

the dark ships

BY HULBERT FOOTNER

Chapter 40 Back To The Ships

"HELLO, Johnny," said Neill. "This is the guy who passed out in your cab Monday night, and whom you took to the Stafford. You came back the next morning to see how I was. Remember?"

"Sure, I remember you."

"Are you free, Johnny? Are you free for the whole night? I want to make a trip into the country."

"Well, I could be," said Johnny hesitatingly.

"Oh, I'll make it all right with you. I've got the jack."

"Okay, then," said Johnny. "Good boy! Fill up your tank and meet me on some quiet corner off the center of town. You say where, and I'll drive there in another cab."

"Make it the corner of Lombard and Butaw. That's quiet enough at this hour."

"Okay."

Johnny was waiting for him. He greeted Neill with a grin that spread all the way across his wide, red face. They shook hands heartily. Neill felt a real liking for the little fellow. He was square. When the other cab had departed, Johnny asked:

"Well, where away, Cap'n?"

"I don't exactly know."

Johnny's jaw dropped as if he thought his fare was slightly demented.

Neill laughed. "We must stop at

If a man could only quiet down long enough to appreciate it!"

"Do I leave you now?"

"Wait until I make sure that there's a boat."

Neill found a skiff tied to a line running out to a post, and pulled it in. There were no cars in her, but he was beginning to learn the customs of the country now. Searching inside the gate of the wharf-tender's yard, he found the oars in the grass, and silently brought them down.

"It's a darn shame to lift the man's skiff," said Neill. "But I'll make it up to him."

He and Johnny shook hands. "You'll be hearing from me," said Neill. "Don't start your engine until I get away from the shore. It might wake up somebody in the boat."

"Good luck," said Johnny.

Neill rowed out on the dark river. After a minute or two he heard Johnny start his engine. The lights were switched on, and the taxi turned around and disappeared over the hill. Then silence except for the creaking and the dip of his own oars.

When he got across the river he didn't know where he was. It was clear that if the spot was new to him it must be somewhere above the stretch that he had covered before, and he rowed down stream. Before he had gone far he came to a point of the shore that he recognized, and upon rounding



Neill rowed out on the dark river.

a filling station and get a map of Maryland so we can pick out our route. I want you to take me down the west side of the Pocomoco river. The road on the east side is watched by the state police. I'll have to pick out the spot on the map where I want you to drop me. It's about 80 miles."

"Ge!" said Johnny cheerfully. "A mystery! Give us the dope, Cap'n."

"I can't tell you the whole story now," said Neill. "But I will soon. I can give you one tip: the big guy who gave me knockout drops on Monday night was Prescott Fanning."

Johnny let out a whistle. "Well I be dogged! And was it you who croaked the so-and-so?"

"Not me. Somebody saved me the trouble."

"Well, I wouldn't be blamed you," said Johnny.

"Let's go!"

Neill's last act before leaving town was to call up Mattingly. "Look, old fellow, there's no use you waiting for me any longer. I've had a clue that's taking me to Washington."

Neill could hear the honest constable breathing hard into the receiver. "But... b... my orders was to bring you back with me," he objected.

"Sorry," said Neill.

"You've got to come back with me."

"I don't know what you're going to do about it," said Neill cheerfully, because I'm on my way." He hung up laughing.

Lifting A Skiff

TWO hours later the taxicab came out on the river at a point where a side road ended at a steamboat wharf. As near as Neill could judge, they were opposite the spot where the big ships were moored. The river was over a mile wide, and the opposite shore was lost in the misty darkness.

Except for the shed on the wharf, there were no buildings nearby except a cottage standing on the top of a grassy bank about 30 feet above. Probably the home of the wharf tender. No light showed in any window. The heavy scent of wild-grape flowers hung on the air. There was no wind and a silence brooded over the countryside that made the city driver murmur:

"Boy! I would scare you down here when you turn off the engine."

"It's a great country," said Neill.

it saw the dim bulk of the great ships moored close in. His heart began to beat, thinking of the coming meeting with Janet. What a lot had happened during the 24 hours since he had left her!

He rowed softly close to the towering steel bulk of the Abraham Lincoln. By counting the portholes he was able to take up a position immediately below the windows of Janet's little veranda. He lay on his oars and softly whistled the meadowlark's call with lips that trembled a little. He was so keen to take her in his arms!

Closed Windows

HE LOOKED up, watching for the weighted string to fall. Nothing came and he whistled again, a little louder. Still no answer. He supposed that Janet had fallen asleep and he was divided between irritation and anxiety. How could she sleep when she knew he was coming? She had all day to sleep in. And what the devil was he to do if he couldn't waken her?

