

The Free Press Short Story

The Old Man of the Sea

THOMAS S. HUNTLEY

"Gee! That's what I said!" Pepper Summerville looked at his solemn-faced roommate in disgust.

"Well, I've been awake most of the time I've been rooming with you, at least," grinned Sandy MacDougall.

"You're just the Old Man of the Sea," sneered Pepper. "Your ideas may have been all right when your dad was in school, but you're dumb if you stick by them now."

Sandy took off his glasses and laid them on his desk. Pepper started for the door, then he stopped as he asked "Give those papers to Linn Gardner for me in class tomorrow, will you? I won't be back in time to hand them to him."

Sandy nodded, then lay back in his chair and stretched his long legs until his bare toes touched the hot radiator.

"Ouch!" he grunted. After he had nursed his toe for a few moments, he thought of Pepper. His roommate never studied hard; he never had to do that because he always managed to find some student whose notebook he could borrow, or who would give him the answer to any problem.

Pepper had a good time. Sandy scowled, and washed his big Scotch father had not hammered the idea of doing things well and by himself into him so hard that he just had to keep plugging.

Half an hour later Sandy started as he heard the bell in the tower of the university union building boom. He had been chewing his pencil and thinking all this time. He rose to his feet to stare out at the campus.

Bright moonlight bathed University Hall and transformed the old building into a fairy palace. His school and his dad's school, he thought, worthy of the best, and expecting the best of its men for generations. Guess he would keep away from the idea of "getting by." Sandy yawned, then turned in for the night.

Next afternoon found Sandy on the basketball floor of the university gymnasium. As he shot baskets with the second team, he secretly watched and admired Scott Warren who was the star right forward on the first team.

This long lanky young man sent shot after shot arcing toward and through the basket with a misty, swish. "Wow!" muttered Sandy to himself. "I wish I could do that the way he does."

"Not bad, eh?" asked a voice at his elbow. Pepper grinned at his roommate. "You better watch your step or he'll have that place sewed up for good."

Scott Warren did appear to have that position for the season. Sandy watched most of the games from the substitute's bench, except for the few times that he was sent in long enough for the regular player to regain his wind. His father had been a star athlete of the old days, so Sandy felt his disappointment deeply, and Pepper sensed this a bit.

Time for examinations drew near. Pepper Summerville was not his usual confident self. Sandy, always thorough in his work, was studying hard at his desk as his roommate stamped into their room one evening. Pepper threw his books down on his desk with a bang.

"Grinding away as usual, Old Man of the Sea," he grumbled. "Well, I wish Scott Warren and myself had done a bit more than we have, but we'll get along all right. I'll figure some way to get that history exam."

Sandy looked up at his roommate. "Both of you studying a bit?" he asked. "I'll be glad to help you fellows if you want to cram a little."

"No cramming for us. We won't need it," laughed Pepper. "I'll say you will be glad to help Scott! You have every chance in the world of being a regular player if he slips up on this exam."

"I don't want any letter carried that way," exclaimed Sandy, his temper getting the best of him. "What kind of a fellow do you think I am?"

"Well, we don't need your help. We're not going to study for it because we don't need to. See you later. Both of us have a date to-night!" Pepper banged the door just as Sandy was about to protest about the lack of study.

He stared at the books on his roommate's desk then after a short time he grunted. "Well, if the dean's son and Pepper want to act like a couple of silly boys, peach. He turned back to his work. "Old bureaucracy grind like myself should learn to mind his own business. This thought did not satisfy him however, and he was still chewing the end of his pencil some time later while he stared out of the window at the shadowy campus.

The next day Sandy stopped in the lobby of the dormitory to see about his mail. He intended to make a telephone call, but both booths happened to be in use, so he sat down in a chair next to one of them. The door of this booth was not lightly closed, but since the lobby was almost deserted, the occupant evidently thought this unnecessary. He was arguing with some one. "But I tell you, it will be all right. George tipped me off that Prof left the exam outline in his desk. Yes, the old boy is getting absent-minded or something. Nothing to it. Meet you out in front about ten o'clock to-night."

