

27 C  
in Canada  
30 Cents  
W

September 1st

# Adventure

Published Twice  
A Month



Y.E. Pyle

**COMMANDER ELLSBERG · GEORGES SURDEZ · ARED WHITE**  
**ROBERT SIMPSON · JAMES W. BENNETT · and others**



# Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)



## CONTENTS

for September 1st

1931  
VOL. LXXIX No. 6

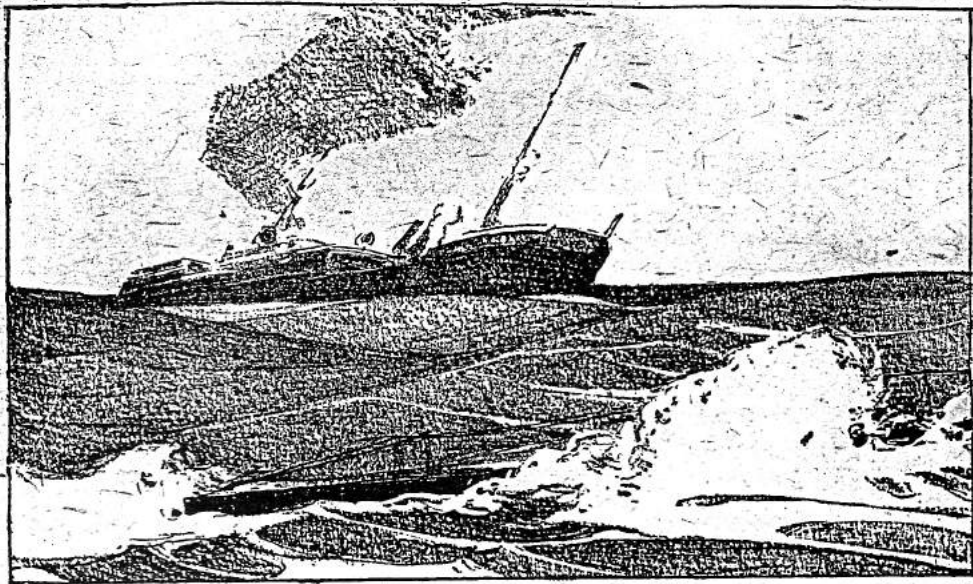
A. A. Proctor  
EDITOR

Cargo To Newcastle <i>A Novelette of Submarine Warfare</i>	COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG	2
The Buffoon <i>A Story of Morocco and the Legion</i>	GEORGES SURDEZ	28
A Cape Storm (A Poem)	HARRY KEMP	39
Brownies <i>A Story of the Railroad Men</i>	E. S. DELLINGER	40
Frederick Townsend Ward <i>An Article on a Famous Yankee Adventurer in China</i>	JAMES W. BENNETT	53
Curios	BILL ADAMS	62
Monsieur Le Falcon <i>A Novel of the Napoleonic Wars. Four Parts—Part III</i>	ARED WHITE	64
Médusa Dines <i>A Story of the Deep Sea Folk</i>	PAUL ANNIXTER	96
Singular Cinés	CAPTAIN MANSFIELD	102
Horns Of The Ram <i>A Story of the Slave Coast</i>	ROBERT SIMPSON	104
The Sun Shines Bright <i>A Story of the Racetrack</i>	LUPTON A. WILKINSON	126
Spirit Meat	VICTOR SHAW	136
Scourge Of The Volga <i>A Story of Fendal Russia</i>	NATALIE B. SOKOLOFF	138
If William Walker Had Been There	ROBERT WELLS RITCHIE	148
Jonah Jones <i>A Story of the Sea</i>	R. V. GERY	150
Machine Gun Morale <i>A Story of the Mexican Border</i>	CHARLES L. CLIFFORD	161
<hr/>		
The Camp-fire	181	Ask Adventure
Cover Design by V. E. Pyles		186
		Trail Ahead
		192
		Headings by Harry Townsend

Published twice a month by The Butterick Publishing Company, Butterick Building, New York, N. Y., U. S. A., Joseph A. Moore, Chairman of the Board; S. R. Latslaw, President; W. C. Evans, Secretary; Fred Lewis, Treasurer; A. A. Proctor, Editor. Entered as Second Class Matter, October 1, 1920, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Chicago, Illinois. Yearly subscription \$4.00 in advance. Single copy, Twenty-five Cents, in Canada Thirty Cents. Foreign postage, \$2.00 additional. Canadian postage, 75 cents. Trade Mark Registered; Copyright, 1931, by The Butterick Publishing Company in the United States and Great Britain.



*A Novelette by the Author of "Pigboats"*



"SHAKE a leg now! Another hundred tons and we're off!"

A shrill blast on his whistle, Lieutenant Blake sprang clear of the in-rushing trucks; a gang of bluejackets leaped forward, started shoveling coal like mad into the yawning canvas bags, straining to clear the deck before the next clamshell bucket swung over and disgorged its load on their heads.

Blake, his face caked with coal dust and furrowed with sweat, his eyeballs fiery red from constant irritation, his once white uniform as black as his face, grinned approvingly as the mountain of coal piled on the deck melted away before the onslaught of the flying shovels, glanced again over his shoulder at the scoreboard hanging against the port boat crane. A hundred and eighty tons last hour for the Third Division.

A distant rumble; he faced hastily outboard. A huge steel clamshell whipped up out of the dark hold alongside, rose high above his head, hung a moment, swinging

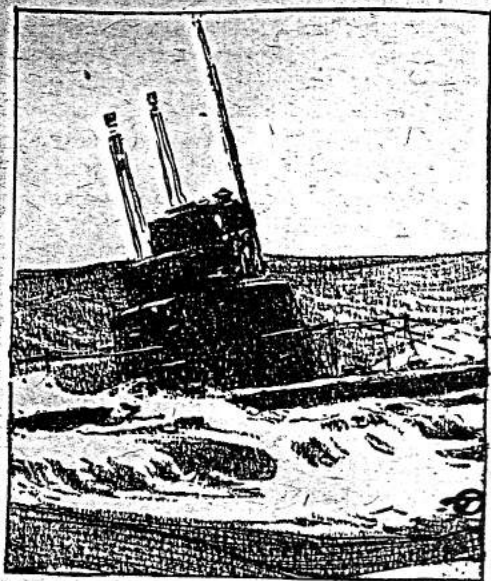
violently amid a forest of steel booms and singing cables, then to the groaning of the winches and the shrill whine of the trolleys, it shot over the rail of the collier *Ulysses*, poised a moment above the deck of the battleship *Texas* while the sailors below jumped clear.

Another blast on Blake's whistle; the steel jaws opened, half a ton of coal dropped out, hit the deck. Still enveloped in a cloud of dust, the empty jaws snapped to, the hurtling bucket trolleyed inboard, dropped like a plummet into the black hold of the collier for its next bite.

Once more the grimy sailors leaped in, shoveled frantically to load the bags on the next set of trucks.

The deck of the U. S. S. *Texas* hummed with action. From bow to stern, under the overhanging booms of the collier alongside, mounds of coal littered the deck, constantly replenished by the flying clamshells from the *Ulysses*, constantly melting before the shovels of the deck

and "On the Bottom"



# CARGO TO NEWCASTLE

By

COMMANDER  
EDWARD  
ELLSBERG

force as they heaved it into bags, feeding the endless streams of little trucks that circled the deck, hauling the coal from underneath the booms to the numerous scuttles yawning all over the main deck, down which the coal poured in a steady torrent into the bunkers far below the warship's armor belt.

Clouds of black dust wreathed the *Texas*, smudged the superstructure, crunched on the wood deck under the little wheels of the hurrying trucks; filled the nostrils, the eyes of the sweating sailors, filtered through their blackened clothes, caked their skins from head to foot. No one would have recognized in the grimy vessel or its blackened crew the trim warship or the neat bluejackets of three hours before, when the *Ulysses* had first nosed her way gently alongside the *Texas* and, in a flurry of heaving lines and straining hawsers, made fast and rigged out her coaling booms over the spotless battleship.

Well, it was nearly over. With relief

Blake watched the yeoman chalk up the tally for the third hour—twenty-two hundred tons of coal already aboard and mostly stowed below; only five hundred tons more now, just another hundred tons of it for the Third Division to stow, and the *Texas* was through, filled chock-a-block. And that settled it for the squadron too. They were the last ship of him, a few hundred yards off, he could see their sister ship, the *New York*, which the *Ulysses* had coaled just before coming to them. Geysers of water were spraying everywhere over the *New York*, washing her superstructure, flooding her decks; muddy streams gushed from the scuppers in her armor belt, cleansing her of the dust and grime of coaling, but blackening the clear waters of Long Island Sound as they poured overboard.

Another bucket roared in overhead, dumped its load. Blake turned again to his task, encouraged his weary men.

"Come on, *Texas*! Only a few more now and we're off to the war. Dig in,



boys; instead of coal, you'll soon be heaving shells at the Kaiser! Hear that rumble? The *New York's* heaving in her anchor to short stay. They're only waiting for us."

Reddened eyes stared up at him, white teeth gleamed strangely out against coal black faces; the gobs of the Third Division plied their shovels with redoubled vigor and strove to drown their discomfort with vivid jokes about what they'd soon be doing to the Kaiser. Whistles shrieked, clamshell buckets thundered down into the emptying holds of the collier, cata-racts of coal poured out on the deck of the deeply laden battleship.

A smile of satisfaction wreathed Blake's face. Never before had the ship coaled so fast; and never had his turret crew so far outclassed the other ship's divisions in manhandling it into the bunkers. Like that in everything, he thought; that division of his was always good. And now on the brink of their departure for the war zone, they were outdoing themselves.

He looked proudly at the white "E", hard won trophy of their marksmanship, shining even now through the coal dust against the war colored side of No. 3 turret—with that pair of fourteen-inch babies towering over their heads, instead of imprecations his boys would soon be hurling shrieking messengers of death against the armored sides of the Kaiser's battleships. And as soon as those buckets finished whipping the coal aboard—up anchor! The *Texas* and her sisters of the Sixth Battle Squadron would be on their way to the North Sea and to action.



"DUCK!"

At the top of his lungs Blake shrieked a warning, grew suddenly sick at the pit of his stomach as his scream failed to carry through the din. A wire on the boom forward of him parted; in agony Blake saw the heavy clamshell bucket swing side-wise, clip the mate on the *Ulysses* on the head, send him sprawling into an open coal bunker.

Blake leaped the rail, to the collier's

deck, peered down the hold. Forty feet below a limp mass was vaguely discernible through the dust, huddled on the steel plates at the bottom of the empty bunker.

Whistles shrilled, coaling ceased, a strange quiet enveloped the *Ulysses*. Seamen scrambled down steel ladders into the hold; Blake seized an empty coaling bag from his boatswain's mate, thrust a heaving line through its manila loops, lowered it down. A moment, then willing hands hoisted away, the canvas bag with its silent burden rose over the hatch coaming, was gently lifted over the bulwark to the deck of the *Texas*, hurried below to the battleship's sickbay. And then, as if oblivious of human suffering, the winches creaked again, the interrupted river of coal started once more to flow aboard the *Texas*.

