

BLUE WATER

A TALE OF THE DEEP
SEA FISHERMEN

BY FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—(Cont'd.)

The Court Usher banged his gavel and called for silence, and the Judge, looking over at the chattering fishermen who had so unceremoniously disturbed the sanctity of the Court House, said severely:

"I have a mind to order the arrest of you men for contempt of Court. Captain Clark, what do you mean by this interruption?"

Uncle Jerry reddened. "Excuse me, Judge," he said. "I'm sorry if I've done any harm, but I think I've found somethin' that'll prove my nevv'y's case."

While Frank gasped in consternation, his lawyer arose and addressed the Judge. "I have here the necessary documents to prove my client's claim. Here is a letter written by the deceased Captain and address to his notaries, Messrs. Smith and Crosby. In it he has written: 'I have sold my house and land to Captain Frank Westhaver of this place for two thousand dollars. Make out the deeds and send them to him. I am also sending you this cheque, which I want you to get cashed and send the money to the Treasurer of the Sailor's Orphan Society of Liverpool, G.B., saying that it is a donation from Asa Crawford, late master of the Liverpool ship Guinevere.' Now, your honor, I would ask you to compare the signatures on this letter and on the receipt which my client holds—"

Mr. Wrigley jumped up. "Excuse me, but is that cheque endorsed by the deceased?"

Frank waited in a cold sweat for his lawyer's reply.

"The cheque is made payable to bearer," replied Mr. Stevens slowly; "but I see that Asa Crawford has endorsed it as well. That gives us three signatures for comparison, and I think that Mr. Smith, who has handled all the Captain's legal business, will certify as to their authenticity."

The Judge nodded. "How came this letter to turn up?"

Captain Clark stepped forward on a nod from the lawyer. "Your honor," he said, "one of my men had a ditty box given to him by a Mrs. Taylor of Long Cove, who bought it at Cap'n Crawford's place when th' sale was held. It's one o' them puzzle boxes, an' I managed to open it while we were lyin' to off Seal Island in th' schooner Lillian. As soon as I opened it a number o' letters fell out an' th' one which Lawyer Stevens has was among them. When I larned who 'twas addressed to, I callated it might be th' letter my nevv'y was a-lookin' for, so we hung out th' patch an' hooked for port as hard as we c'd slam. Ef th' wind hadn't ha' headed us in th' Bay we might ha' bin in afore."

"All right, Captain!" The Judge looked over the papers laid before him. "I think we have conclusive proof that Captain Westhaver purchased the property in litigation. The endorsed cheque and the letter to Messrs. Smith and Crosby bear out the testimony of the defendant, and the signature on the receipt is identical with the signatures on the letter and the endorsement on the cheque. You will swear to the late Crawford's handwriting, Mr. Smith?"

"Yes, your honor!"

Mr. Wrigley, the smile gone from his cadaverous features, arose and spoke. "Your honor," he said, "I beg for a postponement of the case. I wish to prove that the deceased was not in his right mind when he made this disposition of his property—"

The Judge waved his hand. "Nonsense, Mr. Wrigley. I wouldn't entertain that claim for a moment. I knew Captain Crawford very well indeed, and I know he never evinced any signs of insanity."

And the fishermen assembled sniggered audibly.

Of course Westhaver won his case, and when the Judge gave his decision there was a roar of approval from the spectators, and for a good quarter of an hour Frank was shaking horny fists and being almost choked by the hearty slaps he received on the back from the delighted fishermen. Mr. Stevens was cheered and congratulated until he felt that he had friends for life among the Bay Shore trawlers, and it was a fact, he gained a lot of fishermen's business by his connection with the case.

Mr. Wrigley, knowing that he had lost the day, made the best of a bad job by congratulating Frank upon his success. "I'm sorry I had to oppose you, Captain," he said; "but that's the way of the law—"

"Sorry sulphur!" growled a bulky, red-headed fisherman. "Git away an' leave th' skipper alone, you yaller-mugged sculpin." And Mr. Wrigley wriggled off with the growls and surly looks of a score of angry trawlers hastening his departure.

Mr. Stevens gathered up his papers and placed them in his bag.

