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## BLUE WATER

A TALE OF THE DEEP  
SEA FISHERMEN

BY FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

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### CHAPTER FOURTEEN—(Cont'd.)

"What happened outside, thar?" asked the injured man. "I have nawthin' but a jumble a-runnin' in my head about it, I kin remember seein' th' Lurcher Shoal breakin' an' th' Lightship—"

"Then you guv a yell what brought us all on deck, an' ye were heavin' th' wheel hard down when she shipped a sea which threw ye on th' spokes. We were heavin' in on th' mamsheet, an' you sings out t' scandalize th' mains'l. She started slattin' in that breeze, an' th' sea sluggin' over her somethin' savage; we had a blaze's own job t' stand on deck. We lowered away on th' peak halliards an' was a-hitsin' up when she guv a whoop of a sla' an' parts th' spring stay—then she jest comes tumblin' down an' th' boom hits you at th' wheel. Jules an' Mac here lugs you from under th' wreckage an' lays you down in th' cabin, an' we gits busy an' cuts th' gear adrift. After that, we started runnin' in among th' breakers an' rips, which blame near scared us t' death until you comes up an' gits us out o' them again. Lord Harry! I never thought we come out a' that place alive. Th' place was breakin' water for miles in that sou'-wester . . . hell of a night we had.—Excuse me, miss." The nurse had come forward.

"Now, men, you must go," she said; and promising to call on the morrow, they left Frank alone with his thoughts.

If ever a man received a castigation from his own conscience, it was West-haver, and his mental flagellation gave him more pain than did his injuries. Luckily he was spared the additional lash of a wounded heart. The ordeal he had gone through had somehow put the affair in a different light, and his mind ceased to be haunted with disturbing visions of the girl who had driven him to the actions of his madness. She was a memory of the past—an unpleasant memory, but one, which, like a nightmarish dream, could easily be dismissed from recollection. No! He did not care about her now. The scales had fallen from his eyes and he had become critical—cruelly so—and her sayings and actions he had analyzed mentally until he had weighed her in the balance and found her wanting. He had known her for many years, and yet, upon cool reflection, he began to doubt the fact that he had really loved her. He had longed to possess, yet having possession he was not sure that he would have been entirely satisfied. It would be like a man who coveted a jewel, and when he finally owned it would put it away in a case without giving it a further thought. It was not love which had prompted him in his mad rage, but rather a sense of wounded pride at the success of a rival—a realization of having failed in his efforts to own and control, and being a

strong, self-willed man, he was uncontrollable in his frenzy at failure. So he had reasoned—even while he was at the wheel of the schooner—and mature reflection had purged his mind. But it was the madness of his actions which seared his soul; and as he thought of the gamble with Death, the near sacrifice of twenty-one souls upon the altar of his insensate fury, he trembled and broke into a sweat of fear. The roar of the hungry breakers sounded in his ears; the scream of the wind mingled with it, and a vision of the gale-hounded vessel, staggering, plunging, and storming through the awful inferno of shoal water, wind and tide whipped, flashed persistently through his mental retrospection. What if he had struck? The thought almost caused him to groan with the agony of the conception, and a strange illusion haunted him. Who was the oilskinned man at the wheel of the "Kinsella" that night? The man who had torn the spokes from his grasp and gazed at him with eyes of tender commiseration, and who seemed to have exercised a power over him which saved him from striking the Shoal? "Sable Island North-East Bar dead ahead!" Frank shivered. He knew now, and the thought frightened him. The father had come to warn the son—to save him from himself; and as he turned it over in his mind he felt all the terror and reverence for the supernatural. And yet why should he be afraid? The child is not afraid of the mother who lifts it from the floor to which it has fallen. Why should he be afraid of the spirit of his father?

In their sequence came other disturbing reflections. Jules! The man who had been his shadow for years; who had been his confidant and his dearest friend. Jules, who had advanced him money for the furtherance of his ambitions, and who was content to follow him without thinking of himself. Jules, who had proved sterling and of the best—true-hearted, trustworthy, and honest. How had he treated him? He had not been so drunk but what he remembered, and memory of his callous conduct made him weep bitter tears into his pillow. He would repay him as soon as he got better—if it were not too late. Then came the thought of his gang—the rough and tough, but staunch and warm-hearted fellows who had thrown in their fortunes with his. What had he done for them? Dragged them out to sea in a gale of wind and would have thrown their lives away in his blind rage had not a greater Power intervened and saved him from being a wholesale murderer. Murderer! What an awful conception! And yet they forgave him without a murmur; sympathized with him, and wished him well. And he had risked their lives but the night before and deprived them of a possible livelihood for a month at least! And Hoolahan! What about him? Had he not played fast and loose with the old man's property and lost him money? The vessel was only insured under a policy which covered total loss only, and a new spar and dories would have to come out of his and Westhaver's pocket—each in his proportionate share. Truly, in his review of events the young fishing skipper was flayed by conscience; conscience which touched him on the raw, and seared his soul until the scalding tears dropped from his eyes at the recollections of his ungratefulness. But he would pay it all back. He was blind, blind, blind, but he had tried himself before the harshest of all judges and had promised to atone.

