

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 30

CONTENTS FOR JULY, 1937

Number 1

Cover Design	Virgil Finlay	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "The Thief of Forthe"</i>		
The Thief of Forthe	Clifford Ball	2
<i>The story of a thief who coveted a kingdom, and the appalling secret of an old magician</i>		
To Virgil Finlay	H. P. Lovecraft	17
<i>Verse, written on seeing Mr. Finlay's illustration for "The Faceless God"</i>		
Jail-break	Paul Ernst	18
<i>The aftermath of Littell's escape from prison was far worse than the prison itself</i>		
The Whistling Corpse	G. G. Pendarves	26
<i>A gripping weird novelette of the sea, by the author of "The Eighth Green Man"</i>		
To Howard Phillips Lovecraft	Clark Ashton Smith	48
<i>Verse, a memorial tribute to a supreme master of weird and outré literature</i>		
Raider of the Spaceways	Henry Kuttner	49
<i>A startling weird-scientific story about a vampiric entity on the Night Side of the planet Venus</i>		
The Last Pharaoh (part 3)	Thomas P. Kelley	68
<i>A story of the weird doom that enmeshed two lovers in a castle of gloom on the African coast</i>		
The Ocean Ogre	Dana Carroll	94
<i>A tale of the thing called Alain Gervais that came aboard a ship at sea</i>		
The Interview	H. Sivia	100
<i>An astonishing surprise awaited the young reporter when he returned to his newspaper's city room</i>		
The Creeper in the Crypt	Robert Bloch	104
<i>A tale of stark horror in the dread cellar of an evil house in legend-haunted Arkham</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Hounds of Tindalos	Frank Belknap Long, Jr.	111
<i>An eerie tale reprinted from WEIRD TALES of eight years ago</i>		
The Eyrie		122
<i>The readers discuss the merits and demerits of this magazine</i>		

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. *Subscription rates:* One year in the United States and possessions, Cuba, Mexico, South America, Spain, \$2.50; Canada, \$2.75; elsewhere, \$3.00. English office: Otis A. Kline, c/o John Paradise, 86 Strand, W. C. 2, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 840 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Copyright 1937, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company.
COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

The Whistling Corpse

By G. G. PENDARVES

A gripping weird tale of the sea—of the thing that walked in the fog—and the terror that stalked on board an ocean liner.

"WHY, Steevens, whatever is the matter? You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"And if I haven't, it's by the mercy of Providence," replied the chief steward, "though what we *may* see before this trip is over is something I don't want to think about."

Mrs. Maddox stared. She'd been stewardess on board the *S. S. Dragon* for the past five years, worked under Steevens all that time, and knew him for the most even-tempered, easy-going creature that ever sailed in a ship. She felt a nasty sensation of goose-flesh and clutched her bundle of clean white towels a trifle more tightly in her arms.

"Good gracious me! Well, what is it? You're getting me all in a dither!"

"They've — they've opened Number 14!"

She frowned, blinked, and several towels slid unnoticed to the floor.

"Not *the* 14? Not 14 on deck A? No!"

Her voice rose discordantly, and Steevens was recalled to his duty by its sudden stridency.

"S-s-s-sh! D'you want the passengers to hear? They're going down to dinner. Second bugle's sounded."

They were standing in one of the linen-rooms, a narrow slip near a main companionway. Mrs. Maddox turned a white, stricken face.

"Tell me, quick!"

"Captain's orders! This is his first command. He's young, thinks he knows

everything. Isn't going to keep a first-class stateroom locked up on *his* ship. I heard the end of a row him and the chief was having. Mr. Owen up and told him as the owners knew all about it. And the Old Man said he was going to show the owners there wasn't no need to lose money every trip."

"Steevens!" Mrs. Maddox looked suddenly far older than her forty-eight years. "If I hear that whistling again I'll—I'll lose my reason and that's a fact."

He had no comfort to offer. The man's cheerful, weathered face wore the same look of dread as her own.

"You can't tell the cap'n anything. But wait till he hears it too!"

"And when he does"—she turned on him with a fury of demoralizing fear—"what good's that going to do us all? It'll be too late then. The door's opened now and it's out again . . . it's *out*!"

FIRST-CLASS passengers were making their way to the dining-saloon for the first meal on board. The *S. S. Dragon* had left Liverpool landing-stage only two hours ago; so people straggled in without ceremony, tired from the bustle of embarkation, agitated about the preliminaries of settling down on board; the majority either wound up to a pitch that sought relief in floods of talk or preserved stony silence that would have done credit to tombstone effigies.

Mark Herron, a boy of ten, traveling in the captain's care, stood in hesitation at the entrance to the dining-saloon. One

of the passengers, a Mr. Amyas, put a friendly hand on his shoulder.

"Coming in?"

Without hesitation now, Mark smiled up at the brown, wrinkled face with its piercingly black eyes.

"Waiting for someone, eh?"

"No." The boy's voice was as attractive as his slate-gray eyes that concentrated so eagerly on anything or anyone that attracted his attention. His rough shock of brown hair and equally rough brown tweeds made him look somewhat like a very intelligent, well-bred dog.

"I'm traveling alone," he confided.

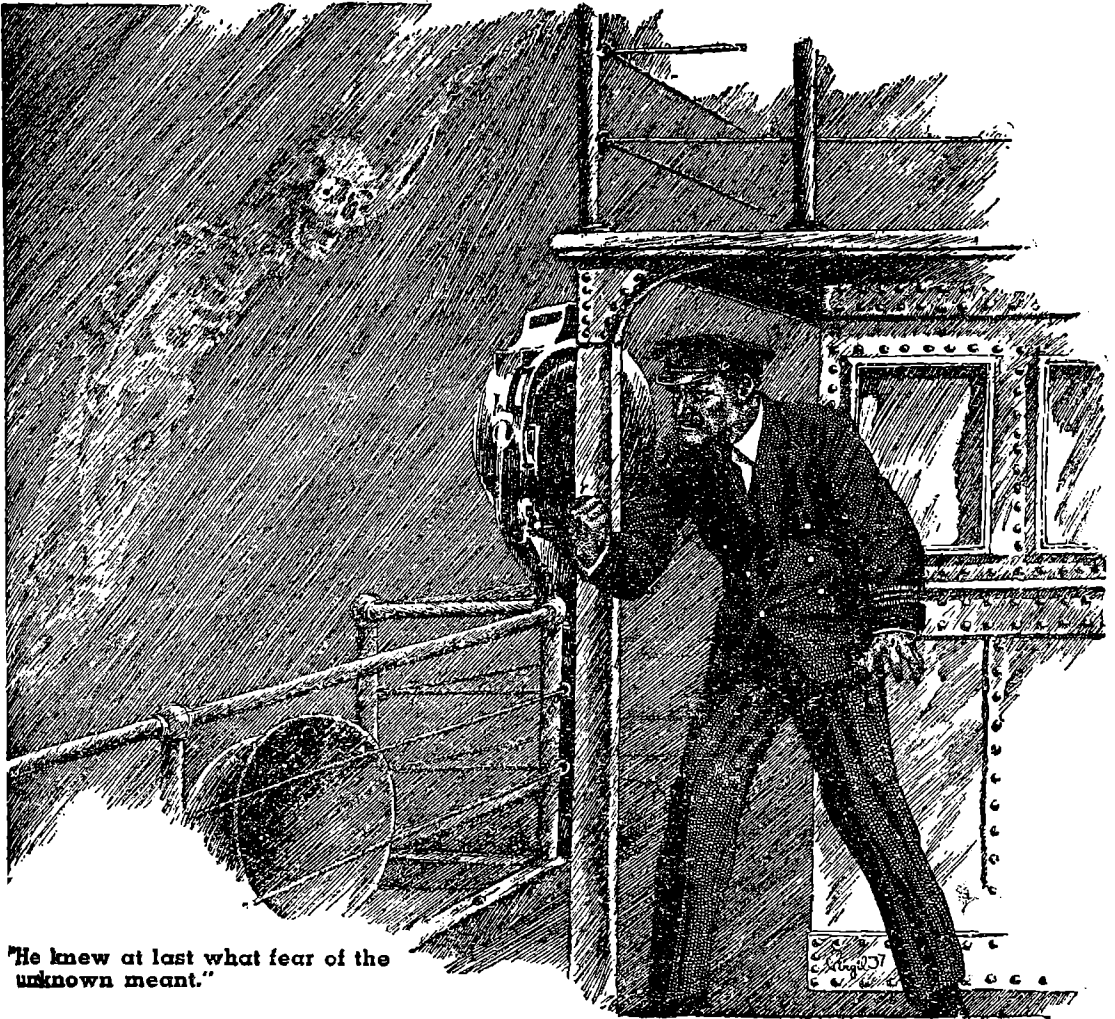
"I've been ill and Captain Ross knows Dad and told him I'd be better for a sea-trip. I'm going to Java and back on this ship."