"Well, Captain, I'm glad you won out. I'll look after this business for you and see that you don't get mixed up in any more legal complications. It will be some satisfaction to you to know that your friend Morrissey is to pay the costs of this suit. Good day, Captain."

The transition from absolute despair to the ecstasy of joy and renewed hope brought out all the boyishness of Westhaver's nature, and nothing would satisfy him until he had dragged all the Lillian's gang into one of the best hotels in Anchorville and ordered a dinner. Clad in their old clothes and rubber boots, they sat down to the meal and ate everything, from soup to nuts, and the commercial travellers and other guests wondered what such a rough-looking crowd could be rejoicing over. At last, when it was all over, Frank drew his uncle to one side.

"Before we go aboard th' Lillian an' shoot for th' Cove, I'm goin' down t' buy some books on business, an' one o' them will be a copy o' th' Law. I don't git inter any more scrapes like this again."

When the Lillian arrived off the Long Cove wharf next morning, the whole population were down to meet her, and with the ensign fluttering from her main gaff she glided in between the pier heads.

"How d'ye come out?" bawled Harbor-master Jennings.

"All right!" answered Frank, and the crowd on the wharf broke into a cheer which made the hills and rocks echo again.

Chaired on the broad shoulders of two brawny trawlers, Westhaver was escorted to his home by a laughing, shouting mob, who, when they arrived at the house, clattered into the sacred precincts of Mrs. Westhaver's "settin'-room" and demanded to know all about it. If poor Bob Morrissey had been in the vicinity at that time he would have fared roughly, and Mrs. Westhaver had to close her ears to the various lurid and picturesque deep-water anathemas which were levelled against him.

"Now," murmured Frank when they had departed, "I hope I'm through sailin' shipmates with Trouble. Th' clouds hev lifted an' th' barometer's

risin' for fair weather. Let's hope I kin steer good courses after this." And he sat down and wrote to Lillian Denton.

The autumn passed and winter came with frost and snow, but Long Cove had passed the hibernating era of coast settlements. The Lillian had a full gang of Bay Shore men who came away from the American vessels when they heard that they could fish out of their home port, and as they were in almost every two weeks during the winter the village was by no means lonesome. The boat fishermen, able to procure supplies, bait, and a ready market for their fish, had no call to haul their craft up and go vessel-fishing out of other ports, and the once almost deserted wharf became a daily centre of activity with the men unloading their fares and cleaning and dressing the catch.

The new store, owned and operated by the Company, became a kind of club-room for the inhabitants of the village, and around the big stove on winter nights a coterie of Long Covers smoked, yarned, and argued over every conceivable subject from the build of Noah's Ark to the current war in progress. All the old men of the settlement found the store a great asylum for whiling away the long winter days, and they dropped in after breakfast and read Frank's newspapers and magazines and almost bothered the life out of him until closing time at night.

The chilly months sped away very quickly. Frank came down and opened up the store at eight in the morning, and after sweeping it out and lighting up the big heater he usually retired into the back office and opened up his books. During the day he was kept busy noting the tallies of fish brought in over the wharf and entering the amounts to the credit of the various shore fishermen. The store required a great deal of attention, and as most of the goods purchased were debited against fish supplied, it necessitated quite an amount of book-keeping on Westhaver's part. When the work eased up for an hour or so, he would light up his pipe and proceed to master the art of double-entry book-keeping, and by the summer he was able to strike off an accurate balance and run his ledger, cash-book, and journal in a very creditable manner for a fisherman. There were occasions too when the memory of his legal fight came to mind, that he closed his door against the chatter of the loungers outside and reached down a half-calfed volume labelled with a legal title. It was intensely dry reading, but by patience and exercise of the dogged determination which was part of his nature, Westhaver gained a fairly comprehensive idea of the law regarding property and business transactions.

Almost before he was aware of it, Frank, from his desk at the office, saw that spring had come. The grass was showing brown-green through the patches of snow, and the drip from the roof pattered in glittering drops before the window. In the flake-yard, Captain Ring and Lem were busy erecting the drying racks, and as he gazed out upon the blue of sky and sea, the lure of the season called to him, and he threw down his pen, opened the window to let the fresh breeze sweeten the heated atmosphere redolent of tar and sulphur matches, and went out.