Sandy heard this with a sudden fear. Just then the door of the booth opened all the way and Pepper stepped out. He glanced nervously at his roommate, sitting in the near-by chair.

"You and your dates!" exclaimed Sandy. "That call probably cost you a dollar."

"Oh, run along, Old Man of the Sea," grumbled Pepper, but he appeared relieved. Sandy stared hard after him as Pepper hurried out of the lobby.

After dinner that evening Pepper pulled up a chair to his desk and appeared to be studying. Sandy shifted his feet nervously. "Have you—reformed, or something?" he shyly asked.

"Just you leave your little roommate alone," grunted Pepper. "Have you forgotten that you and I and the rest are to take that history exam? But of course you'd be liable to forget that, about like I would forget to eat."

Neither said a word for over an hour; then two of Pepper's friends dropped in. Sandy left for a room farther down the hall in order to be by himself. He was so excited, however, that he had a hard time trying to do any studying. He glanced at his wrist watch often.

About a quarter of ten Sandy hurried back to his room. Pepper was buttoning his coat. "Don't work too hard, Old Man of the Sea," he warned Sandy, with a grin.

"New time of night to be going out," grumbled Sandy. His roommate did not answer, but banged the door hurriedly. Sandy could hear him walking down the long hallway. After the sound of his foot-steps had died away, Sandy hurriedly pulled a warm sweater over his head, grabbed a heavy coat and an old slouch hat, then he rushed out of the room not far behind his roommate.

Down in the lobby, he saw Pepper Summerville and Scott Warren slumped over in chairs, still wearing their coats.

"W-well, if it isn't the Old Man of the Sea," declared Pepper.

"Sure enough!" added Scott with a grin. "Look at him. He tried to go in swimming with his clothes on."

All this time Sandy had worn a silly grin on his face. He said nothing, removing his wet clothes as fast as he could. Soon he was splashing around in a bath.

When he entered the study room once more, Pepper and Scott were still there. "Have a nice bath?" asked Pepper, with a grin. Sandy admitted that he had. "Well, make yourself comfortable in that chair. We want your help in solving a mystery. Don't suppose you know anything about that bell ringing which the whole school heard a few minutes ago?"

"Seems to me that I did hear a bell," declared Sandy slowly, as he rose from his chair and edged near the door of the bedroom. He was not quick enough, for Scott and Pepper jumped on him, pulled him to the floor, and sat on him. Sandy shouted with laughter in spite of the mauling he was receiving. "Wow! All you two fellows needed were two pairs of long ears and a couple of tails!"

When the three were sober once more, Pepper spoke seriously. "I guess maybe you're right, Sandy. There's really something to this idea of searching for what you get. You sure even did us a good turn to-night, even if you did take a dumb way of scaring us to our senses."

"No more dumb than you way," grinned Sandy. "I happen to know that old Professor Martin is absent-minded, but he never has left any examination questions around loose. You see, he doesn't write out any. He just puts them on the board during the examination time."

"Old Man of the Sea," laughed Pepper, "both of us would be glad of your help while we study for this exam."

"We surely would!" declared Scott warmly. "Let's begin right now."

A NICE APPROACH
Trump—Lady, I'm a sick man. A nice doctor gave me some medicine and I would like to ask you to give me something to take it with.

Lady—Would you like a spoon and a glass of water, I suppose.

Trump—No mum—not that. The doctor said I was to take the medicine after meals and I thought you'd contribute the meal.

A HIGH VALUATION
Merchant—I will give you a position as clerk to start with, and pay you what you are worth. Is that satisfactory?

Applicant—Oh, perfectly, but do you think the firm can afford it?

IN THE NEXT MAIL
"Do you know, Mary, if my dressmaker's bill came while I was out?"

"I don't think so, ma'am, I can hear master singing."

THOUSAND ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

A new unit will be added to the many links of communication between the United States and Canada with the formal opening of the Thousand Islands International Bridge on August 18.

The governments of both the United States and Canada will be represented at the dedication ceremonies which will mark the opening of an International gateway through the picturesque Thousand Island region.