The gipsy-black eyes twinkled. "That's my program too! We'll keep each other company—eh? My name's Amyas. And you're——?"

"Mark Herron, sir."

"All right, then. Now, let's plunge into the jungle and see what we can catch for a meal."

The little man made for a table over on the port-side, one of the smaller tables where some member of the staff had al-



"He knew at last what fear of the unknown meant."

ready begun his meal. As Mark and his new friend approached, the man looked up. Immediately he sprang to his feet, welcoming hand outstretched.

"How are you, Amyas? I'm delighted! Who's this you've got in tow? A stow-away?"

Mark was introduced to the ship's doctor. Mr. Amyas sat down. The boy stood, looking with bewildered frown at the third and only vacant place.

Doctor Fielding laughed. "What's the matter? Something wrong with that chair?"

The boy's face grew red. He looked from the doctor to Mr. Amyas with embarrassed reproach. "Oh—but——" He glanced apologetically at the third place, then moved hastily to a table near by and sat down there.

The two men stared at Mark. Covered with confusion, he was pretending to study a large menu-card.

"Must think we want to be by ourselves."

Mr. Amyas got up and crossed over to the boy's table. "Come and join us. What d'you mean by refusing to sit down with a friend of mine—eh?"

Mark glanced back at the other table. His face cleared. He went back with alacrity and slipped into the empty place.

"I think he was angry," he looked from one to the other of his companions' blank faces. "He's gone out without any dinner at all."

Then, as they continued to regard him with expressionless eyes, he laughed.

"Is it a joke, or something? That man didn't think it funny, anyhow, when you wanted me to sit down on top of him."

"What was he like?" The doctor's voice held a sudden arrested note of breathless interest.

"Didn't you notice him?" Mark mar-

veled. "Such a queer man, too! A yellow sort of face, very lined and cross, and he'd black hair—like the Italian organ-grinder who comes round with his monkey at home."

"Did you—did you happen to notice if he wore a ring?" The doctor seemed quite amazingly interested.

"Yes. A very big one, rather dull and funny-looking! I thought he must be a foreign prince. Like the ones in the papers, you know. Going off somewhere because they'd taken his throne away. That's what he looked like."

Doctor Fielding put his arms on the table, leaned forward, regarded the boy with a strange look of awe.

"Look here! You're the kid the captain's looking after—the great Arthur Herron's son?"

Mark nodded, his face glowing at the admission.

"H-m-m! Captain Ross said you were a bit of a wizard yourself with your pencil. You can draw?"

Mark nodded again with calm confidence.

"Could you, by any chance, draw from memory the man you saw sitting here?"

The boy smiled and pushed aside his soup-plate. He turned the menu-card face down, dug a pencil out of a pocket and set to work. Both men watched intently, Mr. Amyas interested in the peculiar mixture of child and artist, the doctor wholly absorbed in the portrait growing under the small, amazingly sure hand. The table steward removed three plates of cold soup and put three portions of fish down with bored resignation. He hovered with a dish of potatoes, caught a glare from the doctor and went to bestow his vegetables elsewhere.

Mark handed his sketch to Doctor Fielding, who regarded it long and frown-

ingly. Finally he got to his feet. His face was grave.

"Sorry! You'll have to excuse me. I've—remembered something urgent."

He went out of the saloon with an air of absent-minded haste and took Mark's sketch with him.

"Oh! Was it a prince, d'you think? Is he going to look for him?"

Mr. Amyas discussed the possibility, then led the conversation to other things. The two hit it off famously and went together, afterward, in uproarious spirits to the billiard room.

THE coolness in Captain Ross's eyes bordered on contempt as he looked up from Mark's sketch. Doctor Fielding's lean, clever face and tired eyes showed a deeper weariness as he met that look. Captain Ross was one who admitted no breath from the chill void of eternity to penetrate his materialism. It was a solid wall about his thoughts.

The doctor's own mind, ever exploring, seeking, experimenting, found no smallest chink whereby to enter, yet he must attempt it. If he failed, if Captain Ross remained unconvinced, then the *S. S. Dragon* would become a floating hell.

"If the boy saw this man," Captain Ross tapped the menu-card with impatient gesture, "then the man must have been sitting there."

"I did not see him, sir. Mr. Amyas did not see him. The steward did not see him."

"But the boy did! He's not a liar—I happen to know that. If he told you he saw the man, he *did* see him."

"And I repeat—this man," Doctor Fielding indicated the drawing, "died on this ship a year ago and his body was committed to the deep. I saw it done."

"All right, then. In that case there is

a passenger on board who bears an extraordinary resemblance to him. That doesn't pass the bounds of possibility. Your idea of a *révenant* does."

A knock at the door interrupted them. The first mate, Mr. Owen, entered. Steevens and Mrs. Maddox followed.

"Ah!" the commander's frosty blue eyes regarded them quizzically. "You three, I understand, were on this ship a year ago when Number 14 on deck A was sealed up?"

"Yes, sir," replied the first mate.

The other two made muffled sounds of assent and endeavored to exchange glances while presenting blank, respectful faces to Captain Ross.

"D'you recognize this, Mr. Owen?"

The chief bent over the table to examine Mark's sketch, then straightened himself with a jerk. His ruddy face was suddenly a sickly brown. He averted his eyes from the sketch as from something that shocked him profoundly. His voice came with a queer uncontrolled jerk.

"Yes, sir! It's—it's *him*!"

"I must ask you to be more explicit. Him?"

"Vernon—Eldred Vernon! Where . . . how——?"

He stopped, and thrust shaking hands deep into his pockets. Captain Ross turned his scornful, impatient glance toward the steward and stewardess.

"Come on! Come on! Let's get this farce over!"

Timidly the pair advanced and peered reluctantly at the card thrust before their eyes.

"Well? Speak, can't you! Is this your old friend, Vernon?"

