*, heavy and deliberate, rushing water into the hot fire-box. It sounded like the crash of thin metal sheets. The outlet valves whistled harder in the darkness. Mr. MacGillvray shook his finger at the fire-room, "To their necks, some of them," he roared, "We can't stay much longer."

Anthony swayed against him, looking through. A naked black back with prodigious arms bent to ease down a coal bucket. Water swayed toward its armpits. In the upper corner a door came wide, and violent yellow light spurted in shattered columns across the liquid surface. A great shadow moved; coal crashed in, iron rang on iron, and the light went out. Up came a white back this time, another bucket.

"Electricity gone there!" roared the chief. "Go everywhere in a minute. Tell the old man. The telephone doesn't work."

The black figure with the dangling arms waded past. His face, his conical skull swayed into the light; he grinned; he swung his apelike arm and wagged the hand up and down. A faint boom-boom

came from his chest. "Home," he moaned, "knock on the door. . ."

"My God," said Anthony, shocked, "he's singing."

"Sure! He's crazy!" shouted Mr. MacGillvray. "No one who wasn't crazy would be here. He's the only nigger left."

Anthony swallowed. "Give me pressure on a winch, chief. I got to get some cases over."

MacGillvray stared at him, open-mouthed. He laid a hand on his shoulder and shook him. "Not do you any good. You can't use your booms in this list. Tie 'em down before you hurt someone."

"I can try," Anthony said. "I got to ——"

"You cannot!" bellowed MacGillvray, his amazement melted in anger. "Hell and damnation, where are your brains, boy? You aren't at dock! Did the old man put that up to you?"

"Maybe I can work it," protested Anthony. "We've got to get those motors off. We ——"

"Never mind them. You go up and find my fire-room crew. Tell the old man I got to have my men back." He shook Anthony's arm with a sort of fury: "Tell him they left. Tell him I got my engineers firing. Tell him if he wants to float to make those niggers come back here. Tell the old man we can't keep steam — tell him to come the hell down here himself!"

"He can't," shouted Anthony. "He's sick. He hasn't been to bed since Saturday night. What do you expect?"

"He's got no business to be sick," yelled MacGillvray. "Tell him I said so. Tell him we're floundering. Don't he give a damn? Don't he know we could capsize any minute? He'd lose every soul aboard. Just like that!" MacGillvray's loose fingers snapped soundless in the uproar. "Isn't he getting his passengers off?"

"We're doing everything we can," said Anthony. "We ——"

"You are like hell!" roared MacGillvray, "Who's in command? The old man? He's dead to the world. Had him on the phone an hour ago and he didn't know what he was talking about! Why don't Driscoll take over? Why don't you take over? Are you so damn dumb you think you're going to float forever?"

"He's the master on this vessel," said Anthony. "As long as he's on the bridge giving orders, in the deck department we obey them. When we're ordered to abandon, we'll abandon. Meanwhile we keep our mouths shut."

Mr. MacGillvray stared at him. Then he spat hard into the dirty water in front of Anthony. "Get out of here, brat! Take your play-acting upstairs! Believe me, if I was a sailor, I'd rather be drowned than have to tell people afterward what I was doing all morning. Jesus, I hope some of you get off alive!"

Anthony turned, but Mr. MacGillvray caught his shoulder suddenly. "Listen," he roared. "Tell the old man! Get it into him! Ask what he's doing with four hundred human beings somebody's going to want from us afterward. Tell him for Christ's sake use his head ——"

Miro, still on the bridge, waiting for any further orders Captain Clendening might have, could not imagine what the men on the well-deck forward had in mind. He watched them release a boom from its cradle. Then they stood a moment, apparently arguing. Then with a sort of feverish violence, they scrambled above, all laid hold on the cable, and struggling hard brought the boom up, jerk by jerk. It tilted, staggered, mounted uncertain toward the perpendicular. What must surely be the idiocy of this performance did not surprise Miro much as the energy with which they went about it. They might of course, be contemplating something which he did not understand, but he noted that Mr. Bradell was absent, and it seemed more likely that they were acting on their own initiative.

Not speaking, for he knew that the captain would not hear him, he came close and pointed insistently until Captain Clendening looked. There was a long silence, and suddenly the captain, shaking his head a little, roared out: "On the fo'castle! Down that boom! What the devil is going on?"

Below, they wavered. Black faces turned. Out of the concealment of the deck-house under them came Mr. Bradell now, and he, too, turned. The boom hovered in a broken semi-circle, balanced dizzily, went into a drunken side movement.

"Look alive, sir!" screamed Miro.

The boom, released, came too fast. With a blind, inert precision it swung farther left; the iron-sheathed timber struck like a well-directed club out of the anonymous skies. It knocked Mr. Bradell's poised figure ten feet into the scuppers. Up to them came the final crash of the demolished tip.