Shaken by the sudden tragedy, Blake fingered his whistle nervously, followed with anxious eyes the course of the buckets swinging in over his men. The boom forward of him was out of commission; his gang would have to receive the coal for the Second Division now as well as their own. There was confusion for a moment, then the streams of coaling trucks were rerouted and the job proceeded, but gone were the rude jokes which had lightened the task.

A tap on his shoulder. Blake turned, found a marine at his side—the captain's orderly.

"The cap'n wants to see you, Mr. Blake; he's in with the admiral. He says to come right up, sir."

Lieutenant Blake stared in surprise, then turned the division over to his junior officer and, dodging in and out amid the heaps of coal and the laboring seamen, followed the orderly to the superstructure and up the ladder to the admiral's cabin.

The marine swung back a steel door in the starboard gallery. Blake hesitated a moment—his clothes were filthy with coal dust.

"Don't bother, Mr. Blake; come right in."

The admiral's gruff voice boomed through the door; Blake hurriedly stepped over the coaming, found himself facing not only the admiral and his own captain, but in addition an officer in a Naval Reserve uniform — Lieutenant Commander Bergstrom, skipper of the U. S. S. *Ulysses*, the collier alongside.

The admiral nodded, turned to Bergstrom.

"Lieutenant Blake will fill that billet fine, Captain." He looked toward Blake. "Mr. Blake, this is Captain—"

"But I tal you I don' vant nobody. I get along better yet vit' no mate than vit' strangers. Colliers ain't battleships," protested Bergstrom vehemently, disdaining to shake hands with the newcomer.

Blake looked curiously from the flushed skipper toward the admiral, then cast an inquiring glance at his own captain, standing glumly behind the admiral. What was up?

The admiral broke in bruskiy.

"No more protests, Captain Bergstrom. This is war time; I can't let you go to sea short handed because of that accident. You'll find Mr. Blake entirely competent."

He glowered a moment at Bergstrom, turned again toward his flag captain. Blake's heart sank into his boots as he listened.

"Transfer Lieutenant Blake to the *Ulysses* immediately as her new mate. And he'll have to step lively; we'll probably be underway for Scapa Flow in thirty minutes now."



WITH reddened eyes—moistened from, well, coal dust perhaps—Blake leaned over the bridge rail of the *Ulysses*, watched the ships of the Sixth Battle Squadron fade slowly from sight in the dusk fringing the eastern horizon. Unconsciously his nails dug into his palms; with a leaden heart he gazed as the cage masts of the *Texas* disappeared over the rim of the sea.

Even yet he could hardly believe it had

happened; his ship, his shipmates, were off to the war, and he, only a few hours before in command of a turret on one of those ships, straining with the others to get under way, was suddenly snatched away from everything that meant the Navy, metamorphosed into the mate of a dirty collier.

"Steady on sou'-sou'west, sir."

Vaguely Blake heard the helmsman repeat the course. He gritted his teeth. South-southwest, bound for Rio. And aboard what was next thing to a damned tramp, doomed to haul coal up and down the coast. Not even a chance to cross the Atlantic to coal the fleet in British waters. Coal, worse luck, was the one thing the Limeys could supply themselves on the other side. South-southwest! And there, heading due east toward the war zone were his ship, his shipmates, his guns. He looked aft over the triced up coaling booms, the steel trusses, the huge hatch covers being lowered in place over empty bunkers. This was no warship; the *Ulysses* looked more like a section of Brooklyn Bridge under way than any proper vessel for a sailor. And as a fighting ship! He looked scornfully at the two four-inch guns she carried on her poop. Probably not a man on board who could manage to hit the broad side of a barn even at close range.

He sighed as he thought of the glistening interior of his thickly armored turret on the *Texas* with its enormous guns, its bulging recoil cylinders, the hoists disgorging tremendous projectiles to be swallowed up in the yawning breeches.

And now? Those four-inch popguns! And never a chance while the war raged on across the sea, to use even them. And this the reward of merit! Because his record was good the admiral had chosen him. Important position! He recalled how the admiral had tried to soften the bitter pill. Good man needed. He wished he'd had a few courts on his record so they'd picked some one else and left him with his turret. And on top of everything Bergstrom had said he didn't want anybody. Why hadn't the Old Man



taken Bergstrom at his word, left him with his guns? With hundreds of other lieutenants in the squadron too, why had—oh, hell! What was the use?

The *Ulysses* was heading south off Montauk; the battleships were disappearing into the broad Atlantic. This was the end of the years he had spent sweating, fighting, drilling that turret crew so that every twenty seconds a pair of fourteen-inch projectiles should go screaming toward the enemy while the *Texas* reeled under the recoil of her guns, and behind her armored walls, his men coolly fed more shells into the smoking breeches. The end. He turned dully from the rail, glanced about the unfamiliar bridge.

There, behind the helmsman, he saw Bergstrom, sensed the look of hatred in the skipper's eyes as he took in his new first officer. Well, it might as well be mutual, thought Blake. Who was Bergstrom, anyway, to protest to the admiral against taking a regular Naval officer? Like all the collier officers, perhaps one step above a boatswain's mate. Some ex-sailor, tougher than the rest, who had learned enough navigation to get a license, then a berth in the old Naval Auxiliary Service, and now through the miracle of the war, here he was, a Naval officer, a lieutenant commander in the reserve. In the eyes of the ordinary citizen a representative of the traditions of Annapolis.

Blake coolly faced his skipper's glance. That a Naval officer! He wouldn't know a trajectory from a Mollier's diagram, and he probably navigated by the canned methods in Bowditch. Nevertheless, there he stood, in the Navy only a few months, with two and a half gold stripes on each sleeve, skipper of the ship, while Blake, still a lieutenant even though ten years out of Annapolis, was only his first officer. Everything on this damned ship was on a par with the crazy events of the last few hours.

Bergstrom dropped his eyes, turned his weatherbeaten face to pore over the chart. Blake paused a moment to see if he would speak, then climbed down the

steep ladders to the main deck to supervise securing their gear for sea.

Working in the water and the coal dust on deck, begrimed sailors in dungarees were lashing the clamshells down abreast the closed hatches; aloft on every set of coaling towers the deck force struggled in the gathering darkness to rig in the booms, seize them firmly in their vertical housings against the steel masts.

Blake splashed his way down the narrow port passage outboard of the hatch coamings, stumbling in the dusk over unseen pad eyes riveted everywhere to take the myriad coaling blocks. He swore under his breath; there wasn't a square yard of clear deck on the damned hooker. And the sailors! He peered into their faces as he worked his way aft. The riffraff of the merchant marine; probably the best they could get, though, for a collier. All the difference in the world between them and the young Americans the Navy recruited for its warships.



BLAKE spread his feet wider apart, braced himself as the *Ulysses* rolled unsteadily to a quartering sea. He pressed the telescope of his sextant firmly against his right eye, squinted through the dim light of the early dawn at the faint line of the eastern horizon just starting to make itself visible in the fast fading night. Slowly he turned the vernier screw, bringing Sirius down till the bright star danced just above the horizon line, called to the quartermaster at his side holding the comparing watch—

"Stand by!"

Another twist of the screw and in his telescope the star touched the horizon.

"Mark!"

The quartermaster jotted down the time, looked inquiringly toward Blake as the latter peered through the microscope at his vernier to read the altitude.

"Belay that, Mr. Blake."

Astonished, Blake glanced up to see Bergstrom, sextant in hand, standing beside him on the bridge, waving the quartermaster away.

"It ain't necessary for you to bodder vit' navigation no more; on my ship I'm the navigator. Them Navy ideas of trusting junior officers to do it don' go vit' me."

Blake flushed, quit reading his sextant.

"You won't have to worry about trusting me, Captain. I was navigator a whole cruise on the *Michigan*."

"That ain't noddin' vit' me." A surly look filled Bergstrom's eyes. "I don't trust my ship to nobody." He beckoned to the quartermaster. "Larsen, mark the time now." He faced the east, lifted his sextant, hastily adjusted the mirrors to catch a sight before the stars faded in the brightening dawn.

Blake's jaws tightened; he gazed curiously at Bergstrom as the skipper's clumsy fingers struggled to adjust his sextant. What ailed the man, anyway? Blake could understand his antipathy toward having a Naval officer as his exec; many merchant officers felt that the Navy looked down patronizingly at them.

And on the other hand, most Naval officers felt that the merchant officers considered them as gold laced tea fighters, not seamen. And there were enough incompetents on either side to lend color to both theories. Blake knew that; he realized how his skipper might feel, but why carry it to extremes? And especially in navigation, where Blake when he was a midshipman had starred; the very sextant he held in his hand was a prize, won as the most competent navigator in his class. And now this marlinspike sailor was saying he couldn't be relied on to navigate a collier when he had spent two years navigating a battleship.

Bergstrom gave the quartermaster his altitude, searched the sky for another star at right angles to Sirius, to give him a "fix" by crossing his two lines of position. He sighted one to the southeast, hastily shot it, then turned again to Blake.

"On my ship I'm the skipper an' the navigator. You stand your vatch, look out for the deck force, an' don't worry over noddin' else. You understand dot?"

Blake repressed his rising anger, nodded

briefly, went below cursing inwardly. His cruise on the *Ulysses* was going to be a madhouse with that captain.

And no relief. With a sinking heart he looked over the other officers gathered at breakfast round the table in the messroom in the poop. McGuire, the chief engineer, a boisterous mechanic, nothing more. Higgins, the second officer, a blear eyed weakling. Lost his master's certificate years ago. Ship piled on the rocks while he was drunk in his cabin. Hadn't been able to get an officer's berth again till the war started and any kind of a sailor was in demand. Olson, the carpenter, a stupid squarehead. The third officer, the assistant engineers? Blake looked them over hopelessly. The dregs of the merchant service.

Evidently the transports, the fast liners, the big freighters, the swarm of hastily converted auxiliary cruisers, had gobbled up all the competent officers in the merchant marine; only the misfits were left to man the colliers. Blake squirmed in his chair at the head of the mess table, nibbled distastefully the lukewarm bacon and eggs the colored messboy slid across the dirty tablecloth before him. What a change from his old mess on the fleet!

"Well, praises be, we're rollin' down to Rio!—No coal this trip!" McGuire's voice boomed in his ear. Blake put down his half emptied coffee cup, looked up.

"No coal, Chief? Why not?"

"Shure, an' it's not. Fer why should we be steamin' to Rio fer coal, wid all thim Pocahontas black diamonds piled up in Hampton Roads?"

Blake nodded. McGuire was right. In the turmoil of the last twenty-four hours, it hadn't occurred to him that for coal it would be ridiculous to go to Rio. The heart of the seaboard coal industry was Hampton Roads. How many times had he seen the colliers loading up at Newport News, at Sewall's Point? No coal? Perhaps the cruise of the *Ulysses* might develop something after all.