"God save us—yes!" muttered Steevens. He fell back from the pictured face in horror.

Mrs. Maddox gave a terrified squawk and clutched him by the arm.

"A-r-r-r! A-r-r-r! It's him again! Take it away! I won't look at it! A-r-r-r——"

"Be quiet," barked the captain. "Take her over to that chair, Steevens. You two have got to stop here while this affair is settled once and for all."

He looked from one tense face to another and his eyes sparkled with temper.

"You all agree, it seems, that this boy's drawing resembles—who's the man?"

"Eldred Vernon, sir—the late Eldred Vernon," replied the doctor.

"Eldred Vernon, yes. The man who was murdered on this ship in May of 1935."

"The man who murdered Mr. Lackland, sir," softly corrected the first mate.

"Murderer, or murdered, it's all one now. The point is, he's dead."

A deep, unassenting silence answered the statement. Four pairs of eyes expressed complete unbelief in it.

"A pretty lot of fools I seem to have on board! What *is* this mystery? Doctor Fielding, will you have the goodness to make a clear, sensible statement of the facts? The facts, I said, mind you. I don't want a fairy-tale packed with superstition and ghosts."

"Did you read the log for May of 1935?" asked the doctor. "And did the owners explain their reasons for leaving Number 14 sealed up?"

"Yes, to both questions. But don't forget that my predecessor, Captain Brakell, was a very sick man when he entered up that log. The owners had the facts from him—a sick man's delusions! I attach no value to them. I said as much in the office at Liverpool, gave my opinions. They understood that I proposed to run my own ship in my own way. I

will allow no tomfool nonsense to interfere with it."

The doctor's face showed a stain of painful color.

"You are very much mistaken, sir, in thinking that Captain Brakell was ill when he entered up the log. He was a very sound man, sound and sane and healthy. His mind then, and to the end of his days, was particularly clear. He was a man of enviable courage and strength and determination. Otherwise he could never have done what he did."

There was a stir and murmur of assent in the small, brightly lit room.

"Captain Brakell collapsed only on reaching port. He brought his ship home first. He brought her home with that devil, Eldred Vernon, imprisoned in Number 14."

"You mean Vernon didn't die during the voyage, after all? You have already told me you saw his body committed to the deep."

"I repeat that I did. But Eldred Vernon's devil lived on—an audible and visible thing."

"And I repeat that I don't believe a syllable."

Again color painted the doctor's sallow face an angry red.

"Words mean nothing," he answered curtly. "Words mean nothing. Captain gave his life to make his ship safe. He was heroic, I tell you. Faced terrific odds, and won by sheer strength and goodness. He cornered that crafty devil, Vernon. He couldn't destroy him—that was beyond even *his* wisdom, but he managed to imprison him, to make his ship safe. And you——"

HE BROKE off, remembering he and the captain were not alone. There was an awkward pause. Captain Ross sat with broad, well-kept hands folded on

the table before him. Aggressive unbelief depressed the corners of his long, firm mouth. His upper lids drooped quizzically over cold inquiring eyes. Doctor Fielding sighed, paused as if to marshal inner reserves of strength, then began again on a new flat note of narrative devoid of emotion.

"The whole thing started with an affair between Guy Lackland and Eldred Vernon's very young, very lovely wife, Kathleen Vernon. It blazed up tropically swift and hot. Lackland was attractive, very! Nordic type. In love with life, with himself, and above all with Kathleen Vernon. Brilliant, rollicking youngster. Irresponsible as a puppy off the lead. And whistled like a blackbird."

A stifled groan escaped the stewardess.

"It was a characteristic that features largely in my tale, sir, Lackland's whistling. Dancing, swimming, deck-games, strolling round—you could always keep track of him by that trick he had of whistling. But there was one tune he whistled for one person alone—a sort of lover's signal. The tune was *Kathleen Mavourneen*."

Mrs. Maddox engulfed herself in a large, crumpled pocket-handkerchief. Steevens rubbed a bristly chin. The first mate shifted his feet as if the deck had rolled beneath him, and his throat muscles worked convulsively.

"Her name was Kathleen, as I said. She was a dark, fragile, exquisite thing. Lonely and unhappy. Afraid of her husband. Ripe for a lover. And she fell for young Lackland hard. Inevitably. I never witnessed anything more heart-breaking than her passion for him. Like seeing a brilliant-tinted leaf riding the peak of a monstrous tidal-wave. Swept past all barriers. The pair of them—lost to everything but youth and love—the glory of it! Tragical young fools!"

Captain Ross made no audible comment. His set, obstinate face spoke fathomless misunderstanding.

"Eldred Vernon was a good fifty. A lean, secretive, silent man. Intellectual—repellently so. His brain-power was abnormal. His reasoning faculties, will, concentration were terrific. He'd developed them at the expense of every other quality that makes a decent, likable human being. There was dark blood in him, too. His swaying walk, a peculiar way of rolling his eyes, the lines of jaw and skull. Unmistakably negroid. The boy shows it in his sketch here."

Captain Ross glared at it and grunted noncommittally.

"The ugliest thing of all was his jealousy. It's a poisonous quality in anyone. In Vernon it was satanic. He never interfered, though. On the contrary, he arranged to throw them together quite deliberately. We didn't begin to fathom his motives, but the whole situation made our blood run cold. There was none of the ordinary scandal. The affair was too serious, everyone felt scared. I spoke to young Lackland; so did others. One or two of the women warned the wife. Both of them laughed. Eldred Vernon laughed too. It sidetracked the pair of them, the way he laughed! She vowed her husband didn't care two straws what she did as long as she left him alone. Incredible! Everyone was afraid of what Vernon would do except the two most concerned."

Doctor Fielding dropped his cigarette, which had burned down unsmoked between his fingers.

"The inevitable crisis came. She gave Vernon a sleeping-draft in his last whisky one night, then went along to Lackland's stateroom, Number 14 on A deck. Waited for a moment. Heard him inside, moving about, whistling—whistling *Kathleen Mavourneen*."

"And how," interrupted Captain Ross, "do you come by this chapter of your melodrama?"

"She told me—later."

"You had the lady's confidence, I see! Perhaps after Lackland went you took his——"

"She was dying."

The doctor's voice and steady eyes did not waver. He went on like an automaton.

"SHE went into Number 14 to find—her husband! He was laughing, silently, doubled up, tears of mirth on his face. He tied her up and gagged her, laughing all the time. Told her Lackland would be late. He'd forged a note in her writing, sent it to Lackland asking him to wait, to come to Number 14 at midnight, not earlier on any account. Vernon had counted on a lover's obedience to any whim. He was right."

"Lackland came on the stroke of twelve. Vernon was ready for him—with a knife. In the struggle, Lackland got a grip of the other's throat. Vernon thrust home. In his death-agony, Lackland's hands tightened, fastened like a vise. Vernon was asphyxiated. A steward found them both dead, lying locked together at Mrs. Vernon's feet."

The bleak austerity in Doctor Fielding's eyes checked comment.

"That's all of what you would call fact. Mrs. Vernon died—brain-fever in the end."

"And they were all buried at sea? All three of them?"

Captain Ross looked not wholly unsympathetic.

"Yes."

"Then I know the whole thing from start to finish at last."

"No. It is not finished yet, sir. Ver-

non knew the secret of perpetuating himself in the physical world even without his body. That had been lowered over the side and I saw it done. But Vernon himself—his malicious powerful ego—has never left this ship."

