

The Free Press' Short Story

"TROUBLED WATERS"

JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

LANE CROSBY tied up his little... motor boat to the dock at Ketchikan...

"Guess I'll hold long enough for me... to be turned down again!" muttered Lane...

He climbed up the ladder, a long, rough-hewn... of a youth in work clothes and high rubber boots...

Graduation had left him almost penniless... so he had set out for Alaska in his little boat...

Lane was keenly disappointed to find that Hugh Sargent had preceded him... and that Sargent was confident the position was his...

Forced to make his own way in the world... he had left the founding home which had helped him through childhood...

"I was," said the other dryly; "but while taking a pleasure trip up here... Dad wired me that the firm had gone into bankruptcy..."

Half of the broad dock was occupied by the cannery... The clatter of cans and the humming of the rotaries drowned out the sound of approaching footsteps...

son that Mr. Moffit's piercing gray eyes were deep set... If the cannery owner had noticed Lane at all...

"Mr. Moffit, Lane Crosby," he said in informal introduction... "I believe Lane wanted to see you about something, too..."

Mr. Moffit studied the tall young man in work clothes... but he said nothing. At that moment Lane's eyes were drawn to a bunch of bobbing specks...

Mr. Moffit seemed to bristle... "Have you?" But it didn't do any good... Axel thought I tried to cheat him four years ago...

"Perhaps, but I can at least try," Hugh Sargent forced a sardonic laugh... "Why risk your neck for some stilt-necked Swede?" he demanded...

He freed the hawser, primed the engine, swung the wheel... The warm engine caught, and the steady put-put of the motor vibrated the "Bubbles"...

The little fishing boats were tacking, swinging about as crazily at times... their iridescent propellers operated by auxiliary motors lifted high above the water...

Lane felt that the "Bubbles" would burst into shattered fragments... from the blows of the crashing mountains of water which poured over it...

"You're mistaken!" growled Severson... "We're to take our fish in to the Ketchikan cannery!"

"But," expostulated Lane... "you're under no obligation to them nor to me." Severson's blue eyes lost their cold look...

Lane laughed. "Naturally not!" Their return trip was made easy by reason of the oil clinging to the sides of the boats...

"Who said I was going to Ketchikan?" "I thought that was your destination," said Lane in surprise...

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who isn't afraid to dirty his hands when he's needed... Lane's eyes widened incredulously. "But I thought Sargent..."

Fortitude is the sentinel and guardian virtue; without it all other virtues are in peril... Daring as inborn, and often born blind...

WHAT NONSENSE! Enemy at Manoeuvre—"You are my prisoner." Sargent blinked—"Nonsense! How did you get here?"

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SHOULD BE THANKFUL. He was proud of the fine sons he possessed, but found their education expensive...

KNOW HIS FOLKS. Teacher: "Now, James, if your father can do a nice piece of work in one hour and your mother can do it in one hour, how long will it take them to do it together?"

ALL OVER! This report was found by a doctor in India who had left a native assistant in charge of a serious case...

SORRY TO INTERRUPT. Wife: "Henry, you were talking in your sleep last night." Henry: "Was I? Sorry to have interrupted you."

OPINIONS. "It is our business to have a pagentry of peace that is as attractive as the pagentry of war..."

"It has become clear that treaties count for nothing in the face of national ambition and of what the ruling statesmen regard as national security..."

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