After whistling again once or twice, he rowed a little way out from the hull in order to look up at the windows. Even by star-light he could pick out the four windows of Janet's suite. They were larger than the windows on either side. Suddenly with a tightening of his breast he realized that all four windows were closed. There was no mistaking it; in each window the glass was faintly reflecting the star-shine. Naturally she couldn't hear his signal. Why on earth should she close the windows when she was expecting him?

Then he remembered that it was impossible for Janet to move the stiff windows.

In the first moment the bottom seemed to drop out of everything. What had happened? Had somebody been there? Had she been taken away? How could he get aboard without the ladder?

He set his teeth, and got himself under control. He rowed around the ships to the little platform at the foot of the boarding-ladder, and tied his skiff alongside the others. He didn't know if the extra guards were aboard tonight and he didn't much care. If Janet was gone, nothing mattered. There were no lights showing in Captain Bicket's cabin.

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Neill finds Janet being cross-examined by the police, tomorrow.

Crooner Worst As Expectant Father

NEBRASKA CITY, Neb., Oct. 20.—(AP)—Miss Nicola Monroe, supervisor in the obstetrics division at St. Mary's hospital, has her own ideas about expectant fathers.

Some of them pace up and down at the last moment, she said, others talk to themselves, some just sit and stare, and some faint. But the most trying of all, she stated, was the one who crooned.

Mount Hood Popular

THE DALLIES, Oct. 20.—(AP)—The 38,822 persons visiting the Mount Hood-national forest last year have given the area a No. 1 popularity in the northwest, Eric Gordon, district ranger at Dufur, reported today. Mount Hood itself, Gordon said, is the "most climbed" of the major peaks in the United States.

Seek Grants Pass Radio Permission

WASHINGTON, Oct. 20.—(AP)—Attorneys for the Pacific Radio corporation of Grants Pass, Ore., appealed today to the communications commission for a permit to operate a radio station in the western city. They asked that the corporation be assigned a wave length of 1320 kilocycles and allowed to operate with 500 watts power daytime only. The commission took the petition under advisement.

HIGH COURT UPHOLDS CONTEMPT CONVICTION

SALEM, Oct. 20.—(AP)—The state supreme court upheld Tuesday contempt convictions of four Portland men who refused to testify in connection with the slaying of a man in 1934, in front of the Columbia

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Of.

NATHANIEL GREENE BECAME A BRIGADIER-GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN ARMY 5 MONTHS AFTER HE ENLISTED AS A PRIVATE! Dec. 1774 - May 1775

THE BASILISK LIZARD IS KNOWN IN CENTRAL AMERICA AS THE "JESUS CRISTO LIZARD"—BECAUSE IT CAN RUN OVER WATER THOUGH IT HAS NO WEBBED FEET! IF IT STOPS IT SINKS!!!

THE DOUGLAS SPRUCE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE DOUGLAS FIR, IS NEITHER A SPRUCE NOR A FIR!!!

FREDDY WELSH LOST THE WORLD'S LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP BY A KNOCK-OUT WHILE STILL ON HIS FEET! HE WAS COUNTED OUT LEANING ON THE ROPES... -vs. Benny Leonard, 1917-

John Hix 10-20-37

Private To General

Son of a peace-loving Quaker, Nathaniel Greene was brought up in anything but a martial atmosphere. Yet, when the impending break between the American colonies and England became imminent, he was one of the first to prepare for war.

Appointed to a committee for revising the militia laws of the colony of Rhode Island "as soon as may be," Greene enlisted in the Kentish Guards as a private in December, 1774. The Kentish Guards was a newly organized military body, known next to nothing about military matters. To overcome this, Greene went to Boston, then occupied by the British, and there managed to induce an English deserter to return to Rhode Island with him for the purpose of becoming drillmaster for the Guards.

When the Revolution began a few months later, Rhode Island hastily provided for the raising of an army of 1,500 men. In recognition of Private Greene's help and ability shown in developing the Kentish Guards, he was given a commission as brigadier-general in the army, dated May 8, 1775—five months after he had enlisted as a private! He was less than 33 years old when elevated to the post. Throughout the war, General Greene was one of the most able and successful of American officers.

Neither Spruce Nor Fir

Strange as it seems, the red fir, the yellow fir, the Douglas fir and the Douglas spruce are all one and the same tree—yet the tree is neither a fir nor a spruce. Related to both the spruce and the fir, its scientific name is *Pseudotsuga douglasii*.

