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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.)  
"Sh! Hold your tongue," exclaimed the girl. "You're not at sea now, and you'll obey orders."  
Frank laughed. "It's a pleasure for me to obey orders from some people."

She was packing his things in the suit-case. "Do you want your watch out of this vest?" She held up the sea-stained garment. It was part of the suit he wore on the memorable trip out of Portland.

"Yes, if you please. I call'te it's spoiled, ain't it?"

"No," she replied. "It seems all right. There is something else in the pocket too. Do you want it?"

"What is it? Ain't a roll of bills, is it?"

For answer she stepped across with the watch, chain, and a small velvet box. Frank took them from her slowly, and slipping the watch into his pocket, he took the box in his fingers.

"Th' ring! I clean forgot all about it." He spoke slowly, and then raised his eyes up to the face of the girl standing in front of him. Pulling a chair over, he said quietly, "Will ye sit here a moment?"

Wonderingly she obeyed, and with his eyes gazing into hers he snapped the cover of the box open and displayed the flashing gem.

"What a lovely diamond!" she exclaimed in surprise. "Isn't it a beauty?"

"Yes," he said tensely; "but not half so beautiful as what you are, Lillian. Will—will you put it on your finger?"

With the color mantling in her cheeks, she picked the ring out of his outstretched hand, and while he watched her with the intensity of ap-

prehension she slowly slipped it on her finger.

"Sweetheart!" he cried joyfully, and reaching over, he clasped her to him with his strong right arm, and as he looked into her eyes—bright and shining with the lovelight under their long lashes—he knew that he had won. "Oh, darling! An' 'tis the happy man I am this day now that I have ye for my own. Aye! my very own!"

### CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

There is no man so supremely happy and contented with life as he who has wooed and won the girl of his heart. Frank Westhaver was no exception. He had taken a chance with a young woman whom he regarded as his social and intellectual superior, a girl he had met in an unusual manner a few months before, and upon an acquaintanceship of a few weeks; he had proposed and was accepted. The odds, to his mind, were greatly against him. He was a fisherman and a member of a profession usually regarded by the uninitiated as being of a low type—odoriferous, menial, poor, and degraded. He had no means of knowing what other rivals there were already in the field, but he had "made a set for her," as he expressed it, and he had "hooked his fish."

If Frank could only have read Miss Denton's mind he would not have thought his task such a difficult one after all. Months ago, when she first saw him, he had impressed her greatly, and when she learned more about him and got to know the stuff he was made of she admired him more than any other of her friends. The admiration was mutual, and soon ripened into love.

There is a trite, but oft-times true, proverb which declares that the course of true love runs not smoothly. So Westhaver found when he broached the subject to old Captain Denton. The venerable shipmaster had no objections to Frank as a son-in-law—in fact he would not have wished to see a better man the husband of his daughter—but he had some views upon the subject which he explained to Westhaver at some length.

"I like you, Westhaver," he said, as the two sat on the sun-flooded porch

of the Denton house, "but if you were the smartest fishing skipper on the Atlantic I wouldn't let you have my daughter for a wife. I'm a sailor myself, and I know what the lot of a sailor's wife is, and years ago I vowed if Lily ever got hitched up it would never be to a sailor. No, siree! I know what her mother had to go through when I was away at sea. I've seen her git grey-haired with worrying over me, and every breeze of wind that blows keeps them wakeful and wondering how their husband is faring when he's outside. Then there's th' lonesomeness of it, and— Well, I reckon I need say no more. You know exactly what I mean, and let me tell ye, a fisherman's life is worse than a deep-water sailor's. Ye may be at home a little oftener, but th' risks you fellows take in them small schooners is more than I'd want any son-in-law of mine to be taking, and there's a sight of poor fishermen's widows around this coast, I can tell you. Then again, I've given Lily th' benefit of a good education, and I've had her brought up well socially. She's not going to throw all that away as a fisherman's wife. When she marries, her husband has got to be living at home, and have a shore job, and a good one. I'm not going to see her living alone and depending upon the earnings of a husband who may strike luck one voyage and make nawthing in another. That's too precarious."

Frank nodded. "Yes, sir, I kin understand th' way you look at it, an' I see your point, but I don't plan fishin' at sea all my life. My uncle an' me are plannin' t' start a little business up in Long Cove. We've bought a vessel—th' Kinsella—an' I call'te runnin' her while uncle looks after th' shore end o' the plant."

The old man nodded. "Yes, that's all right, but you're going to be doing the sea end of it, and that's what I object to. You're a smart lad, I know, and I think if ye'd look around a little you can do more than fossick around with a little bit of a business. Use your brains, and look for something bigger, my lad—I'll give ye two years—and when you've git into something that'll keep you ashore and earning enough to keep my girl as she should be kept, I'll say nawthing. But 'til then—no marrying."