"What are we after?" he asked eagerly. "Hit ayn't coal this time, matey, hit's



worse—a load o' ruddy manganese," broke in Higgins gloomily. "Hi knows the stuff; hit's so 'eavy, ye'll sink before ye gits yer 'olds filled.

"Shure, manganese ore fer the steel mills. Widout it how cud thim lads in Bethlehem 'n' Midvale turn out the big guns 'r the armor plates 'r the shells fer the byes in the trenches? Shure, wot wid a war goin' on 'n' all thim mills cryin' fer manganese fer tools 'n' ivrything ilse, it's worth its weight in gold now! Black diamonds we bin carryin'? If they wuz rale diamonds, they'd hardly be in it wid a cargo o' manganese fer rale value these days!"

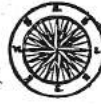
"Manganese?" questioned Olson. "Ay tal' you, ay don't swallow such a yarn. What good ban manganese for, Chief, that gold-ain't worth that much?"

"Shure, Chips, ye claims to be a carpenter, 'n' ye don't know that? It's fer to toughen steel; ye throws mebbe a few pounds in a big batch of o' molten steel fer an alloy, 'n' wot happens? The steel gits more'n twice as strong 'n' tougher'n hell. Widout it ye jist cudn't make thim armor plates, nor shells, nor big guns nor nuthin. Whin the manganese runs out, the war'll ind, I'm tellin' yez, fer the byes'll have to fight wid their fists thin."

"Right you are, matey," chimed in Higgins. "Hi was loaded down wit' it when Hi beached the *Landon Castle*, an' well Hi learned before the underwriters an' the Board o' Trade took my certificate wot manganese was worth even hin those days. An' now? The chief's right, hit's worth hits wight in gold!"

The discussion waxed warm, Higgins elaborating on the dangers of stowing such a cargo, with manganese ore five times as heavy as coal, and Olson arguing with McGuire as to the relative value of manganese to the various nations engaged in the war. Blake listened at first in amusement as tempers rose and cockney arguments were countered with the dialects of Cork and Copenhagen, but soon he lost interest. What difference, coal or manganese? Their final destination in either case was Hampton

Roads, their mission only to be the prosaic bulk carrier on the quiet side of the Atlantic, while thousands of miles away, the fighting men of all nations struggled in the turmoil of the war zone to conquer their enemies by force of arms.



THE lightened *Ulysses*, her rusty sides high out of water in spite of the liquid ballast in her forepeak and all her double bottom tanks, rolled deeply to the long swells coming up on their starboard bow. An endless motion, complicated slightly by moderate pitching as the bow of the *Ulysses* plowed through the tropic seas, held the ship, amazing for its magnitude in such a mild sea. Blake watched, at first a little anxiously, then with professional interest only as the days wore on, the abnormal rolling of the topheavy collier. Twenty degrees to port, twenty degrees to starboard—that was nothing out of the ordinary for this ship with her forest of top hamper and her empty holds. On a battleship, weighted down with heavy waterline armor belts, ponderous machinery and magazines chock-a-block with shells, it would take a hurricane to develop that much motion. On the *Ulysses*, with a moderate sea and a light breeze, it was an everyday occurrence.

Blake pondered. Would filling the upper tanks with sea water for ballast make the *Ulysses* roll less or more? Certainly it would increase their draft and that should steady them; on the other hand the added ballast would be above their waterline and it might increase their already marked topheaviness. His forehead wrinkled over the problem, then he gave it up; it was too hot to think deeply. And putting sea water in the long disused tanks might ruin what good paint work there was left in them. Besides, tomorrow they should be due in Rio; once that manganese was aboard they'd be pumping out what ballast they had already in the double bottoms.

Rio tomorrow. Bergstrom's navigation was not so bad; each day his own sights

had checked the skipper's position within two or three miles—good, considering that because of the captain's opposition he had had to take his own sights unassisted by the quartermaster; had had to guess at the dead reckoning run between sights from their speed without access to the exact reading of the taffrail log.

But in spite of the skipper's evident anger he had kept up his old habit of getting a morning and an evening position, and had taken a somewhat unholy delight in Bergstrom's ill suppressed wrath at having his first officer even unofficially keep tab on the ship's runs.

Blake entered the chartroom, compared his wrist watch with the chronometer. Back in the wing of the bridge, keeping a little clear of Bergstrom, he lifted his sextant to his eye, flicked two smoked glass shades over the telescope sight, worked the screw a moment to bring the limb of the sun down on the sharp horizon line, then glanced hastily at his watch to get the time of his sight. Carefully he set his sextant on the broad teak rail, drew his notebook from his pocket and jotted down the time, then reached for the rail to read the altitude on his sextant.

A bump, Bergstrom stumbled against him, sent his precious sextant flying over the rail. Blake lunged futilely for it, missed, watched the delicate instrument bounce off the forward hatch, come to rest a twisted mass of junk on the deck twenty feet below.

Bergstrom looked down at the smashed sextant, shrugged his shoulders.

"Too bad, Mr. Blake. But this ain't no place for private property. You should leave your sextant below like I tol' you."

Blake glared at him. His prize sextant. What lubberly clumsiness! And Bergstrom was not even sorry. Blake clambered down the ladders, squirmed in between a winch and the anchor windlass, retrieved the wreckage of his sextant. He looked at it hopelessly. Ruined. With a muttered oath he tossed it overboard, strode aft along the heaving deck to his cabin in the poop.



RIO harbor. The dreary clank of the clamshell buckets echoed across the water, was lost in the wide sweep of the land locked bay. Dirty barges surrounded the *Ulysses*, ancient wooden hulks filled with manganese ore. Strange figures—coal black negroes, uncouth Indians—scrambled over the barges, shifting the empties, warping the loaded hulks to favorable positions under the collier's booms.

As the hours passed by the *Ulysses* sank lower and lower in the water; her Plimsoll mark began to go awash. And finally the last group of lighters was emptied, the last few tons of ore shoveled in heaps, sent aboard; dumped down the holds.

Blake made the rounds of the deck with the carpenter, peered down each of their huge cargo hatches into the bunkers where the crew of the *Ulysses*, armed with shovels, were leveling off the heaps of manganese.

The two forecastle bunkers, those forward of the bridge, Blake had left empty altogether, to fill as well as he could the holds amidships. But even so, he gazed with misgiving at the less than half filled cargo holds. He shook his head.

"What have you got for dunnage boards, Olson, to keep that cargo from shifting?"

"Ay don' have none, Mr. Blake. Always before the holds been full wit' coal so ay ain't never use none aboard here." The carpenter gaged the wide expanse of the open hold before him. "Such a job tak' lots of lumber, ay tal' you."

"I can see that, all right, Chips; and lots of men too, to get dunnage boards over all that stuff and shored down ship-shape and Bristol fashion so it won't shift in a seaway. Well, get your gang and measure up; I'll send the paymaster ashore to get a barge load of planks and timber for the job as soon as you turn in your list."

On the port side a frayed manila eye was dragged clear of a cleat and tossed overboard. A tug puffed vigorously, sending a cloud of black smoke rolling to leeward over the waist of the *Ulysses*.



Coughing violently as he stepped out of the haze of hot gases, Blake watched the last barge draw slowly away from their side. He looked down at the water—barely ten feet of their hull was now above the surface; they were fully loaded down, and that with the holds still half empty. Higgins was right, that manganese ore was heavy stuff. The sooner they got it properly stowed the sooner they would be off.

A rumble came from forward, a feather of steam curled round the fore-castle, then the clatter and bang of the anchor cable shook the ship as the iron links hammered the hawsepipe. Blake turned in surprise and ran forward. Yes, there was the boatswain in the eyes of the ship, heaving in the anchor and Bergstrom leaning over the bridge rail, a short pipe clenched in his teeth and a megaphone in his hand, superintending the job.

The boatswain leaned over the fore-castle side, turned, bawled out—

“Anchor’s aweigh, sir!”

Bergstrom stooped, gripped the engine telegraphs with both hands, jerked them round to “one-third ahead”. As Blake ran up the steep ladder to the bridge, the ship commenced to shake under his feet—the main engines were turning over.

Breathlessly he faced the skipper.

“The cargo isn’t stowed yet, Captain. I need another day before we start.”

Bergstrom blew a cloud of smoke into his face, started for the wheel.

“I haf orders to hurry, so ve vaste no time. Dot’s a heavy cargo; it ain’t required to stow it.” He turned abruptly to the helmsman. “Hard left! Vatch your steering now.”

His broad back smothered further discussion. Ignoring Blake altogether, Bergstrom shifted the telegraphs to “half ahead” as the huge bulk of the *Ulysses* gathered headway from the churning propellers and moved slowly from her anchorage.

Under way. And without even an attempt to stow the cargo for sea. Blake stared a moment at the captain’s back, then spun on his heel, clambered down

the ladder cursing under his breath. That, a sailor!

The heavily laden *Ulysses* steamed slowly out of the harbor, started to roll uneasily as she met the long-Atlantic swells, while in the stifling heat of the dusty holds, sweating seamen strove to finish the trimming of the manganese, spreading it smoothly out over the bunkers.

One by one the hatches were battened down, the winches secured. The *Ulysses* turned her lumbering prow northward toward the equator; when the last hatch finally was lowered in place Rio and its coastline were fading into the dim haze far off on the port quarter.



SIX days later. The *Ulysses*, her brief stop at San Juan over, was once more under way, steaming out under the fortress guns on the last leg of her voyage, only the run from Porto Rico to Hampton Roads left.

Gathered in the waist of the ship, the narrow passage filled with their bags and hammocks, a group of ten bluejackets and three petty officers faced Lieutenant Blake.

“Here, sir.”

“Here, sir.”

One after another their crisp replies rattled across the deck as he called the roll from the list a chief gunner’s mate in the party had given him. Blake smiled a little bitterly as he checked off each reply; these men were passengers for Norfolk, there for transshipment immediately to join the destroyer squadron at Queens-town for anti-submarine patrol. How he envied them as he scanned their bronzed faces—fighters all, happy at last to be on their way to the war.

War! Well, there had nearly been a miniature war right on the deck of the *Ulysses* when she dropped her mudhook in San Juan to leave the mail from Rio and pick up the mail for the States. Blake grinned as he remembered the look of surprise on Bergstrom’s face when a motor sailer, carrying the American con-

sul and loaded down with bluejackets and their baggage, shot alongside the *Ulysses* while the mail was coming aboard, and the row that started when the consul informed them that the *Ulysses* was to take those seamen north.

Bergstrom had flatly refused; it was his ship and he would carry no passengers. And the consul had just as blandly insisted, standing on his cabled instructions that the men were to go north by the first Naval conveyance and the *Ulysses* plainly enough was the first Naval vessel that had stuck her nose into San Juan since the cable had come.

How Bergstrom had raged at that, cursed the consul, refused to allow the men aboard, ordered the ship under way as soon as the last mail bag came over the side.

