

The Free Press Short Story

BELOW THE BLUE

JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

WHITE foam creamed about the dipping sides of the "Emma-Jane" and burst into misted blue spray as the men on the tug helped big William Kellog into his canvas-covered rubber diving suit.

Jasper again studied his big brother's tanned, cheerful face anxiously. "Don't you think you'd better wait for diving?" he suggested.

William broke into one of his infectious laughs. "I wouldn't ordinarily, Jasper, but we've had trouble locating the 'Princess Borsalina'."

For three days the diving tug had dragged for the ship which had sunk just before reaching the straits. The "Princess Borsalina" collided with a trans-Pacific liner in a fog, had sunk, and the crew had safely disembarked in boats.

A premonition of some disaster would not leave Jasper, but he understood his brother's desire to make the dive which would end this search for the \$50,000 in gold which lay in the cabin of the "Princess Borsalina."

The shipment of gold had been insured for its full value. The Northwest Insurance Company, therefore, had made good the loss. To recoup this payment, they had hired the Kellog-Stoneway Divers, Incorporated, to dive for the gold, offering them \$500 for the job and a \$2,000 bonus should they bring up the box of precious metal.

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Graduating from the Bellingham High School that year, Jasper had opened a little sign-post shop. His heart was not in the work, however. He wished to be a diver like his older brother.

William had proved obstinate in refusing to let him join the firm. Infantile paralysis had left Jasper lame and rather frail. William was not taking chances with his brother's health at a work which he believed required strong men like himself and his two brawny partners.

"Communication all right," he said briefly to Homer. The two of them helped William to the landing platform. So encumbered was he by his 250-pound diving suit and his leaden-soled shoes that he could scarcely have walked alone above water.

which Homer swung over the side of the tug. Again the winches rumbled and groaned and the diver dropped swiftly toward the undulating gray surf, only a swirl of spray marking his passage as the descending line rippled through the water.

When ninety feet of the landing-platform line had been paid out, Theodore pulled up his lever, the winches ceased shuddering the tug, and Homer and Theodore turned to the descending line. They paid it out until 130 feet had sped over the side.

For five minutes there was no sound save the crash of waves against the tug, the throb of the pump sending down to William, air which meant his life, and the whistling of the strengthening breeze through the rigging.

"Do you want to take the phone, Jasper?" asked Theodore. His brown eyes acknowledged their gratitude as Jasper slipped the apparatus over his ears, unconsciously licking his dry lips.

"Reached the captain's cabin," said a voice Jasper failed to recognize as his brother's. Several moments of silence. A muffled roar sounded in the tubes, and William's breath seemed to come almost in sobs.

Finally a strained voice raged: "The swells have shifted the boat. I'm trapped under something heavy." Jasper stammeringly repeated the message.

Big Homer Stoneway's face whitened to the edge of his tawny-colored hair. The big fellow exchanged significant glances with Theodore. They all saw the scene mentally, William in the captain's cabin of the sunken ship with a bed or some other piece of furniture, loosened by the shifting of the ship in the swells, plunging him down.

The abrupt jerk of the boat on its anchors startled the three youths from their paralysis of indecision. Jasper saw the whitecaps climbing higher in the brisker wind. A storm was brewing. He interpreted the Stoneway brothers' thoughts. The anchors could not hold for long against the pull of wind and swell.

"I'll go!" declared Jasper decisively. "It's my place to take the risk!" Homer laughed but the sound was not particularly mirthful.

"You have no experience at that depth, Jasper," he said bluntly. "I'll have to get Bill out!" His face twitched, but Jasper could form no words as Homer dragged on the heavy suit. He was lowered over the side, and presently the others received his word: "On deck!"

Suddenly Theodore stiffened, his face growing ashen. "Homer can't do a thing!" he said to Jasper. "Something's wedged itself against the single door of the captain's cabin. He can't either push or pry it open. Homer's coming up. Tell Bill he'll have to free himself!"

"He can't come up!" cried Jasper, his voice vibrant with agony. "Bill—is—helpless!" "I know, but it's two lives if Homer doesn't come up; one, otherwise!" Seeing Jasper's incredulous expression, Theodore added sharply, "Can't you see the anchors won't hold five minutes at most?"