Captain Clendening opened his mouth and shut it. He shook his head and said: "Quartermaster?"

"Yes, sir," said Miro.

"Who was that?"

"Mr. Bradell, sir."

"Bradell," said Captain Clendening. "Bradell." He turned his head, continuing sharp and clearer. "Quartermaster."

"Yes, sir," said Miro, whiter.

"See about him." Captain Clendening's moustache worked stiffly. "Don't report back here. If he's alive, get him into a boat. Don't come back here. Get him away, get him off this ship. We're floundering."

"Yes, sir."

Left alone, Captain Clendening was quietly aware of death like a man beside him. He thought of his lungs, bursting with sea water, a final agony of suffocation. This his body recoiled from, his gullet tightened, bitter saliva filling his mouth. He looked about carefully, as though there might be somewhere he could go; but it was a minute, never-completed gesture, for a habit of thought, an automatic pride, interrupted him. He was exposed, on the bridge, people could see him. The slugging of his heart, too large now for his chest, he could not control, but that was hidden. He knew perfectly now he had to die, and they did too. He wished that they might for a moment face it; he would like them to know — he was distracted, not ironic — if death would still seem so proper, so necessary to them.

There his acute senses broke down self-defensively. An anaesthetic of poorer comprehension, a sort of mental stupor took off the momentary keen edge, veiled the face and fear of death. Deliberately, his hands heavy and inaccurate, he buttoned his bridge coat, tugged it into place. He made some motions to smooth the wrinkles from his sleeves, brushing the gold braid. After several uncertain efforts he picked up his uniform cap, and this, too, he brushed off, hitting it with his numb hand once or twice. Then he put it carefully on his head, brought the visor down, a stiff, somehow heartening, line across his vision. He stood as straight as he could, supporting himself when necessary on the rail.

From the south the sea was travelling in long swells. Miro, braced against the backboard of boat ten, supported Mr. Bradell between his knees. He did not know what time it was; he had somehow smashed his good watch. The glass was gone and the hands snapped off; there was sea water in it and some blood from Mr. Bradell's broken head. They had more than thirty Negroes on board, and this, Miro recognized was shameful; but he could not prevent it while he had Mr. Bradell to look out for, and he told himself that if they had been the first to cut loose, he had orders to get away. Many of the other boats had been filled; one he saw — and it frightened him more than anything else — was entirely filled with women and children. He tried to call Mr. Fenton's attention to the fact that there was no one in it capable of managing it. What would they do? Mr. Fenton paid no attention to him, and the men in number ten, mutinous at the delay, pushed off; with great difficulty got clear. Miro hoped that it might at least set the others an example; that they wouldn't wait any longer for an order to abandon. Otherwise he

understood, they might sink where they were, boats still attached, many people still on deck.

Mr. Bradell moved between his knees and Miro was seized with distress and consternation, for it occurred to him that now Mr. Bradell would realize that number ten had deliberately drawn off, leaving hundreds of people in danger of death. He said at once: "Captain's orders to abandon, sir."

Anthony's face had fallen apart, but it was bound up fairly well with a handkerchief and a hard web of pain. He did not realize anything; and not knowing how he got where he was, where he had been, nor for how long, Anthony made an effort to learn the time. The left arm with his wrist-watch he found to be no longer subject to his control. Pain of light on his eyes made him look up, and by the thin sun hung above him in the white sky he knew that it was close to noon. The boat, riding roughly, passed up a mound of water and let him see, amazed, the *San Pedro.*

He was stupified by this sight. He had seen the *San Pedro* too often; he recognized at once that this view of her was a dream. It was impossible; it would be fatal. She could not remain like that. Here was no matter ballast tanks could correct — her list was mortal; and at once he heard a low voice saying: "*But you do not float quite level . . . quite level. . . .*"

He started to make a movement, to arise; and hands were instantly on him, holding him. Blood came into his mouth. A scalding void complemented his body, filling out the electric emptiness where half his face and all his shoulders should have been. Waves of heat overpowered him — so strong that with them came the imaginary smell of hot oil, the roar of the engine-room shaft. At his side, in a shabby black overcoat, he saw the horrid author of that low voice, insistent, plucking at him: "*But you do not float . . .*"

This, he knew, was entirely false; he saw, actually, nothing but the men forward, the gunwales, the mounting green water,

"We'll need every bit of cloth we can lay hands on, Miss Gill."

literal things in a spinning blur of fever and pain — yet, in a way, Doctor Percival remained; the fleshless face was steady and close, brooding on them.

Seeing thus, while not seeing, he smelt stronger than salt and blood the warmed sweetness of patchouli; he was aware of the dark, despairing blue of her eyes, the frail flippancy of her voice like a veil drawn decently over her unspeakable desire to live.