The captain's softened expression was instantly combative. "I've listened to your story, to the end—to the very end! Thank you, doctor. I've no time to speculate on ghosts. Once and for all, I don't believe in the supernatural."

He turned to the others.

"Before we break up this meeting, have you anything to say? Mr. Owen?"

The first mate was a Welshman, vivacious, sensitive, emotional.

"The doctor's not told you half, sir," he burst out. "You don't know what a hell the ship was for days and nights. God, those nights! Up and down the deck—up and down, whistling—if you could call it whistling."

"Whistling what? And what whistled?"

Mr. Owen was past being daunted by the captain's glance.

"A high, queer sort of sound, sir. No tune or anything. Went through your head like red-hot wire. What was it? Don't ask me, sir! It doesn't bear thinking of."

"Exactly. That's my complaint against you all. You refuse to think. This absurd legend of Number 14 would never have existed if you'd thought, and investigated. Anything more?"

"I—we—there was the fog, sir! And Steevens here saw——"

"I'll take him in turn. Fog?"

"Yes, sir. Fog or sea-mist. The whistling seemed to come from it."

With a quick, irritable gesture, Captain Ross turned to the steward.

"Well? What's your little contribution?"

"It's true, sir. You'll know for yourself soon. The whistling and all! Something cruel! Drove you wild, sir! Aye, and that Number 14! Locking the door wasn't no use; no, nor bolting it neither. Chips did his mortal best. But every morning it was burst open, and the bunk—covered thick with dirty foam! The smell of it fair knocked you down, sir. Like something that had rotted in the sea."

Mrs. Maddox was obviously beyond giving verbal support to these statements. She sat shivering, white-faced, tears dripping down her large, pale face to the starched bib on her apron.

Captain Ross got to his feet.

"Thank you, Doctor Fielding. Thank you, Mr. Owen. Steward! Report any complaints about Number 14 on deck A to me, if you please. The passenger who is to occupy it is Colonel Everett, a personal friend. He is aware of the facts. I've told him of the deaths that occurred. The rest interests him even less than me."

"One moment." The doctor followed him to the door. "I shall tell your friend, Colonel Everett, the exact nature of the risk he is running."

"Do! He will laugh at you. He shares my views of what you call supernatural phenomena."

"You are exposing him to hideous peril. It's murder, sir!"

Captain Ross looked bored and put his hand to the door-latch.

"One more thing." The doctor's manner was that of a lecturer making his points. "Eldred Vernon marks down his victims methodically, and in every case he gives twenty-four hours warning, a signal of his intent to kill. He whistles *Kathleen Mavourneen*. Last May, before

Captain Brakell was able to seal up the door you have opened, five passengers heard that tune. Each one died in twenty-four hours."

"Logged as dying of virulent influenza. I gather the owners suggested your substituting influenza as your diagnosis in place of ghosts?"

"It was heart-failure from shock."

"Quite. Well, Captain Brakell and I had the same end in view. But we went about it differently. He calmed down his passengers by going through a ceremony of sealing up Vernon's supposed influence. I see more wisdom in letting sun and wind and everyday life penetrate Number 14. After this trip it will be a chamber of horror no longer. I'll have no locked-up rooms on my ship. And anyone who goes round encouraging a belief in ghosts will lose his job and needn't apply to me for references."

"GOOD morning! Good morning!" A brick-red, large gentleman at the captain's table, engaged in adding a top-dressing of toast and marmalade to previous strata of porridge, fish, and sausages, spared an inquiring glance for a limp young man who slid into a seat next him. The young man had butter-colored hair and looked as if serious consideration of vitamins had been omitted from his education.

"Why 'good'? he moaned. "I've been kept awake all night."

The brick-red gentleman was surprised. "Eh? What? I slept like old Rip Van Winkle."

The limp young man unfurled a table-napkin with the air of one who drapes a winding-sheet about him.

"China tea. This brown toast and bloater paste." He lifted an eyelid to a hovering steward. Then, to his neighbor:

"Perhaps you're married or live by

a fire-station. I mean," he explained, "whistlings and shriekings and stampings just lull you to sleep! You on deck A? No! I'm in Number 18. There's a damned nuisance of a colonel in 14. Kept up an infernal racket last night."

"Pipe down, my lad, pipe down! He's a friend of the captain!"

"Well, he's going to have an 'in loving memory' label on him soon! Never had such a night."

A tall, straight ramrod of a man stalked in, made his way to the table and took the vacant place at the captain's right.

"I say!" bleated the butter-haired one. "What's the great idea of practising your tin whistle all night? You may think Number 14's sound-proof. Is it? All you've got to do is to come outside and listen to yourself!"

Colonel Everett drank down a cup of coffee almost at a gulp, murmured something about the shortage of reliable nurses, and gave an order to the steward. A good many faces were turned toward him. Other accusers gave vent to their rancor.

"If you're the occupant of Number 14, sir, I think it was damned thoughtless—damned thoughtless of you!" And:

"I'm not one of the complaining ones, but the noise you made was unbearable. My husband got up five times and knocked at your door. And you simply took no notice!" And:

"Are *you* the person in Number 14? I was just telling the captain that it's disgraceful. After all, one does expect some decency and quiet in first-class. My two children were awake and crying all night. No wonder! Such an uproar! Why, even steerage couldn't be more rowdy."

"What *is* all this about the noise in your stateroom?" asked Captain Ross.

"Someone's idea of a joke." Colonel Everett's face and manner were grim.

The captain frowned at him and spoke under his breath.

"Were you pickled when you went to bed, Tom?"

"Don't be a fool! You've known me all my life. I never take more than four whiskies a day."

"Then why didn't you hear all the din?"

"Dunno! Unless I'm due for malaria again. I felt deuced queer when I woke. Dizzy. Couldn't get the hang of things. Feel half doped now."

"Hm-m-m-m! Perhaps you are—doped! This fool notion about Number 14 being haunted! Some maniac's trying it out on us. I'll put him in irons, whoever it is. I've given fair warning I'll have no more of their pet spook on my ship."

Colonel Everett thrust his face forward. His eyes glared. His lips stretched in an ugly grin. His clear emphatic voice changed to a thin dry rustling whisper.

"*What are you going to do about it?*"

Captain Ross's fork dropped with a clatter. He met the evil, malevolent stare hardily, but his face grew white to the lips. Quite literally, he was unable to speak. His thick black brows met. Was this Tom Everett? He didn't recognize the man he'd known so long and intimately. Those cold eyes—hating, defying him! This was a stranger! An enemy!

A voice broke the spell—a boy's voice, eager, confident, friendly.

"How queer! I thought that was Colonel Everett at first. He seemed to change. It's the man I drew last night. The prince in disguise, you know."

Colonel Everett drew back, looked round him with a frown. His face and eyes were blank now. He seemed rather

shaken, like a man who'd been just knocked down and winded.

Captain Ross felt a sudden vast relief. What an ass he was! Good heavens; he'd actually felt afraid, afraid of good old Tom Everett! The poor fellow was looking ill and shaken. Distinctly under the weather. He signaled to Doctor Fielding, who came round to the head of the table and put a hand on the colonel's shoulder.

"Come along with me; I'll fix you up. You've had a rotten night, I can see."

Dazed, swaying on his feet, Colonel Everett allowed the doctor to guide him out of the saloon.