That consul was a man, all right, thought Blake. He had listened silently to Bergstrom's epithets, then dropped down the side ladder into the motor sailer.

"Will you take these men aboard?" he had shouted as Bergstrom mounted the bridge.

"No, damn you! Keep dose men to hell off the *Ulysses*! She ain't a Naval transport, she's a collier!" And with that the skipper had ordered the boatswain to heave round on the anchor windlass.

Blake laughed aloud as he thought of it. The consul had pointed silently to the guns in the fortress at the harbor mouth, shouted back:

"Very well, Captain, clearance is refused! Better not try to sail. Within an hour I'll have a cable here from Washington designating a new skipper for the *Ulysses*!"

That had settled Bergstrom. Blake looked at the men in front of him, wondered where to put them. The regular crew had bunks abaft the engine room hatch, but there were no spares; these men would have to swing their hammocks from the deck beams in the forecabin. They'd manage it somehow; sailors always did.

He checked off the last name on the

list, handed it to the ship's writer for entry in the log, turned again to the alert chief gunner's mate facing him.

"Johnson, you take charge of this draft. Stow their bags and hammocks for'ard; the carpenter'll lend a hand in putting up some temporary hooks for swings."

"Aye, aye, sir."

A snappy salute; Johnson faced about, marched his men forward. Blake's pulse quickened as he watched; man-o'-war's-men, those lads. He'd almost give his stripes to be in Johnson's boots on his way over there, and quit forever of this blasted collier and her damned skipper.

They passed the fort, stood out of the harbor, headed north-northwest for the Chesapeake Capes.

Blake glanced at the vanishing fort. Four more days and his first trip on the *Ulysses* would be over, they'd be discharging at Baltimore. That is, if the weather held good. They'd certainly been lucky in the weather on the run up from the Line. If it would only hold a few days more, especially with such a poorly stowed cargo. And once in Baltimore, Washington was hardly an hour away. And if he had a friend left in the Navy Department, his first trip on the *Ulysses* was going to be his last.

A collier was no place for a line officer in wartime; he'd make the detail officer in navigation see that even if he had to drag in his Congressman to put it over. The fleet again for him—if not that, destroyers, submarines, even the transports; anything on the other side would do rather than go back on the *Ulysses*. And one more thing he could count on—there'd be no objection to his transfer from the skipper. The sooner Bergstrom saw the last of him the happier he'd be.

"And that goes for me too," said Blake, half aloud, looking up to the bridge where Bergstrom crouched over the pelorus, taking a last bearing for his departure from the lighthouse on the point.

Eight bells. His watch. Blake mounted the bridge ladder, relieved



Higgins, perfunctorily repeated the course and speed, took up his position in the starboard wing of the bridge as far away from Bergstrom as he could get, scanned the horizon ahead. Nothing in sight.

The *Ulysses* plowed steadily northward. The engines, early in the watch, had settled down to a monotonous throb; only the uneven creaking of the booms as the ship rolled gently to the long swells, broke in on the rhythmic quivering of the overburdened hull.

Blake, looking aft along the long line of coaling towers and past the twin stacks at the break of the poop, scanned the horizon astern through his glasses. Porto Rico had vanished; the ship was well out in the open sea, homeward bound.

Another half hour and this watch would be over. A few more watches and the cruise would be over. After that, no more colliers. A few more watches. Could he keep his fists out of Bergstrom's face till they tied up in Baltimore? His record was clear; with luck and enough restraint he'd keep it that way till they came alongside the pier.

"Mr. Blake!"

Blake dropped his binoculars, looked inboard. At the head of the ladder from his cabin stood the captain, holding a letter. Blake walked over, saluted, caught a glimpse of the Navy Department seal across the letterhead.

"Mr. Blake, change course to east-nor'east."

In surprise Blake looked at the skipper.

"East-northeast, Captain?"

"East-nor'east, Mr. Blake!"

Without a word Blake stepped to the wheel.

"Hard a'port!"

The helmsman spun his wheel to starboard, the bow fell away, a broad streak of white showed under the counter as the stern kicked over under the push of the hard over rudder, and the ship heeled sharply in her turn. The lubber's mark started to move over the compass dial—north, north-northeast, northeast, the compass points spun past the black line marking the ship's head.

"Meet her."

"Meet 'er, sir!" The helmsman reversed his grip, the spokes flew round. The rudder swung back, went five degrees to port to check the swing, then as the bow came slowly on the course, was gently eased back to midships.

Blake watched a moment, marking the position of the jackstaff against the horizon to make sure they had steadied on the new course, turned to Bergstrom.

"Steady on east-northeast, sir."

Bergstrom beckoned to him, indicated the folded paper in his hand.

"Orders from the Department, Mr. Blake. Consul delivered 'em at San Juan, sealed, marked, 'Not to be opened till fifty miles at sea.' I just opened it. Ve discharge at Newcastle, not Baltimore."

Blake's heart throbbed violently. Newcastle! They were going across after all. Through the war zone. Newcastle! Scapa Flow, the Grand Fleet, the *Texas* would be but a few miles away and he might get transferred back. But there'd be one trip through the war zone anyway, a chance to fight if U-boats spotted them. Like a flash his worries lifted, he smiled at Bergstrom.

"Of all the luck to have that draft come aboard just in time! I'll organize some decent gun crews right away." He looked with new interest at the four-inch guns, standing out in black on their quarter. "And we can practise firing at some kegs heaved overboard tomorrow!" He caught himself suddenly, looked at Bergstrom. "Any reasons given?"

"No, just discharge at Newcastle. Maybe our cargo is more needed there."

"I suppose so," replied Blake. "Say, did you notice three o' those men were wearing gun pointer's ratings, and two of 'em had white E's on their sleeves? Can you beat that for luck?"

"Vot's the difference? A sub we can't see; a cruiser's too big. Let's hope ve don' meet noddings."

"Don't worry, Captain. You'll be surprised what a couple of four-inch rifles can do in good hands. Just leave 'em to me!"

Higgins mounted the ladder to take the watch, but after glancing around he strode to the wheel, looked over the helmsman's shoulder at the binnacle.

"Hi thought it was queer, the sun bein' on the wrong quarter. We're 'eadin' east! Wot's up, matey?"

Blake explained. Higgins' face fell.

"Lord 'elp us, facin' them U-boats in this tub! Why didn't I ship in the king's navy an' sink under the Union Jack?"

Bergstrom looked a little queerly from Higgins to Blake.

"Vell, nodding pleases 'em all." He turned on his heel, vanished down the ladder.

Blake checked the heading with his relief, turned over the deck, started aft. But the news had reached the wardroom before him, and round the table he found an excited group of officers arguing their chances of stealing safely through the submarine infested waters around the British Isles.

Ignoring the discussion, Blake retreated into his room, tossed his cap and binoculars on the bunk, punched the button on the bulkhead alongside his desk.

A black head, a pair of shoulders in a dirty mess jacket pushed through the green baize curtain in the door.

"Yas, sah, Mistah Blake."

"George, tell that chief gunner's mate who came aboard at San Juan I want him right away. You'll find him in the focsle."

"Yes, sah, Mistah Blake." The mess-boy disappeared.



BLAKE peered under his dripping sou'wester at the barometer. Down another tenth of an inch last hour. They were in for it, all right. He pulled his hat more tightly down, staggered to the charthouse door, opened it, stepped through. A fierce blast struck the door, tore it from his grip, heaved it back against his leg, gouged a chunk out of his shin. With a smothered oath, he put his shoulder against the door, by main force heaved it back, worked his way outboard

to the wing of the bridge, crouched low behind the windscreen for protection.

The sea was rising, whipped by a wind of hurricane force. Already the *Ulysses* was pitching heavily. All around a wild sea met Blake's gaze. The ocean, a mass of dull gray waves under a black sky, was covered with sheets of flying spray blown from the crests, driving like hail into his face. In endless succession the seas rolled up under the starboard counter, smacked the high poop, broke over the low bulwark amidships in a mass of green water, washed forward along the side while the ship staggered beneath the blows and, heeling under the mass of water on her deck, poured it in cataracts through the freeing ports back into the trough of the sea.

Blake watched the top hamper uneasily. With the sea under their counter, they were making the best weather possible of it; even so the labored rolling of the ship worried him. If the sea increased and the wind hauled abeam—no dunnage boards, no shores over their cargo. What would it do if the collier started rolling in earnest?

The *Ulysses* was not much as a heavy weather vessel. Her low freeboard amidships permitted the seas free sweep across the bulwark each time she rolled to windward; the starboard passage between the coaling trunks and the rail became a foaming lake as each crest rolled past the break of the poop, washed over the steel side, swirled up the deck in crazy maelstroms, burying the cleats, the deck scuttles, breaking with a roar against the bridge deckhouse under his feet; then, as the wave swept by, pouring overboard through the scuppers and the overburdened freeing ports, while the ship, weighed down by the added tons of water in her waist, strove to right herself and then, rolling to leeward, sent the remaining water pouring in angry torrents over the coaling hatches and into the port scuppers.

\* Sluggish; no reserve buoyancy to make her rise, to let her ride the waves sweeping up on her quarter. And all that top



hamper swaying high above the decks, leaning far outboard as she rolled, first to starboard then to port, holding her down while the heavy seas pounded across the buried rails.

The wind whistled through the coaling towers, drowned out the creaking of the booms as they worked unsteadily in their housing straps against the masts. Smoke, cut sharply off the tops of the twin stacks, drove forward in a black cloud diagonally through the rigging, swirled to leeward just abaft the bridge house. Blake watched it, scudding low over the waves on the port bow, quickly lost to sight against the low background of black clouds that covered the sky, ringed in the horizon.

The stern rose to a crest, rolled to port. A sudden rumble shook the *Ulysses*. The starboard screw, half out of water, was racing free. The wave rolled forward, the stern dropped, the buried propeller slowed suddenly, the rumbling ceased as the bow pitched high out of water and the next wave hurled itself against the poop. Blake shook his head. It must be a madhouse below, with the black gang sliding all over the floor plates trying to heave coal through furnace doors which never stayed put long enough for a fireman to get his shovel decently poised in front of it.

And in the engine room McGuire and his machinists were wildly closing throttles each time a propeller came free to prevent a racing engine from tearing itself off its bedplates, and just as madly opening them again to keep headway on the ship when the whirling screw buried itself once more in solid water.

Quiver, pitch, roll, rumble. The *Ulysses* staggered onward through the storm. Blake turned his back to the wind, wiped the spray from his face, shook his head dubiously. The collier *Ulysses*—fine as a coaling machine, damn poor as a ship. One comfort anyway. They were on the edge of the war zone, but as long as this gale lasted there was no need to fear attack from submarine—or a surface ship for that matter. All would be busy, fighting their common enemy, the sea.



CLINGING tightly to the edge of the chartboard, Blake peered over the captain's shoulder at the chart. For three days they had fought their way northeast through the increasing storm; now they were a hundred miles west of Ireland and heading to pass north of it—if the skipper's navigation was accurate, which Blake had had no means of checking since their departure from San Juan.