Distant about a two-hour drive by motor car from Ottawa, Canada's capital city, the Thousand Islands International Bridge spans the island dotted St. Lawrence River from Iy-Lee, Ontario to Collins Landing, New York, a distance of about eight and a half miles.

The new structure comprises a series of five separate bridge spans resting on five islands and linked by strips of highway. The actual link between the United States and Canada, is a ninety-foot concrete arch, the shortest of all International spans, over the Rift between Wellsey and Hill Islands. The Rift is a narrow space of swift running water which once was run by small steamers to give excursionists a thrill.

Two islands of the St. Lawrence National Park, Georgian Island and Constance Island, serve as stepping stones for the bridge as it reaches the Canadian shore over a broad trajectory expanse of water. A new scenic highway leading from Brookville, and Gananoque to the bridge head is under construction, and when completed will form part of the much-travelled highway from Windsor to Montreal and Quebec City. On the United States side the bridge emerges about four miles west of Alexandria Bay, a comparatively short drive from Watertown, the focal-point for Syracuse and other large centres in the northern part of New York state.

The new international bridge provides another avenue of approach to a popular vacation area rich in scenic attractions, for in this region the waters of the St. Lawrence are studded with more than 1,700 picturesque islands varying in size from less than an acre to several square miles. About 200 of them can be seen when crossing the bridge. As early as 1904, the Government of Canada set aside a number of these islands as national reservations which, together with a small mainland area, now form the St. Lawrence Islands National Park. On several of the park islands attractively designed pavilions and shelters have been erected, and tables, benches, outdoor seats, sanitary conveniences and firewood are provided for the use of visitors. Each island or group of islands is in charge of a caretaker from whom the necessary camping permits may be obtained. The island parks on which improvements have been made, together with the nearest points of approach are Cedar Island, near Kingston; Georgian Island, near Iy-Lee; Aubrey and Beau Rivage Islands near Gananoque; Stovin Island, near Brockville, and Broder Island, opposite the Town of Morrisburg.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, of the United States, and Premier W. L. Mackenzie King, of Canada meet at Kingston, Ontario, on August 17th, when the new Thousand Islands International bridge system was officially opened. Important announcements were made at this meeting and since. Above photo shows the designers' conception of the new suspension span crossing the

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WOULDN'T BE MISSED
"In the event of a hostile air raid," says a writer, "some of the public statues would be the first things to suffer."

Even so, says an art critic, we're still in favor of peace.

AN EARLY START
"So Tom has got engaged? Are the banns up yet?"

"Oh, yes, he mustn't smoke, drink or go to football matches."

TOO GREAT A RISK
There is no need for your wife to worry about her sight," said the optician. "The weakness is a sign of advancing years—and you can tell her that."

"Me!" gasped the little man, jumping out of his chair. "You can tell her yourself, old chap."

SCRAPED APPLE IN SUMMER COMPLAINT

The late Dr. A., an old family practitioner in Iredell County, North Carolina, lost his first baby of cholera infantum. Two summers later his second child became desperately ill of the same complaint. Then the baby began to improve and the doctor was dismayed when he discovered the old negro manny feeding it scraped apple.

He scolded her soundly, asking why she wanted to kill the child. "Well, doctor," she replied, when he paused for breath, "your baby is gettin' well isn't she?"

When the doctor admitted that she was, she continued, "That's because I've been feeding it scraped apple. If you want her to get well, let me keep on."

Within a few days the baby was well and thereafter the doctor used scraped apple successfully in cases of diarrhoea and dysentery.

This was 40 years before Birnberg published his first report in America of this famous method of treatment, thus forestalling Dr. A.—in the practical application of the best known of Scriptural commands, namely: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, etc."

Scraped apple is one of the best methods of treating infantile diarrhoea, just as apple juice is the best "pick-me-up" after severe exertion. The reason for the latter is that exertion causes a loss of potassium from the muscular tissue and since a pint of apple juice contains approximately 9 grams of potassium, this homely article is an effective remedy. Apple growers should profit by this knowledge. Mothers of families whose babies have diarrhoea, may use scraped apple with good effect before calling the doctor.—John W. S. McOulough, M.D., D.P.H.

Roosevelt, King met as International Bridge Opened



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