It was too ghastly, too unreal. A few minutes before Jasper had watched his brother's infectious smile, the crinkle of his blue eyes when he smiled. He would never see William smile again. The lad fought down a hysterical impulse to scream. It had always been just the two of them since their father and mother had passed away, years before.

A prayer trembled on his lips, a prayer that God would give him strength to do something, to come to some decision. Homer rose through the waves without the usual period of slow stages to "decompress" him so that the pressure would not give him divers' "bends."

Theodore had not dared risk decompressing his brother on the way up lest the anchor chains break. He was rushed into the steel decompression tank, and the doors shut behind him. Jasper's recollection of what William had once said in teaching his Sunday school class suddenly clarified his whirling thoughts, steadied them. "I'm going down!" declared Jasper.

"You're mad!" snapped Theodore. "What could you do if Homer couldn't pry open the jammed door?" "Victory is in the mind and not the body!" Jasper said quietly, something like anger flashing in his brown eyes. "Neither you nor Homer believe it's possible to get Bill out. I believe I can somehow free him and I will!"

Something in his manner commanded obedience. Theodore helped him with the breastplate, his hands shaking. One of the men lifted on the copper helmet. A moment later, he was whisked over the side and cold water closed over his head.

When the landing platform finally stopped at ninety feet, he no longer saw anything, although he felt the pull of current and swells on his suit. He stepped off the platform, and the rope dropped him swiftly through the cold, wet night of the ocean. Finally his feet came to rest on something solid. With the dimness of unreality, he saw the ghostly outline of something black—the ship—magnified out of all proportion by his vision plate. "On deck!" he shouted, and received an answering call from above.

He had studied the plan of the ship with William, and knew the direction of bow and stern. He found the rail, and felt his way aft to the stairs leading to the bridge and the captain's cabin. He found the captain's door and leaned off the platform, and the rope dropped him swiftly through the cold, wet night of the ocean.

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'SALADA' TEA is delicious



ONTARIO INCOME TAX RETURNS are DUE APRIL 30th

If you are subject to the Dominion Income Tax, you are also subject to the Ontario Income Tax.

You are required to fill out ONE FORM ONLY—T1-1935. This form combines both your Ontario and Dominion Income Tax Returns.

USE THIS FORM:

T1-1935 DOM.-ONT. COMBINED. For use of individuals other than farmers and ranchers. All communications must have sufficient postage affixed. DOMINION OF CANADA AND PROVINCE OF ONTARIO INCOME TAX RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1935

You should obtain three copies of this form from one of the following sources:

- 1. Any office of "The Inspector of Dominion Income Tax". These offices are located at Ottawa, Belleville, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, London and Port William. 2. Any Post Office. 3. Any Province of Ontario Savings Office.

On or before April 30th, you must file two copies of this form T1-1935, (or form T1A-1935, if you are a farmer or rancher) at the nearest office of "The Inspector of Dominion Income Tax".

In making this combined return of Ontario and Dominion Income Taxes, attach a certified cheque or money order, payable to the Receiver General of Canada, for at least one quarter of the total tax payable.

EXEMPTIONS AND DEDUCTIONS Form T1-1935 is self-explanatory. The exemptions and deductions are the same for the Ontario Income Tax as for the Dominion Income Tax.

Your taxable income is also the same, with two exceptions: (1) you deduct the amount of your Dominion Income Tax. (2) You add all income received from Dominion of Canada Bonds.

IMPORTANT. Because the Ontario and Dominion Income Taxes are combined, there is only one form—only one cheque or money order required. This arrangement greatly simplifies your returns and your payments.

PURPOSE OF ONTARIO INCOME TAX The main purpose of the Ontario Income Tax is to enable your Government to adopt a "Pay-as-you-go" policy. By helping the Province, you help yourself.

SUPPORT ONTARIO'S NEW POLICY OF "PAY AS YOU GO"

THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

SCOTT'S SCRAPBOOK by R. J. SCOTT. BRONCO BUSTING, AS A PROFESSION, IS CONFINED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE U. S. AND MEXICO. NEARLY 7,000 SPECIES OF BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS ARE CATALOGUED IN NORTH AMERICA ALONE. DR. JOSEPH HERMAN HERTZ OF ENGLAND IS PRIEST, AUTHOR JUDGE AND SARDIUSI HEAD OF ALL ORGANOIDS JEWRY. HE IS THE RELIGIOUS LEADER OF 15,000,000 PEOPLE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE WORLD.