Outside in the darkness the gale howled by. The center of the storm had finally caught up with them. For three days to a steadily falling barometer the wind had increased, the seas had mounted higher, pounded the laboring *Ulysses* harder and harder as the wind gradually hauled forward on their starboard quarter. An hour ago had come a sudden lull; the wind weakened, hauled rapidly ahead, started to blow again with redoubled force from the northwest. The center of the storm had at last passed over them; the barometer had taken a final plunge.

With wind and sea on the port bow the *Ulysses*, no longer running before the gale, groaned and shook from stem to stern as she pounded into the waves, her rolling increased.

And with the wind hauling more and more to port, the seas were starting to take them more directly abeam. On their present course, in less than an hour they might expect to be running in the trough of the sea.

Blake gaged roughly with his eye the distance to go before they changed course north of the Orkneys—another day's run at least. Dangerous.

He lifted his voice to make himself audible above the storm.

"Captain!" he shouted.

Bergstrom lifted his head, turned an unshaven face across which shot an ugly look of surprise as he first became aware of the presence of his mate scanning the chart.

"Vot is it?"

"The wind's hauling abeam, sir," yelled Blake in his ear. "We'd better change course to the sou'east, run for the

Channel and discharge at Liverpool."

Bergstrom shook his head, shouted back—

"No, ve are bound for Newcastle!"

"I know it," said Blake angrily, "but the cargo's not stowed right. In this storm, if we catch the seas abeam, she'll be a bad actor!"

"Don' worry, Mr. Blake," sneered the captain. "Ain't you a sailor?"

Involuntarily Blake clenched his fists, poised himself on the unsteady deck, then slowly relaxed his hands. Wartime. Nothing in that. He caught a queer flicker in Bergstrom's eyes. The skipper had not missed that motion, had half ducked to avoid the threatened blow, was now reaching into his pocket. He pulled out a bunch of keys, unlocked a drawer under the chart table, ostentatiously drew out a pistol, fingered the butt a moment, casually slipped it into his coat pocket.

"The *Ulysses* goes to Newcastle!" he repeated roughly. "I carry out my orders."

Blake stared fixedly at the bulge in the skipper's coat. Armed. The yellow dog! Slowly he raised his eyes; as calmly as possible he faced Bergstrom again.

"As good a sailor as you, Captain." For a moment he gazed steadily into Bergstrom's blue eyes. "Maybe a better one. That's why I'm afraid. Our cargo isn't stowed right. I objected to it in the beginning. If it shifts, the *Ulysses* 'll capsize. Change course to bring this sea astern!"

Bergstrom slipped his right hand into his pocket, stepped back into the corner of the chartroom, waved sharply with his huge left fist toward the door.

"Liverpool? Never! Ve go to Newcastle, you hear? Und on time, too! Now get th' hell out!" His lips drew back in a snarl, a cold light gleamed in his eyes as he faced his mate.

"Crazy," muttered Blake, then turned on his heel, stepped out into the night.

Instantly he found himself fighting to hold his footing as the wind sweeping over the open bridge caught him full in the

chest. He staggered outboard, crouched in the port wing, clung to the pelorus stand as he tried to peer out at the sea. Darkness everywhere. Invisible waves battered the forecastle, broke in dim patches of white foam as the water swept over the sides.

Below he could barely make out the coaling hatches, vague islands in the swirling seas washing them amidships. Back aft, two dull red glows stood out high against the dark sky, marking the tops of their smokestacks, weaving back and forth against the dense blackness of the night as the ship tossed in the seaway.

Blake clutched the pelorus, cursed inwardly. Wartime, yes. Important to discharge at their designated port, of course. And on time, too. Their cargo was urgently needed, or they would never have been so suddenly and secretly routed across the sea instead of to Baltimore. But war or no war, no sailor was justified in holding his course in this gale. Especially in the *Ulysses*. He looked inboard, watched in the dim light reflected from the binnacle inside the wheelhouse door, the helmsman clinging to his spokes, struggling to hold the ship's head into the wind, the constant spinning of the wheel to head her up again as each sea smote the bow and flung the ship's head to leeward.

The rolling was worse. Twenty degrees each side, anyway. What was the matter with the Old Man? Get that sea astern, head south away from it. And if they couldn't discharge at Liverpool, when the storm blew over, they could steam through the Irish Sea around Scotland only a few days late at most.

What right did Bergstrom have to hazard the ship, their priceless cargo, in his mad whim to hold his course? Arrive on time? The ship lifted to a huge wave, lurched heavily into the trough with a bump that capsized the pelorus in the gimbals. Blake straightened it up, waited anxiously as the ship slowly righted herself. Arrive on time? Lucky to arrive at all.

Another bad roll, another dull thud as



the bow smacked the sea. Then a sharp crash aft. Blake let go the pelorus, looked astern.

The glow at the top of the port funnel was dancing athwartship like a firefly, rocking wildly about a red glare showing fitfully at its base, low down close to the deck. The guys must have carried away on the port stack; the stack itself was about to go overboard!

Blake leaped across the bridge for the ladder, heard the engine telegraphs clanging wildly in the wheelhouse as he shot down. The throbbing of the hull suddenly quieted as he hit the deck. The engines had stopped.

Buried in water to his waist, Blake fought his way aft along the lee passage, one moment swept against the bulwark, the next sliding inboard against the coaling trunks. The rolling grew worse. As the ship lost headway she swung slowly into the trough of the sea, caught the waves fair on the port beam. With each heave now the side buried itself completely in solid water. The stumbling mate clung desperately to eyebolts, to winch leads, to anything in reach to keep from washing overboard as the seas swept across; then on the up roll, half swam, half ran as far as possible toward the poop. They must save their stacks! If the seas ever washed down the uptakes and put out the fires the *Ulysses*, a helpless hulk without steerageway, could never ride out that storm.

Half strangled with salt water, bruised and battered in his journey, the frantic officer reached the break of the poop, dragged himself up the starboard ladder, paused an instant to survey the damage. A terrifying pounding met his ears. The port after coaling boom, a heavy latticed steel structure, had broken free of its housing strap at the upper end, was swinging wildly athwartships about its gooseneck in the base of the after coaling tower. With each roll of the ship it swept across the poop in a wide arc like a scythe, cutting through everything in its path. Already it had carried away the guys of the port stack, was per-

vented from flying to starboard only because the swaying funnel had not yet toppled over.

With a noise like the roar of a huge drum the boom swung inboard again, hit the funnel, cut a wide gash through the steel plates. Smoke and flame poured out along the ruptured base, swirled aft over the counter. The stack leaned drunkenly over, lay an instant against the starboard funnel; then, as the vessel rolled to windward, pivoted on its few remaining guys and fell loosely back, following the boom which, lying outboard now, seemed poised, waiting only for the next roll, to swing in and wreck the funnel completely.

Blake gazed aloft in the darkness. What was holding the head of that boom up? A standing stay, probably the guy which took the load when the boom was rigged outboard for coaling. He remembered it vaguely. A one-inch wire, shackled to the head of the boom, shackled inboard to a pad at the top of the tower.



A MOB of white faced firemen streamed out the fiddley hatch. In the dim glare from the broken stack Blake saw them pouring upward, half naked men fresh from the stokehold, bare chests, bare arms glistening weirdly in the glare reflected from their perspiring bodies. Gasping and choking from the smoke filling the firerooms below, they struggled out on the poop, rushed blindly to windward seeking fresh air. Then, seeing the hurtling boom and the swaying stack dangling over their heads, they turned and, in spite of the smoke covering the poop, ran for the stern.

"C'mon back here, ye yellow bellies! Stand by yer fires!"

McGuire. Uncertainly Blake made out the form of the chief engineer in the smoke pouring up the fiddley hatch, clutching a wrench in one hand high over his head, ready to hurl it after his fleeing firemen.

In swung the boom, stopped with a

deafening crash against the stack. Involuntarily McGuire ducked, dropped the wrench.

"Chief!" Blake leaped to his side. "Gimme that wrench!" Before the startled engineer could recover it, Blake seized the wrench. "Lend a hand, Mac. We'll clear it!"

Beckoning to McGuire to follow, Blake leaped to the forward poop rail, clambered over it. Still clutching the wrench, he started to climb the narrow iron ladder running up the starboard side of the after coaling tower.

The ship rolled violently under him, the ladder jerked uncertainly with every yaw, the wind whistled sharply by as he scrambled upward in the darkness. Not a foot away as he crawled upward he could feel the starboard boom, the mate to the one which threatened to wreck the ship, straining madly against its housing, endeavoring to tear itself free each time the *Ulysses* brought up with a mad jerk at the end of its roll. And with every jolt Blake instinctively stopped climbing, clung desperately to the slippery steel rungs to avoid being snapped off and hurled into the black ocean.

He reached the top, fifty feet above the tossing deck, stretched out full length on the horizontal girder, wormed his way on his stomach across to the windward side. He bumped an obstruction, paused, clung tightly and raised his head cautiously to examine it. The topmast. A wooden stick, stepped amidships on the after coaling tower to carry the radio antennæ. Carefully he gripped its square base and dragged his body, his legs hanging free in space, around to the other side. He stretched out again to resume his crawl. As he turned he saw McGuire's huge form close behind, heard his labored breathing as he dragged himself toward the mast.

Outboard—once more. The windward side now. Below him Blake saw the smoke pouring from the starboard funnel, could look down the port stack as it swayed crazily below him. The guy wire. Where was it secured? Slowly he

felt round the steel top of the coaling tower. He could hear the shackle groaning as the boom swung round, rushing in an arc about that shackle. Down below him somewhere. A squeeze on his foot. McGuire was right behind him now, could go no farther.

Cautiously Blake reached over, felt the latticed side of the tower. Not too far. If he reached too low and that guy swung round and nipped his arm against the mast . . . His fingers ran against a pad eye; he could feel it quiver as the boom shot round. *Bang!* The boom hit the stack again, stopped an instant. Blake shot his hand lower, his fingers swept swiftly over the eye. As he thought. A big shackle bolt through it, holding everything. With that bolt out, he could drop the boom and end its mad career before it carried away both stacks. He jerked his fingers back to safety as the quivering started again.

How to get at that bolt? He had imagined the pad would be on top of the tower where he could stretch out on the girder while he worked. But it must be at least two feet down on the outboard side. A monkey couldn't hold on to work leaning down that far. He felt desperately round the tower for a ladder. None on that side. Only on the starboard side.

Another smash. He peered down. The port funnel was battered into a shapeless mass, wreathed in smoke. A few more blows and it would be gone. The ship took a terryfying roll to port. It seemed to Blake, as he swung dizzily downward, that he could touch the crests of the breaking waves below him. A jerk. The ship stopped, hung a moment while Blake looked into the foaming sea below, then the *Ulysses* rolled slowly back. But not all the way. Steam and steerage must come soon, or she'd keep right on rolling on the next bad one, with no stopping and no coming back.