Then, violently, without escape, he knew that this was real, not a dream. The *San Pedro* was really there; the ocean was in her; the sea smothered her tremendous engines. It choked up every passage and part of her; swamped into silence the marvelous elaboration of her machines, quenched all her lights, and would in a moment drag her down like any broken metal. Water would do away quickly with everything that breathed aboard her. The boat brought him up again. Cold as he had been hot, he saw once more the *San Pedro.*

Just adequately the *San Pedro* met each swell; no wasted effort. She lay on her port side; down by the head, and took her terrible rest while the mounds of water pillowed her and washed her quietly. Like the disarray of weariness, starboard davits on the top deck dangled out trailing ropes, suspended white boats unevenly. Expiring wisps of steam broke in curls from her flanks. She had a screw clear, pinned lined like a mighty metal flower on the slim cone of the starboard bracket.

There she lay in a motionless lethargy, and then without pause or warning, she went. The shooting swell rose in a hill, came quite over her bows. Her funnel inclined; water poured freely into it, into the high hoods of her ventilators. Deep in her, a hidden drum boom-boomed. Like a pool, the dark gully of her promenade deck filled forward; steam mounted in columns through her coal-hatches. A great metallic sigh, a six-hundred foot shudder — why hadn't her boilers blown, lifted thunderous through her exhausted sides? — she was going home, going to some deep sleep. The waters folded over her — air, steam, the great chords booming in her hull. . . .

There remained Anthony, harassed by great pain, the boat under him, Miro behind him, the black men with the oars; if there were other boats, he could not see them. Only, overhead, the vast sky, pale and white, all around the infinite empty ocean.

THE TIDE

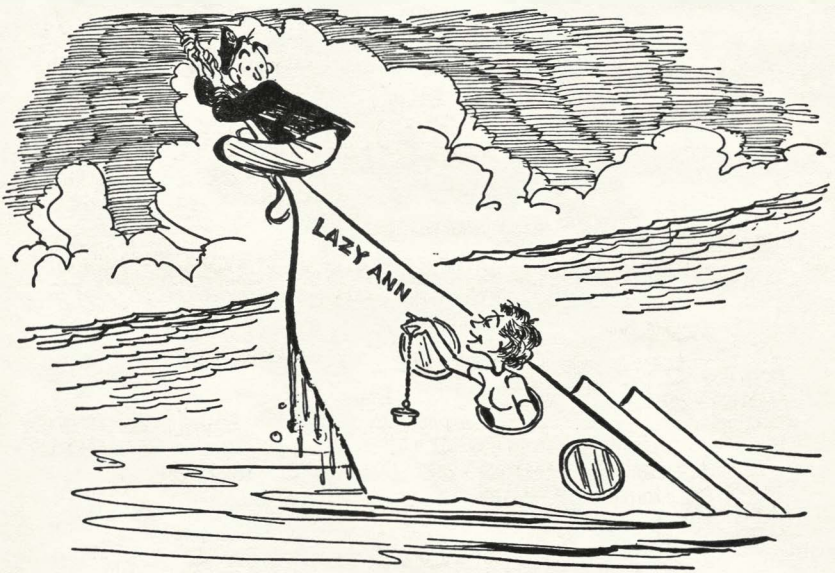
(Continued from page 75)

A great crowd of children screamed and splashed in the surf and dug holes in the sand. The ground was strewn with sheets of newspaper, banana skins, pieces of cooked sausage, empty cans, egg-shells, bottles, orange peel, cardboard boxes and empty cigarette packets.

The smooth, curving beauty of the golden beach was now all torn and destroyed. The people lay stretched out upon its ruins, twisting about in the heat and clawing the sand voluptuously. Oil gleamed on their naked thighs and bellies as they moved, like slime on the bodies of enormous white creatures that have just been unearthed.

The tide began to flow. It rolled back up the beach, putting the people to flight. They gathered up their luggage and went away, leaving the rubbish behind them. The returning waves drove the rubbish before them and took back the wounded beach into the sea's bosom, to remould the beauty that had been torn.

At sunset, when the tide again reached the roots of the palm trees, a great flock of birds feasted on the offal borne on the surf.



"I found it, dear."

IN THIS ISSUE...

A CLASSIC NOVEL OF THE SEA

By Pulitzer Prize Winner

James G. Cozzens

Tragedy and terror trail the S. S. San Pedro like some dark-finned tiger shark from the moment she puts to sea. Aboard are such memorable characters as Dr. Percival, first to notice that the ship "floated not quite level"; First Mate Anthony Bradell, who faced duty as he found it; and the lovely, wholly desirable Marilee, who proved to Bradell that there is more to life than salt water and ship schedules.

Drama, suspense and action against a backdrop of restless waters, make S. S. San Pedro a reading experience never to be forgotten!

—*The Editors*