Frank accepted Captain Denton's decision as final, and Lillian was too dutiful a daughter to dissent from anything her parent said. "You'll find something, Frank," she remarked when the situation had been explained to her. "Dad is right. I couldn't bear to have you away out at sea. You've got two years before you—two years is a long time, but I'm sure you could do a lot in that period. You're young yet—twenty-three isn't old—and we've both got plenty of time before us. Get your wits to work now, and I'll help all I can."

And as Frank looked down into her lovely face he felt that his task would be inspired by his love for such a woman. "Oh, dearie," he whispered as he pressed her to him, "I feel that I shall do great things for your sake. With such a prize to win, I c'd go through anythin' t' make you happy." Her face was very close to his; her hair brushed his cheek, and, looking into the depths of her brown eyes, he saw her admiration for him glancing from under the long lashes. There was a warm glow in her face and a fascinating disorder in her silky hair, when her father's voice came from the verandah.

"Oh, Westhaver! Come out an' try one of my Antwerp manillas."

Frank rose. "Jest another, sweetheart!" and with the touch of her warm red lips upon his he went out to join the old man with a little regret at having to defile the lingering sweetness with such a thing as a smoke.

It was a glorious August day when he landed upon the string-piece of the Long Cove wharf. A fresh breeze was blowing in from the sea, and the tang of it, coming in over the weed-strewn rocks, with the sight of the fleecy clouds racing athwart the blue of the sky, filled Frank's young heart with the ecstasy of living, loving, and being loved. All the Long Covers were working upon the new additions when he stepped ashore, and they threw down augers, saws, adzes, and hammers in the rush to greet him. There was Long Dick, rangier and more bronzed than ever, pumping the hand off him, and shooting questions like a rapid-fire gun. Jud Morrell, Uncle Jerry, Zeke, and Lem Ring were surging round him with the light of welcome in their eyes. Oh, but he felt good to be home amongst them once more!

"Waal, waal, an' here's our Skipper Shorty Westhaver!" cried Long Dick. "Home at last, after settin' th' whole coast a-talkin'. A reg'lar dog of a rip-roarin' driver from T Dock, with yer rough an' tough gang, an' th' Mabel Kinsella! Lord Harry! boy, but ye've suttainly been paintin' th' water, ef all what we've hard is true. Blest, but I'd be 'most scared t' be one o' yer gang, ef ye're th' dog of a feller they say ye are!" Such were the greetings—rough, jesting, but sincere—and it was all he could do to break away from the mob and get up to his mother and home.

He found Jules behind the house making horses for supporting fish flakes, and the honest fellow's joy at seeing him again was truly cordial. "Oh, Frankee, but I was thinking you never coming home. I jest say to Cap'en Clark dis morning dot I be for go to Yarmout' to-morrow for see what come over you."

"Come up th' field aways," said the other. "I got somethin' t' say t' ye—you cute ol' dog."

Jules threw the hammer down and followed his friend. Frank walked on

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for a few yards and sat down under the shade of a giant spruce. "Here, you blame' ol' trawler," exclaimed Frank, with a twinkle in his eyes, "what d'ye mean by goin' aroun' Yarmouth an' tellin' my whole history to every girl ye meet?"

Jules looked up questioningly. "Er—ah," he stammered awkwardly. "Did she tell you dat?"

"Yes," she did," replied the other. "An' a nice scrape ye've let me in for—you an' yer gossip."

Sabot's large eyes opened wide. "What have I done, Frankee?" he said in hesitation. "Is—there anythin' wrong?"

"Is thar' anythin' wrong?" reiterated Frank. "Waal, I sh'd jest say thar' was! Do you know what you've gone an' done?"

"N-no." The Frenchman's reply was apprehensive, and his eyes showed his trepidation.

"Waal, I'll tell ye then," said the other with mock severity. "Ye've jest gone an' tied me up t' th' finest little clipper what ever left th' ways—meanin', that I've put th' ring on Lily Denton's finger—"

Jules gave a whoop of joy, and in his delight he embraced his old dory-mate with all the fervor of his inherited Gallic temperament. "I knew dat she was de girl! I knew it—I knew it. Oh, Frankee, but I'm glad—veree glad." And when his outburst was over he explained the affair to his friend. "I knew dat Dexter girl was not for you, Frankee. She was too perfide—orgueilleuse—proud—

flirt, I tink you call dat. She want everythin'—never give nawtin'. W'en she went to hospital at Boston she get worse. I see dat—you no see. Now, w'en dat lovely girl come off de wreck I say dat de girl for Frankee. I see dat she like you by her eyes on de Kinsella, an' w'en you go hospital in Yarmout' I go for see an' tell her. She was ver' 'fraid w'en I tell her how you hurt, an' w'en I see dat, I tell her w'at fine feller you was. I tell her dat everee tam I take her to hospital, an' she ask me lots of question 'bout you. Den I lef' you to do rest, an' I feel glad—so glad."

(To be continued.)

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