Blake twisted round, shouted:  
"Mac! Hold my legs!"



He dragged himself outboard till his body hung over the tower, and the steel cap plate jammed itself into his stomach.

He felt Mac's arms encircle his thighs, Mac's hands gripping the lattice of the girder, Mac's heavy body pressing down on his legs. Letting go his own grip of the tower, he dangled his arms over the edge, hung head first down the side of the tower, slid his monkey wrench over the nut. Too loose. He jerked the wrench clear, adjusted the jaws, tried again, got a turn on the nut before the shackle whirled round and slipped from his grip. The wire stay tightened suddenly, sang as the boom whistled round, hit the stack, paused a moment.

Feverishly he slipped the wrench in place again, heaved round on the wrench during the brief slack that followed at the end of that roll. A pause, a dizzy sweep to windward. Swinging through space, high above the deck as the ship careened, Blake grew suddenly sick inside as his bowels seemed to heave up his throat. The wind roared by his ears, driving spray drenched his shoulders, the swinging boom danced crazily before his eyes.

The end of another roll. He gripped the loosened nut with his fingers, twisted. Lucky. The threads were free. Frantically he spun the nut, ran off the last thread, dropped the useless nut into the welter of foam below.

The ship lifted, started to heel to leeward. He saw the port rail rise clear of the water, the boom start to pivot, to swing aft again, gathering speed as it went.

Blake clenched his teeth, twisted his body to follow its motion. Now to knock out that shackle bolt. He lifted his wrench, poised his arm for the blow. The boom must drop inboard, well clear of the rail, where they could lash it down.

Crash! It struck the stack again, stopped. Now! Blake swung the wrench viciously, sent the bolt flying out of the eye. With a jerk the shackle shot clear of the pad eye; in a roar of tearing steel the boom dropped, cut through a maze of backstays, crashed to the poop. Be-

hind him Blake heard the sound of splintering wood, then a choked grunt. The topmast had carried away, the broken spar hurtled past him. The grip on his legs suddenly relaxed, he felt himself falling from the top of the coaling tower head first into blackness. His fingers clawed wildly for the lattice of the steel tower alongside, missed. His staring eyes saw the foam covered deck shooting suddenly up at him.



PAINFULLY Blake lifted his bandaged side clear of the bunk, looked up at the petty officer peering through the curtained door. Johnson, the chief gunner's mate they had picked up at San Juan.

"How's McGuire now, Chief?" he asked.

Johnson stepped into the stateroom, fingered his cap nervously. Blake noticed for the first time he was gray haired around the temples; his thin face was startlingly pallid under a weather beaten skin.

"He's gone, Lieutenant," muttered Johnson slowly. "Overboard, I guess. We ain't found no sign o' him. An' by the time they got steam up again below an' the skipper got steerageway on 'er, it wasn't no use searchin'."

"Didn't the captain even try to lower a lifeboat?" asked Blake bitterly.

"No use, even if he'd tried. All the boats is smashed. The seas made matchsticks out of 'em while we was caught in the trough. She's rolled the sticks outa her, an' the radio antennae's carried away, an' with all that wreckage aft, the cap'n didn't know fer awhile was he comin' 'r goin'. Lucky fer you that port passage was awash when you hit; musta been six feet o' water on the deck when you came down an' it broke yer fall; me an' the bosun's mate found you jammed in between the bulwark an' that busted topmast an' we all damn near drowned afore we dragged you clear an' up on the poop." He looked at Blake's bandaged shoulder, asked sym-

pathetically, "How ye feelin' now, sir?"

Blake tried to raise himself. A twinge of pain shot through his shoulder, and he fell back against the bulkhead outboard of his bunk. Queer how he couldn't get clear of that port bulkhead; why, when the ship rolled, didn't he occasionally find himself tossed over to the other side? Well, his right arm was still good anyway. He reached out, grabbed the edge of his bunk, awkwardly dragged himself to a half sitting position.

"Collar bone broken, I guess, Johnson. Must have landed on my left shoulder. Say, what's the matter with this hooker, anyway? I can't get clear of the port side of this bunk."

The gunner's mate looked at him uneasily, answered hesitantly:

"She's got a permanent list to port now, sir, ten or fifteen degrees anyhow. The cargo shifted to port all of a sudden while we was takin' them seas broadside to. An' when that manganese slid into the port bilges she took such a deep lurch an' lay over so long decidin' which way was she gonna roll, with the deck damn near vertical an' me hangin' on to a cleat to keep from droppin' overboard, that I thought she wasn't never comin' back. Believe me, I was sure sick while she was hesitatin'. Lucky fer us the engines started turnin' over ag'in just then so's they could head her up into the weather. Another roll like that an' she woulda kept right on goin'." He braced himself on the sloping deck.

"I tell ye, Mr. Blake, the boys up for'd'r sure thankful ye got that boom cleared 'fore it wrecked that other stack. As it is, things ain't so shipshape. We're runnin' with our port rail awash all the time an' a heel that'd give even a windjammer skipper who was used to runnin' close hauled, a fit to contemplate; but now the wind's hauled aft an' is dyin' away. As fur as I kin make out, we're back on our original course an' Mr. Higgins says we'll round the Orkneys to-night. Somthin' I kin do fer you, Mr. Blake?"

Blake shook his head.

"No, Johnson, but if the weather's clearing, get your crews together now and set the watches at the guns. The mess-boy'll look after me. I guess I won't get out on deck for a couple of days yet. Keep a bright lookout for periscopes. We're in the war zone."

"Aye, aye, sir. Leave that to us. But it ain't U-boats that's worryin' me no more, it's the *Ulysses* herself. It's gonna be nip 'n' tuck 'tween us an' Davy Jones to see who gets this hooker now." Johnson put on his cap, saluted, withdrew.

So what Blake feared had happened. He lay back in his bunk, watched the deck beams overhead sway back and forth as the ship rolled, tried to gage the heel. Johnson had not overstated it; they were listed to port fifteen degrees at least. No wonder he had found it difficult to get away from the bulkhead on the low side of his bunk. Something to be thankful for at that. If the list had been to starboard instead, he'd be continually rolling out on the deck. Bad angle, all right. Tough on the firemen, having to work the fires with a heel like that. Lucky if they kept enough water in the high side to avoid burning out the tubes. A mess, all right, nothing shipshape alow or aloft. One consolation anyway. He twisted his neck, gazed at the crude bandages the sickbay steward had wound round his left shoulder. No surgeon on the ship.

When they got to Newcastle he'd certainly be transferred to a shore hospital to have his shoulder set. And long before he was returned to active duty, the *Ulysses* would be on her way, he didn't give a damn where. And he'd still be in England. Under those circumstances, wangling a detail back to the *Texas* should be as easy as falling off a log—or off a coaling tower. He needn't worry about Bergstrom any further; if he wanted, there'd be no more watches, no more arguments with that squarehead; he'd stay in his bunk till they made Newcastle. After that, Bergstrom would have a first rate excuse for getting rid

of him. And he could trust Bergstrom not to pass it up.

Everything was going to turn out right, after all. He sank back wearily against the bulkhead, closed his eyes with a smile.



LIEUTENANT BLAKE, half clothed as he lay on his bunk, a bathrobe draped awkwardly round his shoulders covering the arm bandaged in tightly against his left side, craned his neck to get a glimpse of the horizon through his porthole. A circle of gray waves met his eye. With that heel, the only view he could get was of the water close aboard. He twisted his body, tried to look upward enough to get an oblique line of sight to counteract the list. No use, he found he couldn't make it. He sank back to a reclining position on his pillow.

He was on the wrong side of the ship anyway, mused Blake. Land would be sighted on the starboard hand as they ran south down the east coast of England for Newcastle.

Three days had passed since the storm off the coast of Ireland; since they had rounded the Orkneys and headed into the North Sea, the weather had cleared and nothing worse than a fresh breeze and a choppy sea had marked their passage southward. The rolling was only moderate now; it was certain that they would arrive safely at their destination with no more storms to worry about. And that was cause for thankfulness.

Blake, on his few brief excursions to the wardroom, had peered out the door on to the port gallery of the poop and, looking forward at the ship, had marveled that she had ever ridden safely through the storm. Even then, in a moderate seaway, his heart rose into his mouth to see the sharp angle at which the *Ulysses* lay to port, her rail awash always, the water half covering the narrow passage between the coaling trunks and the side, the brass deck scuttles now visible, now buried as the ship rolled uneasily along and the waves swashed inboard.

Bergstrom was a sailor, all right, Blake had to admit; any man who could bring a ship in that condition out of a storm still afloat and right side up was a good seaman, whatever other faults he had. And his devotion to duty! Driving ahead, through fair weather or foul to make his port and make it on time. You had to admire him for that. Not many skippers would take such risks to carry out their orders.

Blake pressed the buzzer alongside his berth, glanced idly at the round patch of water showing through his port. The messboy poked aside the curtains. Blake looked up at him.

"Any land yet, George?"

"No, sah. Ain't nothin' in sight nowhere's yit, Mistah Blake."

"All right. Thanks, George."

Blake turned wearily again to contemplate the monotonous circle of heaving waves framed by his tightly dogged porthole. According to Higgins, their dead reckoning down the coast should have brought them a landfall off the mouth of the Tyne at latest in the morning watch. And it was now midafternoon with nothing sighted. Evidently the captain's navigation wasn't up to his seamanship.

Some excuse, perhaps, for overcast skies had probably not given a sight of anything since the storm started. Still there must have been an opportunity for a new departure in the Orkneys; from there south to Newcastle, dead reckoning, even without sights, Bergstrom should have done better than that.

He speculated idly on the reasons. Their compass might be off; it had, of course, been compensated for the ship's magnetism with the *Ulysses* on an even keel; now with the relative position of the ship changed, an unknown deviation from the magnetic meridian may have resulted to throw them off their course. And then it was probable that the skipper himself was not up to scratch; since entering the North Sea he had not left the bridge, so Higgins had reported, keeping the watch himself practically



right, all the time, and snatching only a few minutes sleep on the chart table now and then.

"The Old Man's worried," Higgins had said. "'E's got all 'ands up in them baling towers as lookouts, but is their 'orders to look fer periscopes? No. They're all to keep an eye out on the 'orizon fer masts 'r smoke. Batty, Hi calls 'im. 'Ere, right off our coast, lookin' fer German cruisers. The 'Uns 've got more sense 'n to send surface raiders right under the noses o' the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow. 'U-boats, Cap'n, them's the only danger,' I says to 'im, but 'e won't listen. 'Raiders, Mr. 'Iggins,' says 'e. 'Now we've come this far, we mustn't meet no raiders. We keep clear of every smoke to make sure we meet no raiders. So we must see their smoke first.' An' blimey hif 'e ain't got every one o' them si'lors we picked up in the Caribbees 'anging in the superstructure like a bunch o' monkeys, scoutin' the 'orizon. An' not a gun manned!"