IN THE big, perfectly equipped kitchens the breakfast episode was discussed with terror.

"I tell you he looked as like *him* for a minute as makes no difference." The steward who waited on the captain's table was telling his tale for the eighth time for the benefit of those detained on duty. "One minute he was the colonel and next minute he was *him*! The Old Man noticed it and all! Looked as if he'd been and swallowed a h'asp."

A brand new young steward spoke up. "Who's this *him* when he's at home?"

"Someone you've not met so far, my cocky. And when you do, you won't crow so loud."

Mrs. Maddox, trying to drown her fear in floods of dark brown tea, intervened.

"And how's he going to know if no one don't tell him? Nay! I'm not going to take *his* name on my lips. Someone else can do it—that hasn't heard nor seen what I have on this ship."

Mr. Amyas and the doctor talked in a corner of the deserted dining-saloon.

"He went along to the smoking-room. Revived as soon as we got outside, and refused to go back to bed."

"Hm-m-m!" The little man pulled at his short, pointed white beard. "Could you hear what he was saying to the captain at the breakfast table?"

"No. I saw enough, though. What the boy said was right. He *was* Vernon for a moment."

"Undoubtedly, Colonel Everett as Colonel Everett will soon cease to exist."

The doctor shivered, turned a stricken face seaward. Remembrance of last year's horror surged back with every movement of the restless, sunlit water.

"Eldred Vernon's taking possession of the colonel's body as one would a house. He's moving in," continued Mr. Amyas. "It's barely possible that if the real owner knew what was happening to him he might defend his habitation, drive out the intruder, but I doubt it. Evidence proves Vernon to have unique power. History has only produced two others on his scale. There is the Black Monk of Caldey Island, who has guarded his treasure there since the Tenth Century. And there is Lord Saul, a terror and a mystery since the days of Attila, who tried to kill him by fire and by the sword, and failed. Lord Saul lives to this day."

"Vernon was bound and safely imprisoned once. Can't we do it again?"

"You forget. A year ago Vernon was newly divorced from his body. He was taken at his weakest, before he'd learned the laws, the possibilities of life in a new element. In twelve months he's learned them, so effectively that he's almost achieved his great necessity—a human body."

"Surely that will limit him? A disembodied force is more awful than the wickedest of men."

"No. He'll gain the freedom of two worlds. He can operate in *or* out of his stolen body. And he can use the will and energy of the dispossessed owner for his

own ends. It's a tremendous prize. He'll rank high in hell."

"But—how d'you know all this? You speak as if——"

"It's a long, grim, unnerving tale. Made an old man of me when I was in my twenties, experimenting, like the mad young fool I was then, in occult research. Some day, if we survive, I'll tell it."

"Isn't there the barest chance of saving Everett? Can't you make him believe?"

"That's what I don't know. I can only guess. It's one of the things that doesn't go by rule of thumb. Every crisis varies. But there *is* a moment——"

THEY were interrupted by a scream, sounds of running feet, a second scream. Mr. Amyas turned, ran lightly along to deck A with the doctor at his heels. An excited group of passengers was collecting there. The first mate appeared. Inside the open doorway of a lounge stood Steevens with several other cabin stewards. They appeared to be holding an agitated council of war.

The first mate addressed this twittering little group. "What's all this?"

"Sir! It's Number 14. We saw——"

"Get inside. I'll come along."

He returned to the startled passengers. "Nothing much." His smile was reassuring. "One of the stewardesses! She's had hysterics again. Husband died a few weeks ago and she's gone to pieces over it."

"Very neat," commended Doctor Fielding. "We'll come with you to see what's really happened."

Owen nodded. His eyes and mouth looked strained. Outside the closed door of Number 14 a huddle of white-coated stewards waited.

"It's what it was before, sir," whispered Steevens. "The bunk was covered

with it. Foam—dirty gray foam—inches thick! Right over the bunk, pillows and all. And the smell—my Gawd!"

Owen stood rigid, one hand on the door-latch. Mr. Amyas saw him shudder, caught the loathing on his face as he flung open the door and went inside. Doctor Fielding and Mr. Amyas followed quickly. All three looked instantly at the bunk. A pall of dirty gray foam covered it, like the silt of a monster tidal wave; the air was foul with the odor of stale sea-water and things long dead. Doctor Fielding scribbled a few words in his note-book, tore out the leaf and gave it to the first mate.

"Take that to the captain—at once!"

Thankfully the man escaped. A steward called after him.

"If he wants this bunk made up he'll have to get another man for the job. I'd sooner jump overboard. I'm not going inside 14 again! He can put me in irons—but I won't—I won't——"

The first mate vanished beyond reach of the man's hysterical outburst. No one paid any attention to it. All eyes were fixed on Doctor Fielding and Mr. Amyas standing inside.

"Quick!" cried the doctor. "Out of here!"

Next moment, both were in the passage, and the door fast bolted, but not before they'd seen the blanket of gray foam ripple and heave as if water surged beneath it. And as the door banged to, a sudden shrill whistling began—like the sound of escaping steam. Footsteps approached, a firm, soldierly tread. Colonel Everett's tall straight figure advanced down the long corridor. The whistling ceased abruptly.

"What on earth? Are you playing 'Clumps'? And why outside my door?"

The colonel's eyes, friendly and puzzled, turned from the doctor's haggard

face to meet the speculative watchful gaze of Mr. Amyas. He put a hand to his head.

"Better follow your advice after all, Doctor Fielding. I'm beginning to feel——"

Then, with appalling suddenness, he changed. Voice, face, manner took on the feral primitive hate of a jungle beast. He loomed over Mr. Amyas.

"You're one of the clever ones, you think—spying round, adding up, working out your little ideas! *That's* puzzled you, I'll swear!" He jerked his head toward the closed door; a wicked flare of laughter leaped in his eyes. "Go on worrying—I'm enjoying it! You'll not get me caged up there again, though. *I'm out! . . . and I stay out!*"

Todd, the hysterical young steward, gave an odd, sighing cough and slid to the ground. Steevens dropped beside him, unfastened his collar, held up his head. The rest ran for it, bolted in panic, their feet thudding along the narrow passage like a roll of drums.

Under Mr. Amyas's steady look the red glare died in Colonel Everett's eyes, his convulsed features relaxed. He steadied himself by a polished brass handrail that ran along the wall.

"I thought—I thought someone called me," he said. "I feel a little dizzy!" He looked vaguely from Mr. Amyas to the unconscious Todd, then to Steevens. "What's been happening here? What the deuce is wrong with everyone on this ship?"

"Colonel Everett!" Mr. Amyas was profoundly serious. "Will you put prejudice aside? Will you be persuaded that you are in danger? Will you believe that this room is more poisonous than a rattlesnake's lair?" He gestured to the closed door behind them. "Have you been in

since breakfast? No! Well, it's taking a risk, but it may convince you."

He opened the door.

"Well?" the colonel frowned. "What is it?"

But Mr. Amyas found no answer. There was nothing to say. There was nothing to see except the bunk with its tossed bed-clothes—the flowered green curtains fluttering at the open window—the white enameled walls splashed by the sun with golden light. Mr. Amyas closed the door. The three men faced one another in the corridor.

"Is there any explanation for all this?"

The colonel, very large and indignant, stood with a frown. He was answered by a shrill, fierce whistle. It seemed outside the room now. Todd, who had recovered consciousness, glanced up, and fell back in a dead faint once more. Steevens cowered against the wall with mouth grotesquely open. He pointed at Colonel Everett.