Standing Knock-out

Out but not down was the peculiar condition of Freddy Welsh while the referee counted away his lightweight title in New York City, May 28, 1917, in the ninth round of a fight against Benny Leonard. A terrific right from Leonard had knocked Welsh unconscious but one of Welsh's arms, slung over the ropes, prevented him from falling until after he was counted out.

Tomorrow: New York to Paris by Auto

EX-CONVICT ADMITS MISTREATING CHILD

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Oct. 20.—(AP)—Donald White, 29-year old three-paroled convict, pleaded guilty in police court today to a charge of raping Betty Jane Ruah, 10.

Judge Fred J. Miller bound White over to the grand jury under \$50,000 bond. Maximum penalty on the charges under Ohio law is life imprisonment.

The little schoolgirl was held captive in a vacant house for six hours the night of October 9. Police physicians said she had been assaulted repeatedly.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Is Convinced of Bentley's Guilt!

I GET IT! THIS ACTOR, RUDOLPH MARTIN, WHO IMPROBATED WOMEN ON THE STAGE SIX YEARS AGO, IS HORACE BENTLEY!

THAT'S NOT ALL, TOMMY! LOOK!

IT SEEMS THAT HE WAS ALSO A CIRCUS PERFORMER... BEFORE THAT

YES, AND IF HE HAD COURAGE ENOUGH TO RISK HIS NECK, THEN HE'D HAVE NERVE ENOUGH TO BAIL OUT OF A PLANE!

THAT SETTLES THE MATTER ABOUT THE PARACHUTE, BETTY—LOU! BENTLEY'S OUR MAN!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What Jason Heard

THE DOCTOR GAYS BEN'S PRETTY ROCKY FROM WHAT THAT BULLY'N BRUTE STRALE DONE TO HIM, BUT—HMMM—THE BIG CAR'S STILL THERE—

AN' WITH THE WEBSTER KID SCARED OFF, AN' A COUPLE O' OTHER FAST ONES I GOT UP MY SLEEVE WHY—

—I THINK IT'S SAFE TO TELL GRABBER THAT SETH STRALE'LL HAND OVER THE NUGGET LINE LOCK, STOCK AN' BARREL IN LESS'N TWO WEEKS!

THE NEBBS—Eeny-Meeny-Miny-Mo.

GOOD-NIGHT, DAD, I KNOW YOU'RE TIRED—YOU DON'T HAVE TO SIT UP WITH US KIDS—WE'LL EXCUSE YOU!

EENY-MEENY-MINY-MO! WHICH HAND WILL YOU TAKE?

WELL, WERE GOING TO GET MARRIED SO I'LL GET BOTH YOUR HANDS

WELL, HERE'S \$10,000 IN GOVERNMENT BONDS—GOOD AS CASH AND THERE'S MORE WHERE THEY COME FROM—I SNEAKED INTO THE VAULT WHILE POTTS WAS OUT EATING!

YOU BEWILDER ME, EMMA DARLING, WITH YOUR EXTREME CONFIDENCE IN ME AND I'LL TAKE THEM TO PROVE TO YOU I CAN BE TRUSTED

THE FOOTSTOOL

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

WONDERS IS THERE ANY AMUSEMENT TO BE HAD WITH FOOTSTOOL ACROSS THE ROOM?

CRAWLS OVER TO IT. DOESN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT FOOTSTOOLS, EXCEPT THAT APPARENTLY YOU GET ON THEM

FINDS IT HARDER THAN HE THOUGHT TO HOIST HIMSELF UP ON IT

FOOTSTOOL SHUDD, LETTING HIM DOWN HARDER THAN HE LIVES

HAS TROUBLE SETTING IT UP—RIGHT AGAIN BUT FINALLY SUCCEEDS

WITH MUCH GRUNTING GETS HIMSELF ACROSS IT ON HIS STOMACH WHICH DOESN'T SEEM MUCH FUN

TRIES TO GET OFF IT, BUT WHENEVER HE MOVES FORWARD OR BACKWARD FOOTSTOOL TIPS

SOLVES PROBLEM BY ROLLING OFF

AFTER TIRING HIMSELF OUT TRYING TO GET ON FOOTSTOOL AGAIN, GOES TO SLEEP WITH FOOTSTOOL ON HIM

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S'MATTER POF

By O. M. PAYN

TSONG!

TELL ME WHO DID THAT!

CAN'T!

WHY?

I PROMISED WILLYUM I WOULDN'T TELL ON HIM!

IT'S A GOOD THING I DIDN'T FIND HIM OUT—I'M TELLIN' YA!

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By HAL FORREST

THAT SETTLES THE MATTER ABOUT THE PARACHUTE, BETTY—LOU! BENTLEY'S OUR MAN!

By EDWIN ALGER

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By SOL HESS

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