That had puzzled Blake. Ridiculous to expect to encounter German raiders off Newcastle. If any were out, they'd be far to the eastward, on a line from Helgoland to Bergen, trying to sneak unnoticed round the Shetlands or the Faroe Islands and get by the British Tenth Cruiser Squadron into the broad Atlantic. It would be suicide for them, so far from Helgoland, to be prowling close in on the British coast with British cruisers based at Rosyth or at Scapa ready to pounce on them at the first alarm, and with the Harwich Squadron in their rear, favorably placed to cut off a retreat to Helgoland should they be sighted. No, no chance of meeting cruisers.

But the guns not manned. That had startled him. Here in the war zone, where the most danger was from U-boats, in such a precarious condition that a torpedo hit anywhere would rob them of their slight remaining stability, where their only chance with a submarine was to get their shots in first if sighted, the gun crews all in the tops, the guns not manned!

Higgins had forcibly restrained him as he slid from his bunk to run to the bridge and protest.

"Easy, Leftenant, easy now. Wot's the use o' another row wit' the skipper? When Hi come off watch, in one hour's run accordin' to our position on the chart, we'll pick up Souter Point Light at the Tynemouth. This voyage's over; we won't run into nothin' more. Take it easy; you done enough protestin' this cruise already—nagivatin', stowin' the cargo, changin' course in the storm—you was right in objectin', but wot 'd'it git ye wit' the skipper? Stay in yer bunk, take care o' yourself now. 'N other hour's run 'n' we'll be in."

He pushed Blake back on his pillow, tenderly adjusted the bathrobe round the bandaged shoulder, exacted Blake's promise to lie still, then went aft to get his breakfast.

That was hours ago now, and still no landfall. Blake chafed at the delay, regretted his promise. The men he had so carefully drilled at the guns, all perched high in the superstructure on a useless lookout, the ship defenseless. No landfall yet, nobody to check the navigation. Where were they anyway?

His eyes wandered aimlessly from the bare steel deck beams over his head to the closed airport. He twisted uneasily on his bunk, wondered vaguely how he might get hold of the captain's sextant, hide aft on the poop out of sight of the bridge, perhaps get a shot at the sun through a break in the scudding clouds. His shoulder twinged as he turned, brought him back to a realization of his position. No use speculating on that. With only one arm, he couldn't work a sextant even if he managed to steal one. Why didn't they sight that lighthouse?

A dull roar echoed through the poop, followed by a sharp explosion. Gunfire! Blake stiffened, slid from his bunk, heaved away his robe, awkwardly drew on his coat. The rhythmic pulsing of the deck under his feet ceased abruptly. The engines had stopped. Blake ran unsteadily for the door, stopped, turned back, pawed

through his desk, hastily slipped a Colt automatic into his coat pocket, hurried down the passage to the poop, out on deck.

A shrill scream filled the air; a heavy cloud of vapor was shrouding the stacks. The safety valves had popped, the boilers were madly blowing off steam. Blake ran up the sloping poop, ducked past a tangle of temporary stays, clung to the rail on the high side of the poop while he scanned the horizon. For an instant his heart seemed to stop beating. Two miles off, a little on the starboard bow, was a submarine, her decks still awash, the smoking muzzle of her gun trained across their stem, a signal to heave to and send a boat fluttering from her chariot bridge.

And the *Ulysses*, instead of turning away to present her stern, which was the smallest target, and at the same time bring her quarterdeck guns into action while she fled, was coming to a dead stop. Blake glanced instinctively at the two guns behind him. As he feared—unmanned. And with the tompions still in the muzzles, with tarpaulins still lashed round the breeches to protect them from the seas. In the war zone and the guns not even cast loose and provided!

With a curse he turned forward, started to motion wildly with his one good arm to the bluejackets he could see scrambling down the superstructure, to stand by their guns. For an instant he paused, sighted along the side toward the distant conning tower bobbing in the waves. Nearly dead ahead, too far forward for his guns to bear. He started to scramble down the ladder to the waist, ran wildly up the passage toward the bridge, yelling to the sailors as he passed.

"Stand by those guns! Open fire without orders when they bear!"

He saw the starboard gun pointer streak by him, take the ladder to the poop in two jumps, caught a glimpse of Johnson right behind him, turned his head a moment, saw the tarpaulin on the starboard gun ripped clear of the breech, go sailing over the side followed by the

tompson, the black muzzle start forward, then stop. It would not. Heedless of cleats, of obstructions the passage, Blake ran headlong bridge, flew up the ladder, leaped the railing to find Bergstrom with rung up on both engine tele calmly surveying the U-boat through glasses.

"The guns don't bear, Captain!" Blake, trying to make himself against the roar of escaping "Hard a'starboard and full speed, Bergstrom dropped his glasses, at Blake in amazement.

"I t'ought you vas done for. C of here!"

Blake stopped short, stared blankly at Bergstrom.

"Aren't you going to fight?"

"Fight? Against a U-boat? V collier, not a battleship! Of course Vun torpedo und ve sink!"

Blake's lip curled, his eyes narrowed, he listened. The damned coward! coward or not, action must be quick before that sub got within torpedo range or it would be too late.

"We're just offshore. Get the astern; if she stays on the surface keep 'er off with our guns so she close to torpedo range; submerged never catch us. Quick! And get an SOS while we're running. There destroyers here in less'n an hour!"

"SOS?" Bergstrom waved at the boatswain. Blake glanced up. No answer. "Close ashore, hey? I got a just now. Ve ain't vere ve t'o Look at the chart!"

Blake whirled, thrust aside the curtain over the hooded chart board, peered at the chart. Down the coast close inshore was a pencil line, from Orkneys due south, with neat little circles surrounding the punch marks their dead reckoning positions watched, as the captain had successfully pricked them in, ending in a little over not ten miles off the coast near the T certainly in easy sight of land. And that far to the eastward of their supply

back, freshly plotted in was another  
 rail track down the center of the North  
 a straight for Helgoland, ending in a  
 the old cross hardly fifty miles north of that  
 ough German fortress!

Blake's knees weakened as he stared at  
 at cross. The *Ulysses*, steaming prac-  
 cally into the jaws of the enemy fleet!  
 like a flash, a dozen unrelated incidents  
 not through his brain. Bergstrom's  
 objection to a Naval officer, his rush to  
 ail from Rio, his strange opposition to  
 Blake's navigating, the sealed orders di-  
 kered ferthing them to Newcastle.

Who besides Bergstrom had ever actu-  
 ously seen those orders?

and then his insane obstinacy in refus-  
 this spite of a howling gale, to put into  
 W pool, his devotion to duty in making  
 as North Sea port on time. Devotion to  
 a duty! Everything fitted together, focused  
 not suddenly on that cross where lay the  
 as *Ulysses* and her priceless cargo of man-  
 as anese, hopeless of escape, delivered un-  
 but der the enemy's guns!

Imperceptibly as Blake crouched under  
 he hood of the chart board, his right hand  
 hid into his coat; he whirled suddenly to  
 and Bergstrom, pistol half drawn, tugging  
 ll frantically at his pocket to free it.

"You damned traitor!" Blake jerked  
 ll his arm upward, a streak of red flared  
 ut through his coat.

Bergstrom staggered, his pocket tore  
 wide open, the muzzle of his pistol lifted  
 unsteadily, flashed twice in quick succes-  
 sion. In a red haze, Blake fired again,  
 squarely into the captain's broad chest,  
 t. saw him pitch forward, the pistol clatter  
 to the deck. Without pausing, Blake  
 s kicked the pistol across the bridge, out of  
 l, reach of the fingers convulsively clawing  
 t, at the deck gratings, spinning as he  
 e dragged his Colt clear of his coat, to face  
 r the helmsman who was staring transfixed  
 at the unexpected tragedy.

Blake prodded him with the smoking  
 muzzle, galvanized him into sudden  
 action.

"Hard a'starboard!" gritted Blake  
 through his clenched teeth, then jerked  
 round to see the quartermaster stoop-

ing over the captain's quivering body.

"Belay that!"

The startled quartermaster looked up at  
 the wild eyed lieutenant standing over  
 him, leaped hastily to his feet.

"Man those engine telegraphs!"  
 shouted Blake. "Full ahead, both en-  
 gines!"

Bells clanged, the wheel spun madly  
 round as Blake backed to the rear of the  
 bridge where he could watch both men at  
 once. Through the corner of his eye he  
 saw a broad trickle of red running down  
 the sloping deck of the bridge, saw Berg-  
 strom's legs still twitching spasmodically.

The shriek of escaping steam stopped  
 sharply, to be followed by a sudden silence  
 through which the throbbing of the screws  
 became audible. The engines were taking  
 the steam again; the boiler safety valves  
 had seated. Slowly the *Ulysses'* jackstaff  
 started to swing round the horizon; they  
 were picking up steerageway.

Steadying himself against the bridge  
 rail, Blake looked out ahead. Black  
 smoke was pouring from the stern of the  
 U-boat as her hull emerged farther from  
 the water. Surprised apparently by the  
 unexpected maneuver of her victim, she  
 was preparing to give chase on the surface  
 where she could develop maximum speed.

For an instant Blake watched as more  
 men poured out her conning tower,  
 caught occasional flashes of light against  
 her gray hull as brass cartridge cases  
 whirled down from her chariot bridge into  
 the hands of the loaders silhouetted  
 against the sky. The *U-183*, a cruiser  
 submarine. Blake's heart sank as he  
 read the number painted under her  
 bridge. They were outranged; that class  
 carried 5.9 guns.

The *Ulysses* with her four-inch rifles,  
 her huge bulk for a target, would be no  
 match against that enemy. Hundreds of  
 miles from the British coast, from possible  
 help, they could never escape. Berg-  
 strom had done his job. Blake looked  
 from the distant submarine to the hud-  
 dled mass at his feet, silent now on the  
 deck. He, at least, would never profit by  
 his treachery.



A sharp explosion aft, a shell went screaming by the bridge, burst in a cloud of spray near the *U-183*. Instinctively Blake spotted it. A hundred yards short, deflection three knots left. His starboard gun was bearing now, had opened fire.

An officer scrambled up the bridge ladder, stopped short as he stumbled against the skipper's corpse, caught sight of the whitefaced seamen, then recoiled suddenly before the powder stained first officer clutching a pistol behind them.

"Blimey, wot's hup?" Higgins paused irresolutely.

"Just shot a damned Hun," said Blake shortly. "We're in a trap, Higgins! Bergstrom's landed us right off Helgoland! Rendezvous all set, U-boat on the spot to take us in."

A roar interrupted him. Johnson had fired again. Blake paused, watched the splash. Still too much left. No hope of hitting till the *Ulysses* finished her turn.

Higgins stooped, picked up Bergstrom's pistol.

"Any more 'Uns 'ere, Leftenant?" He looked significantly at the shaking quartermaster.

"Don't know," answered Blake briefly. "Better stand by till I get a few o' my bluejackets here to make sure."