"Look! Look! It's him! . . . ah, ha ha ha *ha!* . . . it's *him!*"

The doctor and Mr. Amyas shuddered.

"You'd better look out for yourselves," came a savage whisper. "You'd better not interfere. Nothing can stop me. *I'm out!*"

A twisted mask of a face leered into theirs.

"Look out for yourselves!"

On this last sneering menace, Colonel Everett's hand opened the door of Number 14. He went inside. The door slammed to. The whistling shrilled louder . . . higher . . . higher. . . .

"**F**OG, sir! Been drifting round for a couple of hours. I noticed it as soon as my watch began."

Captain Ross glanced down from his bridge toward the poop. There—among coils of tarry rope and a mass of can-

vas, iron, life-buoys, and other carefully stowed gear—a patch of white, woolly fog wavered and drifted. The captain snatched up a pair of binoculars and looked long and earnestly.

"Go down and see," he ordered.

The third mate saluted and went. His face was white as he turned to obey. Captain Ross watched while he made his way to deck B and thence to the poop, saw him go forward, hesitate, peer at the eddying fog. Suddenly he threw up his hands with a startled gesture and turned to run.

"Good God! It's after him!"

Captain Ross gripped the rail under his hands as he spoke, and leaned over to watch with eyes almost starting out of his head. Stumbling, running, turning to look back over his shoulder at the thing that steadily pursued, the mate zigzagged an erratic course. A woman's shriek was heard.

An instant later, pandemonium rose on deck B. Men and women struggled from their deck-chairs. Some, entangled in rugs, tripped and fell. Some were too paralyzed by horror to move at all. Deck stewards, serving tea-trays, let their burdens tilt, and the crash of breaking china added to the uproar.

The third mate ran with open mouth, his hands making queer flapping movements, his eyes wild with terror. The fog rolled up behind—closer—closer. A long white wisp of it seemed to blow out like a tentacle, touched the mate's neck, curled round it. The man yelled, put up clutching fingers. His cry died on a strangling sob.

Captain Ross roared out an order through his megaphone. The mate was down on his knees now. Over him the fog circled and hovered. Several of the crew came running; they were, so far, more in awe of the captain than anything

else on board. They picked up the mate and carried him off at a run, vanished down a companionway.

Captain Ross let out a great breath of relief and put down his megaphone with an unsteady hand. The cloud of fog was blowing down deck again. Now it was drifting round the poop. And from it the captain heard a high, keening, intolerable whistle, rising, falling, rising again to torturing shrillness.

For minutes he stood watching, listening. At last he set a double watch on the bridge and went below. He knew at last what fear of the unknown meant. He knew at last that his ignorance and obstinacy had put his ship at the mercy of something he could not understand or control.

"Murder!" The word hammered and clanged through his brain. "Murder! That was the doctor's word. Said I was sending Tom to his death!"

Passengers huddled in groups, whispering, crying, cursing, utterly demoralized as he made his way through the luxurious lounge toward the deck A cabins. He knew it would be wise to stop, to reassure them, to check the panic that was running like wildfire in their midst. He knew also that he couldn't do it. His brain was numb with shock. He couldn't console these terrified people. He was terrified himself, sick and cold and stupid with terror.

He groaned as he hurried to Number 14. The door of the room stood wide open. Sunset light painted it blood-red. Its silence was horrible. A taunt—a threat—a prelude to disaster! He saw Mr. Amyas look in.

"Where is he? Where is Tom Everett?"

Mr. Amyas did not at first reply. He looked intently at the captain's altered face; then:

"You know—at last?"

"Yes, yes! I've seen—the Thing . . . the damned whistling Thing!"

Mr. Amyas nodded. "I was there. I ran down to look for the colonel while you were watching the mate. The cabin was empty then. I'm afraid we're too late. He's gone."

"Gone!" The word burst from the captain's white lips. He seized his companion's arm. His eyes were tortured. "Overboard?"

"No! No! It's worse than that. Eldred Vernon has become a permanent tenant now."

Captain Ross frowned in a fierce effort to follow the incomprehensible statement.

"I mean that Vernon has taken possession of your friend—body *and soul*! Colonel Everett appears to be in the smoking-room at this moment. In reality he's no more there than you or I. Vernon possesses him. Vernon is walking and talking in the body of Colonel Everett."

"But Tom—Tom, himself! Where is he, then?"

"A slave in bondage. In bondage so long as his body is possessed by Vernon. Suffering the torments of the damned. He is still able to think, to feel, to remember, but he is helpless. Vernon has overpowered him, taken his house from him. He's like a prisoner lying gagged and bound in some dark cellar of it."

"Go on, Mr. Amyas, go on!" The other's voice was harsh with grief. "What will happen to my passengers—my ship—to all of us, now?"

"I do not know. I can only guess. But I think not one of us will live to see land again. Your ship may be found—some-time—somewhere—a derelict, a mystery like the *Marie Celeste*!"

"There must be a way out. There must be a way."

"Only by destroying Eldred Vernon."

"How? How? D'you mean kill"—a look of awful enlightenment dawned in the captain's eyes—"you mean—I must kill—Tom Everett?"

"I don't know. I don't know." Mr. Amyas's brown face showed a network of lines and wrinkles. "I can only recall an affair I was once concerned in—an exorcism and a sacrifice—to drive out a devil."

"——to drive out a devil! Tell me what you know!"

And in the haunted silence of Number 14 Mr. Amyas told it.

"COLONEL EVERETT! Colonel Everett!" Mark called after the tall figure just stepping from the smoke-room to the deck outside. "You promised to tell me that tale about your tiger-hunt after tea."

The man paused on the threshold and half turned back to the boy. Mark, dashing across to him, drew up with a start about a yard away.

"I beg your pardon. I thought you were——" His serious slate-gray eyes flashed to the man's face, then to his dark green necktie, his collar, his gray tweeds—even his sports-shoes didn't escape the quick, keen scrutiny.

"I—have you borrowed the colonel's clothes?"

The boy's clear, surprised tone seemed to ring out like a bell in the room.

"Borrowed my own clothes! I *am* the colonel! What's the idea, Mark? Is this a riddle? Or, are you giving me an intelligence test?"

The boy stood absolutely still. Quite suddenly he drew back, a look of horror dawning on his pale, intelligent face.

"You're not the colonel. You've got black hair and your skin is yellow and you're older—much older. Where is Colonel Everett? I want him."

Men were looking at the pair now, peering over the tops of their papers; glancing up from writing-tables. Desultory bits of talk now ceased altogether. Everyone seemed suddenly aware of a crisis of peculiar significance between Mark and the man in gray tweeds.

The latter looked down with cold venom.

"Don't make a little fool of yourself!" His low voice reached Mark's ear alone. "If you ever say such a thing again to me I'll—*punish you*. No good running to your Mr. Amyas either; he won't be able to interfere much longer."

He went out quickly, leaving Mark staring, shivering, sick with fright. The glint of those cold eyes! The hate in that low-pitched voice!

"What's wrong, kid? What did he say?" A good-natured young fellow close by drew the boy over to a group in a corner. "Queer sort of man, that Colonel Everett! He's a bit annoyed with all of us today. Liver or something!"

Mark's white, drawn face did not relax. He shivered convulsively, tried to speak, failed. One of the group rose with an exclamation, glass in hand.