In the flake-yard Captain Ring looked up from his work on Frank's hail. "Aye, it's beginnin' t' look summery again. We'll hev t' git th' flake-yard a-goin' soon, as we hev an awful power o' fish t' dry afore th' barquentine comes aroun' t' load."

Down on the wharf, Uncle Jerry, with an oilskin apron around his waist, was standing by the scales tallying the Lillian's catch, and Frank stood for a moment and watched the gang swaying on the dory tackles hoisting the baskets of fish out of the hold and dumping them into the scale box. "Waal, you blame 'quill driver!" cried Captain Clark. "You're like th' bear, I callate. Th' sun hez sure brought ye away from yer desk t' come an' smell gurry again, eh?"

"Yes, I reckon it has," answered the other, smiling. "How much has Captain Jules brought in this time?"

"'Bout sixty-five thousand, an' all good grade. Brown's Bank fish, y'know, an' all from Jules's favorite spot on th' northern edge. He's doin' well for a green skipper."

The spirit of the season was entering Westhaver's blood, and after looking on the scene of activity around the vessel, the gang unloading on her decks, the busy weighers monotonously droning the weights, the wharf hands pitching the fish into wheelbarrows and trundling them away, and old Sailor Dan hitching and bending new rattlins on the Lillian's rigging, he strolled with an indefinable feeling of pleasure to the end of the pier.

The waters of the Bay stretched gloriously blue to the far horizon, and the white sails of the boat fishermen could be discerned in the middle distance, while far away to the south a lumber-laden three-masted schooner was sagging lazily on her lawful occasions. In the spring the young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love—so runs an old saw; and Frank felt that way and thought of Lillian teaching school in Yarmouth. He wondered if she had pupils like what he was in his younger days, and he shuddered at the thought.

While he was ruminating over the supposition, he heard footsteps behind him, and Jules's heavy hand on his back almost spitted him on the mooring post upon which he was lolling.

(To be continued.)

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A Financial Courtship

Romance of Investments told in Clever Short Story

CHAPTER I.

When James Allen died, he left two daughters a small but comfortable home and fifty thousand dollars of life insurance. He had been a quiet, taciturn man, taking no one, not even his own daughters, into his confidence. Not until he was buried and his will was read, did anyone have the slightest idea of his possessions. He had held the position of Clerk of the Court for forty years, and had lived comfortably, educated his daughters and performed his duties as a good citizen. His wife had died four years before him. It now appeared that he had adopted early in life the idea of living close to his income, saving enough each year to pay his life insurance premiums, and relying on the insurance to take care of his family when he should be gone—rather a dangerous, but not unusual, policy.

He had never discussed business at home, and his daughters were absolutely ignorant of the first principles of finance. They had received the usual common school education, and were now well advanced toward middle life, Hannah being forty-two and Mary, thirty-two.

When the first shock of the unexpected death was overcome and they found themselves thrown wholly upon their own resources, they were staggered by the weight of the responsibility. It is true they had a comfortable home and a modest fortune, but they were entirely

without male kith or kin. There was no man, no near relative, they could go to for advice, and, with the instinctive dread of women of exposing their affairs to outsiders, they hesitated to take anyone into their confidence.

It was the evening following the funeral, and the two sisters, in their new black gowns, were seated in the little lonely sitting-room, reading their father's last will and testament, which was very brief, and left all he possessed to them jointly.

"I never had the slightest idea of how much father had," said Hannah, staring into space.

"Nor I," said Mary. "We always had enough, but we lived very economically, so I suppose we can go on all right."

"Yes, but you must remember we don't have father's salary any more."

"That's true; I never thought of that. Can we live on what he left?" And an anxious look came over the face of the younger woman.

"We must. It isn't as though we were young and could go out and teach or become stenographers. We are almost too old to begin now, and it doesn't look, Mary, as though either of us would get married." A sad little laugh followed the words and the quick tears sprang to the gentle eyes of the younger sister. The word "spinster" was indelibly stamped on both their good, honest, kindly faces and they knew the world would pass them by for fresher and more brilliant ones.

For the continuation of this very human story, read "A Financial Courtship," which tells what happened to the two sisters and their legal adviser. We will send you one free, if you write for it, and mention the name of this paper. Not only you, but every adult member of your family will enjoy reading it, and it will help you—as well to understand how to choose and buy good investments.

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