He stepped to the voice tube to the poop, punched the bell viciously, rattled out a crisp order, stepped back to Higgins' side. Three sailors hastily left the poop. In a few moments a sentry, rifle in hand, stood in each wing of the bridge; another posted himself abaft the wheel.



LIEUTENANT BLAKE, one eye protruding from its socket, the other half blinded from the blood caked on his forehead, leaned weakly against the shattered side of the bridge, brushed his good arm across his face to clear his sight of the warm stream trickling from a fresh gash in his head. That last shell had settled it. He stared at the wreckage of the wheel, made out dimly through the yellow smoke of the shell burst the crumpled forms of the helmsman, of the quartermaster; saw

at his feet the raw mass that had been the nearest sentry.

It had been murder. For half an hour the *U-188* had been trailing them astern, just beyond range of their own guns, firing deliberately at their superstructure, carefully avoiding hits on their badly heeled hull.

A direct hit had dismounted the port quarter gun and wiped out its whole crew. From the bridge Blake had seen the burst, the gun carriage topple, slide overboard, then only a heap of smoldering bodies where a second before there had been mad activity.

Undismayed, from the starboard counter, high up on the listing collier, Chief Gunner's Mate Johnson and the other gun crew, the muzzle of their four-inch gun at maximum elevation, had coolly kept up their fire, trying to reach the *U-boat* far astern of them. But their shots fell short of the wary submarine, and sick at heart, Blake had watched shell after shell from the enemy's 5.9 crash down out of the sky, while the stricken *Ulysses* strove desperately to draw out of range.

Hopelessly Blake had called the radio room, to learn their set had been dead for days; Bergstrom had avoided making repairs after the storm. No possibility of calling a chance warship, which might be raiding into the Helgoland Bight, to their aid.

"Hi see it now," Higgins groaned. "We're way overdue in Baltimore. An' 'e ayn't been wantin' Sparks 'ere pickin' up no messages arskin' other ships maybe to search fer us. An' 'ere we be, sinkin' in the middle o' the North Sea while the Navy's scoutin' fer us off the Bahamas!"

Blake scanned their distant pursuer.

"I suppose those Heines're wondering what's gone wrong here; it must have been all set for Bergstrom to surrender and sail right in."

A shell exploded amidships, tore the covers off of the No. 5 hatch. As the smoke drifted off Higgins shook his fist over the rail.

"Ye 'Uns, come up an' fight like men!"

"They're in a hell of a pickle," swore Blake. "They don't dare sink us. They want that manganese. All they're after now is to pound our decks till we surrender."

"The blarsted devils!" broke in the second mate. "It'd serve 'em jolly well right if we sunk 'er ourselves 'an' took to the boats. But we ayn't got a boat left," he added mournfully, "'an' as fer swimmin', they wouldn't even stop to pick us hup. Matey—" he clapped Blake on the back—"wot'd ye give fer a six-inch gun?"

A six-inch gun? For an instant Blake's mind went back to that shining pair of fourteen-inch guns in his old turret on the *Texas*. Any gun that would reach that sleek demon far astern, that, as calmly as if at target practise, was making of their deck a shambles!

Another flash from the *U-183*, then the sickening seconds while the projectile whistled toward them. It struck a guy on the stack, exploded. A shower of splinters swept the quarter-deck. The men loading the starboard gun crumpled suddenly, sagged to the deck; a cartridge case slid out the half closed breech, clattered to the deck. Blake gazed aft, waiting momentarily for the crew to spring up, reload. No one stirred. The silent muzzle pointed aimlessly skyward.

"Higgins!" Blake seized his arm. "Get aft, see if you can get together another crew for that gun!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" Higgins saluted, slid down the ladder.

The *U-183*, quick to note the cessation of resistance, had speeded up, hurriedly closed to less than a mile, concentrated its fire on the bridge, in a few short range shots practically torn it to pieces. And now with his bridge shattered, engines stopped, steerage gone, the ship helpless at last, the sorely wounded first officer looked dizzily aft through a film of blood at the *U-183*. It was submerged now, and steaming slowly round the wrecked *Ulysses*, cautiously surveying her through a periscope to make sure all possibility of resistance was beaten out, that

no masked guns were anywhere concealed to come suddenly into action when she approached to put aboard a prize crew, rig up a-jury steering gear and take her victim into port.

A burning hatred surged through Blake's tortured breast as he followed the feather of spray in the wake of that gleaming periscope. Cowards! They had not fought; his shipmates had been trapped, butchered without a chance. He staggered, bleeding, from the bridge. The engine room. Open the Kingston valves, sink the ship himself, boats or no boats. The Huns should never get that manganese. He stumbled down the lee passage, crawled over the torn booms clogging it. Never! The *Ulysses'* cargo must not help the enemy to rain death upon his old shipmates in the fleet, on the khaki clad doughboys streaming across the ocean to the trenches on the Western Front.

As Blake staggered through the waves swashing over the half submerged rail, he caught another glimpse of that sinister periscope, just heading past their floundering bow. If only the *Ulysses* could leap suddenly ahead, ram their destroyer. Hopeless. No further chance to fight. All he could do was to cheat them of their prize.

And then a wild idea shot through his dizzy brain. The submarine probably had no boat; she would have to come alongside to board. Undoubtedly when satisfied the *Ulysses* could offer no effective resistance, she would break surface again, sidle up to the low side, her boarding party rifles in hand, would leap across the bulwark to the collier's deck. At his mercy. Yes, he could do it. The ash-cans at their stern!

Blake came to the poop, climbed the ladder. A berserk rage gripped him as his throbbing eyes swept the quarterdeck. Torn and bleeding bodies, naked limbs yellowed with picric acid from bursting shells, lay in heaps round the silent guns. To starboard a solitary survivor, struggling on his knees, was clinging to the breech plug, trying futilely to swing it

home against a cartridge case which Higgins had slammed into the breech.

Blake watched an instant, shook his head. No use for guns any more. The *Ulysses* could not maneuver. The sub would come up where no gun would bear, even if he scratched up a crew among the untrained merchantmen cowering below decks to escape the bursting shells.

"Higgins! Belay that now; lend a hand aft!"

Higgins dropped the shell, picked his way among the corpses to Blake's side. The wounded seaman at the breech, his strength gone, let go the plug, sank to the deck, with glassy eyes followed the trail of foam just showing on the starboard bow.

"Quick, the depth bombs! Get one amidships ready for 'em when they board!"

Higgins stopped short. His thin face went suddenly white.

"But wot if it sinks us too, Leftenant? There ayn't no boats!"

"Our number's up then, I guess. We won't bellyache. Come on, old man!" Blake staggered to the stern, drew out his knife, started awkwardly to hack away at the manila lashings which held the little string of depth charges in the rack alongside the flagstaff.

"Ere, lemme 'elp." Higgins was crouching at his side, slashing vigorously. A few more cuts, the lashings parted, Higgins tipped the inboard ashcan end over end out of the rack.

Gingerly at first, then more rapidly as Blake spotted the wash of their enemy coming down the starboard side, the two men rolled the steel cylinder across the poop, dodged the ghastly obstructions littering the deck, got it to the ladder. Higgins cut a section of the boatfall draped over a smashed lifeboat nearby, took a few hitches round the bomb, eased the three hundred pounds of TNT down the steep steps while Blake gently guided it. Once in the passage, they worked it forward up the port side, dragged it through the water till they came at last

amidships, fair with a freeing port in the bulwark. Working in seas nearly up to his waist, Higgins lifted the hinged plate in the bulwark, Blake rolled the depth charge under the plate, then outboard, it hung part way through the opening, restrained only from dropping free by a single turn of line passed once round a cleat, wound round his wrist.

"Duck!" whispered Blake fiercely.



THEY were just in time. Breaking surface on the port quarter, the *U-183* rose smoothly from the sea, first her conning tower, then her gun appearing as little islands in a mass of foam, followed immediately by her tapering deck and her sleek round sides, while water in torrents gushed down her superstructure.

Higgins and Blake crouched low behind the bulwark, looked out through the crack just over the freeing port. Blake's wounds smarted afresh as he dropped low into the salt water flooding the passage; but he grunted with satisfaction as he noted that their depth charge was covered by at least a foot of water. It would be invisible.

A hatch flew open on the *U-183*, a stream of dungaree clad sailors poured up from her conning tower; the first few manned the gun, the others following gathered in a little knot abreast the conning tower, rifles in hand ready to board and take charge of their prize.

Slowly, silently, the *U-183* glided through the water, closed obliquely on the helpless collier, stopped a hundred yards off. As he watched, the black muzzle of her 5.9 rifle swung abeam, trained on their poop, ready for instant action in case the abandoned gun aft were remanned. Blake caught a glimpse of an officer leaning over the side of the chariot bridge, saw a pair of gold laced sleeves rise above the rail, a pair of binoculars start to scan the tilted deck of the *Ulysses* for any sign of resistance.

Satisfied with his inspection, the U-boat captain dropped his glasses, shouted down



the hatch; the submarine moved closer.

Fascinated, Blake's straining eyes watched the approach of their enemy.

"Goodby, Lieutenant! Don't muff it!"

Blake looked up. Higgins, like himself, submerged in water up to his neck, had just dragged his eyes from his peephole, was staring at him with chalky face and chattering teeth.

"No fear, old man," whispered Blake. "I'll wait for him."

He gripped the line more tightly, gazed up for the last time through the torn steel towers over his head to the cloudy sky above, then clenched his teeth, peered out again over the tumbling waves. Close now, not fifty feet away, swinging gently in, he saw the sharp stem of the U-boat glide by him, the serrated jaws of her net cutter sticking cruelly above the deck. Now the gun was passing, its muzzle seemed near enough to touch.

A rumble in the water, a mass of foam astern, the *U-183* reversed, stopped, was practically alongside. Straining his eyes upward, he saw a line of German sailors with bayonets poised, balanced on the rail of their boat, ready to leap. It was time.

Blake let go the line, felt it slip through his fingers; the pressure of the rounded ashcan against his legs disappeared. He

took his eyes from the rail, turned his head.

"Goodby, Hig—"

A terrible roar, a geyser of water erupted suddenly alongside. The *Ulysses* rocked violently. But the *U-183*, lifted bodily out of water, heaved up amidships, broke in two. Like leaves in a gale, the men on her deck were whirled upward in a vast column of water and smoke, fell back unnoticed into a sea boiling with foam. For a brief instant the two ends of the U-boat pointed high in air, then as the shock subsided, slid swiftly through the surface, disappeared.

The *Ulysses*, her port side crushed in by the same blow, lay for a moment quivering as the sea poured through the gap into her half empty holds; wreckage, dismembered bodies, huge quantities of water rained down on her from the sky. Then as the intruding ocean destroyed her slight stability, she lurched suddenly to port, like a wounded giant, rolled slowly over on her side.

Her masts and her coaling towers cut through the waves, disappeared. Bottom up, with smooth red hull and bronze propellers glistening against the gray sky, she lay a moment; then, stern first, the *Ulysses* slipped gently through the surface of the sea, vanished forever from the sight of men.