"Look here, old man." He put a hand on Mark's shoulder, held the glass to his lips with the other. "Take a sip of this and tell us what it's all about."

The boy drank, choked, dropped his head down on his knees—a huddled, frantic heap of misery.

"Better get the doctor. The little chap's ill."

The good-natured young fellow went to one of the doors, collided with two men about to enter. They were Mr. Amyas and Captain Ross.

"Ill? Mark?"

They listened to the young man's hasty, confused explanation and hurried to the boy. He looked exhausted and was lean-

ing back with half-closed eyes, his features twitching, his delicate hands clenched tightly.

It took Mr. Amyas some minutes to get a word out of him. Captain Ross waited with a pinched gray look on his altered face.

"He was—awfully, *awfully* angry! As if he wanted to kill me!" Mark gasped. "It's that man! It's the prince! He said he was Colonel Everett—he's wearing his clothes—so I thought at first——"

Captain Ross exchanged a somber look with Mr. Amyas, who was supporting the boy.

"Oh! Oh! There he is whistling for me! And I don't like it—I don't like it!" Mark clapped his hands over his ears, dropped them again in bewildered fright. "It's in my head—the tune! Oh!—oh! I wish it would stop. It's—beastly!"

A strange silence fell on the rest. To no one but the boy was any whistling audible. The good-natured young man winked and touched his forehead significantly.

"Oh! Oh!" wailed the boy; "it's that funny old song—my nurse used to sing it to me. *Kathleen Mavourneen*! Oh, can't you make it stop?"

Mr. Amyas lifted him to his feet, put an arm about him. Above the boy's head he met the captain's eyes again.

"I'll get the doctor to give you something so that you won't hear it any more. Come along to my room. No need to be afraid of anything. You're quite right—that wasn't Colonel Everett. Come along. I'll explain. You'll be all right in a few minutes."

The last red rays of the setting sun flashed on the boy's face as he and his companion crossed the room and went out.

"What the deuce!" The good-natured young man stared at the doorway through

which the two had vanished. "Not the colonel! Is the boy a bit touched? He seemed such a bright lad, I thought."

Captain Ross glowered.

"Brighter than all the rest of us put together, it appears. That was *not* Colonel Everett."

"Good lord! What! You don't mean it! I'd have staked my last shirt——"

"Not Colonel Everett," repeated the captain in grim, heavy accents. "I don't think it's any use to warn you, but keep clear of him—if you can!"

He stalked out.

"Raving!" a young man in flannels drawled. "There seems to be something that breeds lunatics on the *S. S. Dragon*. What *is* at the bottom of all this? Whistling and hysterics! Joke's wearing thin. I'm fed up."

A stout, quiet man, playing patience, voiced his opinion in the manner of one accustomed to authority.

"I advise you to take Captain Ross seriously—and literally."

The flanneled one attempted to register world-weary contempt, but his smooth young face betrayed him into sulky resentment.

MR. AMYAS returned. He stood for a moment with his back to the light in a doorway, his black eyes raking the room—very quiet, not a hair out of place, and yet he gave an impression of most desperate haste and disorder.

"Has anyone seen Doctor Fielding?"

A chorus of anxious voices answered. No one had seen the doctor lately. Was the boy bad? They'd go and search. The quiet, sleepy atmosphere became charged with electricity. Some dashed off to find Doctor Fielding. The remainder pressed for information.

"Heart," Mr. Amyas stated briefly.

"He's collapsed. Seems to have had a bad shock. Ah, here's Fielding——"

"Yes. It's the boy. Quickly!"

The passengers saw a look of understanding flash between the two men as they hurried away.

"Mystery! Crime! Adventure!" the man in flannels sneered. "Victim guaranteed every two hours."

"You rather underestimate the time." The stout man was putting away his patience cards. "However, optimism is a privilege of youth."

"Oh, go to hell!" said the flanneled one. But he said it under his breath, and only the trembling flame of the lighted match in his unsteady fingers made response. He walked toward a doorway.

"Er—look out for fog."

The quiet man stowed away his pocket-pack. His tone was perfectly casual.

"Fog! What d'you mean—fog?"

"Ran into some just before tea, I heard. Perhaps I should say—it ran into us."

"I know there was a hullabaloo. The mate got hysterics! But you don't suppose I think——"

"No! No!" the quiet man seemed really shocked at the idea. "Of course not. I know you don't."

The young man violently disappeared. The quiet man sat back in the attitude of one who awaits news. Several of those who had rushed off to find the doctor now returned. They seemed worried.

"Fog?" inquired the quiet man.

"What the devil makes you harp on fog?" one of them inquired.

"I was on deck B before tea," was the reply. "I've seen that sort of—fog, before! In North Borneo. Lived out there twenty years. It's apt to—er, hang about. Like poison-gas. More deadly, though."

"Well, you're right, as it happens," a muscular man in a Fair-isle sweater conceded. "There's a rum patch of fog or

mist or something drifting around near the wireless room. I heard that everlasting whistle going strong and thought I'd do a spot of investigating. Almost ran into the fog. Could have sworn the whistling came from it."

No one questioned his impression. He went on with increasing embarrassment.

"Don't know what came over me. The thing looked—well, I farked! Legged it back here as fast as I knew how!"

"Very sensible," approved the quiet man. "My experience has been that it only—er, functions in the open air, for some reason."

In a cabin close by, Mr. Amyas and the doctor looked down at Mark's quiet, unconscious face.

"He'll do for a few hours. That stuff'll make him sleep. Only question is whether we oughtn't to let him go—now—easily! Seems damnable to bring him back to face that devil again. The boy *knows*. And he's heard the death-signal. Why let him wake? Why let him face tomorrow? What d'you say, Amyas?"

The other nodded. "I agree. He mustn't come back to that. How long will your stuff hold him? Four or five hours?"

"Easily. More likely seven or eight."

"Five will take us to midnight. We'll leave it until then. Captain Ross is sending out S. O. S's. Going to transfer to a home-bound ship, if possible. Best give him another injection at midnight if no ship answers us—in time."

No need to harass the doctor before it became necessary. Mr. Amyas, therefore, did not admit that he had no hope of their S. O. S. messages getting through. He'd seen what the young man in the Fair-isle sweater had seen. More! He had looked inside the wireless room. No operator was there. A cloud of fog hung over it. It was not humanly possible for any man to sit in the place with that

shrieking menace in his ears. There was no chance of outside help. The fight must be lost or won on board within the next few hours.

He looked down at the helpless, doomed little figure, turned toward the door, stepped back for a brief farewell.

"I promised you a gift in memory of this trip together. You shall have it—before midnight, Mark."

A PALE, chill twilight lingered in the sky. Electric lights shone from reflectors on deck. The sea ran smooth, gray-green below the ship's steep sides. Mr. Amyas looked about him with quick, bright eyes. Passengers—those not demoralized by fear, those who hadn't seen and didn't believe in fogs and foam and fantasies—were below, dressing for dinner. Those who did believe were dressing too. It didn't get you anywhere to encourage thoughts of that sort. A good dinner—dancing—lights—music—they'd forget it soon!

Mr. Amyas caught sight of the third mate making for the captain's bridge. Lights were on all over the ship. He thought how brilliant the *S. S. Dragon* must look, foaming on through the dark water, gleaming, illumined, swift. What passing craft would guess she was a ship of the damned? That she was bearing hundreds of souls to hell? That on her long, white, level decks, behind her lighted port-holes, in luxurious cabins and beautifully decorated saloons, horror stalked, biding its time?