The golden glory of the sunset was flooding the room when he became aware of someone entering. The nurse came over and looked down upon him. "Yes, he's awake. Some people to see you, Captain." And he turned his eyes to look up at Jules and Miss Denton!

"Miss Denton! Sabot!" he gasped in delighted surprise. "How—how did you know I was here?"

Miss Denton sat down beside the cot. "Oh, Captain Westhaver," she said sympathetically, "if I had only known sooner, I would have had you taken up home instead of to this lonely place. And how do you feel?"

Frank laughed in pleasure. "Oh, not so bad, miss. We trawlers are hard t' kill. An' how are you yourself? How's your father? None th' worse o' th' wreck, I hope."

The girl smiled, and Frank thought he had never seen such a pleasing smile in his life. "Dad is all right,

He told me to tell you that he'd come to-morrow and have you out in—in—what was the expression, Mr. Galarneau?"

Jules was smiling all over his swarthy face. "Two shakes of a brace-block, Miss Denton."

She laughed—a silvery trill which came like a ray of sunshine into Frank's jaded heart. "Yes, that's it! Two shakes of a brace-block! That's one of Dad's nautical expressions. He gets me absolutely bewildered sometimes by the way he talk. Are you in any pain?"

"No, I don't feel anythin' at all. They've got me all parcelled, served, and fished like a sprung spar, until I can't move hand nor foot for fear of startin' a lashin'."

Miss Denton laughed again. "More nauticalisms! Good gracious! What is a poor woman to do to understand you sailormen. Now, see what I've brought for you. Don't they smell sweet?" And she thrust a bunch of flowers under Frank's nose.

"Ah!" He drank in the fragrance. "Oh, but they're beautiful—and you are so kind—so kind. They're lovely!"

"Now, I'll just put them in this vase alongside your cot. Flowers do make one feel good sometimes, and I simply love them." And while she was busying herself arranging them, Frank looked over at his old dory-mate with a questioning, half-fearful look in his eyes.

It was Jules who spoke first, and there was nothing but friendliness in his eyes. "Well, Frankee, ol' boy, an' how you feel now? I t'ink you was thinkin' I was never come to see you, but I was here wit' you w'en we brought you ashore in de doree dis mornin'. You were faint den, so I go back to de vessel an' dress up. Den I make deal for new mainmast—she's bein' made now—an' I get de sail an' boom an' de oder gear from shore fishermen. De vessel will be all ready in a week, an' I send message up to your uncle at Long Cove to come down. Maybe he take her for one trip until you get well again."

Frank nodded. "Good ol' Jules. You done jest right, an' I'll never be able t' pay ye for what ye've done. An' th' way I treated you—"

Jules frowned. "Say nawtin'. I forget." And with his answer Frank's heart felt lighter.

Miss Denton had finished arranging the flowers, and the nurse was bringing in some supper. "Well, Captain, I'm afraid your nurse will forbid our staying longer. Now, you're to make up your mind to get well as quick as possible, or Mr. Galarneau and I will have something to say in the matter. Papa and I will see Doctor Willis about having you moved up to our place, and your friend and I will call and see you to-morrow. Now, be good 'til then. Au revoir!"

"So long, Frankee, 'til to-morrow. I see you then." And Jules, dressed like a gentleman in his shore clothes, escorted Miss Denton out.

After being fed like a baby, he dropped into a refreshing sleep, with a mind strangely free from the harass of care. He had gone through the mill of recrimination and emerged to find his old friend by his bedside and still his friend, and his heart was cheered also by the visit of a girl whom he had almost forgotten, but whose presence seemed to linger with as much fragrance to his mind as the flowers she had brought.

Frank held a big levee next day, and his visitors came in a perfect stream. First came McCallum and Simms, and then his mother and Uncle Jerry. Frank had seen neither of the latter since the New Year, and the greetings were affectionate in the extreme. It was his uncle whom he wanted to see most of all, as the tangled skein of his affairs would have to be taken up by his avuncular relative.

(To be continued.)

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