His eyes followed the third mate. He was staggering uncertainly. He climbed up to the bridge with painful effort. The strong lights flooded him, showed a ghastly, twisted face of fear. He spoke with Captain Ross. Bad news, evidently. The captain's gesture was eloquent. He dismissed the officer, turned away, and

stood frowning. Mr. Amyas went up to him.

"That devil's got us, all right." Captain Ross turned fiercely. "Five men driven from the wheel this last hour. That infernal whistling fog! And I find it's the same with the wireless. He's cutting us off completely. What's the use of waiting, Amyas? I tell you it's madness to let him corner us like this. Every hour my ship's more at his mercy. Tom Everett is dead—murdered—I murdered him! It's Vernon, not Everett, walking round now, mocking us, destroying us. I'm going to shoot him. D'you hear me? It's time to *do* something. My ship will be helpless soon — driving blind — lost! There's only my first mate left to steer now—until that cursed whistling Thing drives him off too!"

"Only till midnight!" the other spoke with strong entreaty. "Only a few hours more! I know your friend is still alive. It will indeed be murder if you shoot him now. At midnight, I swear to you, Everett will be himself again. For a few minutes he will be the man you've always known—and loved."

"How d'you know? It's only a guess in the dark. And even if we wait—even if Tom does come back, he may not tell me how to destroy Vernon! You're only guessing all along the line. Why should Tom know this secret that you don't—and I don't? No! I must shoot that devil while there's a chance. It's monstrous—it's madness to let him destroy us inch by inch."

Mr. Amyas looked at him and said no more. He'd been afraid of this. The strain was inhuman. It passed the line of what could be endured. He turned to leave the bridge. Queerly enough, his submission touched some secret spring that protest and entreaty could not reach.

"Come back! Come back! Help me, Amyas! I can't watch here alone."

IN THE huge, handsome main saloon, unobtrusively reserved in gray oak and clouded-green upholstery, groups of card-players worked in isolated quartets, tense, serious, absorbed. Mostly elderly and middle-aged. The younger set was dancing. To this sanctum, Colonel Everett entered, stood observant, bright cruel eyes raking the unconscious players.

He walked, his accustomed firm decisive tread, now curiously sinuous and smooth, to a table where the Marchmonts and the Hore-Smiths were engaged in a long-drawn interesting battle. Wealthy, autocratic, exclusive, they represented a high average of breeding and brains.

"I shouldn't risk that."

Colonel Everett stabbed a finger down on the card which Mrs. Hore-Smith had led.

"Dummy," he went on, "has only queen, seven and three of clubs—ace and ten of diamonds—nine, five and two of hearts—and knave, ten, five, four and two of spades."

Four amazed, resentful faces were raised to meet the colonel's hard glare. Mr. Marchmont picked up the cards he had put face-down on the table and reversed them.

"You're right. Very clever. I've seen it done before—in Siam. Perhaps you'd reserve your—er—tricks until later!"

Cold malice leaped in Colonel Everett's eyes.

"Reserve my—er—tricks until later!" he mocked. "Later! You gibbering, conventional puppets! There won't be any later for you. After midnight I rule here! Even now——"

Mrs. Marchmont, very handsome, very haughty, cut him short.

"If you must talk, go elsewhere. Otherwise——"

"You don't want to talk?"

"Nor to listen."

He nodded and made a quick, insolent gesture. His eyes showed a gleam of wicked white.

"Then don't talk. Play!"

The two couples, with strained, altered faces, resumed. In silence—in absolute silence they played. Colonel Everett sat back smoking, his long legs crossed, one foot wagging in perpetual motion. Not a single word escaped from any of the players. They sat stiffly. They moved hands and arms only. Their eyes sought his—read in his evil, mocking glance what cards to put down. Colonel Everett played out a whole rubber thus, merely using the Marchmonts and Hore-Smiths as physical mediums. And they knew what was happening to them. Their wills impotently battled his.

The rubber finished, Colonel Everett stood up and waved a hand that seemed boneless at the wrist.

"It is not everyone who would respect your wishes so perfectly, Mrs. Marchmont. Well, we've had enough bridge now."

His sinister, sidelong glance collected eyes all over the room. Inexplicably to themselves, the players looked up simultaneously.

"We'll go and watch the dancing for a time. This game begins to pall."

He sat down, lighted a fresh cigarette, waited. Group after group rose from the tables. Well-fed, expensively attired sheep ready for the slaughter. They threaded a decorous way to the entrances and passed out of sight.

Colonel Everett rose to watch them go. Lucifer, Son of the Morning! So had *he* towered in dark lust to rule!

ON THE dancing-floor, color flashed like gorgeous birds among a forest of black coats. Musicians combined in assaulting every primitive urge possessed by man. Ordinary lights were turned off.

The dancers swayed through shafts of green and purple, blue, red and yellow.

At Colonel Everett's entrance the shifting floodlights died. Brilliant white lights sprang to life from every bulb in the place. The dancers laughed. A buzz of talk reverberated. Dick Redlands glanced up in annoyance. The most beautiful girl on board was sitting out with him. He adored her. He was letting Wanda know about it and she seemed not uninterested. What fool had turned on the electric lights?

Wanda's grave, wistful, profoundly gray eyes turned to the doorway where Colonel Everett's evening clothes seemed to invest him with quite regal dignity. He bowed to her across the dance-floor and advanced.

"Look here, Wanda! You're not going to dance with that bounder." Dick lost his head in sudden, plunging, nameless fear. "It's impossible! He's . . . he's——"

"What is he?"

Dick was unable to say. The girl's black head with its narrow wreath of pearls was turned from him. Her fingers lay unresponsive in his clasp. Her quickened breath fluttered the gauzy petals of a flower at her breast.

"Wanda!" he urged. "No! Don't dance with him. There's something wrong—he's a rotter—a——"

The colonel was bowing low before Wanda now, drawing her to her feet, melting into the dance with the girl's supple figure held close. Dick stared after them. He was afraid—damnably afraid—and he didn't know at all what it was he feared. But his eyes followed the girl. Her face was turned to her partner's shoulder; his lips were close to her ear, moving, moving in ceaseless talk.

". . . but it won't last. It can't last, your beauty! You are only a shell. A lovely, painted, fragile shell. After to-

night all your beauty will be gone. You'll be dead. Have you ever seen a body that's been in the water for a day or two? For a week? For a month? Very revolting indeed. Bloated—swollen—oh! most nauseating. And the fishes——”

On and on went the horrible whispering voice, painting its hellish pictures, destroying her body—her eyes—her hair—giving her loveliness to hideous death with sure, unrelenting strokes. And, gripped in his iron arms, she had to listen. Her imagination flared to torturing life as all ability to struggle, to cry out, failed her.

“There are so many creatures of the sea that will come starved to rob you of this beauty you love. It would be a waste of time for your latest adorer to go on worshipping at your shrine. He shall see you day by day as you rot—and rot. I heard what he said. He shall live—and regret his living!”

Dick, watchful, not with anger, cold with terror, held in his place by baffling control, saw Wanda's profile as she passed before him—suffering—tortured.

Next time the pair came round, the colonel stopped, led Wanda to her seat, set her in it like a doll, then walked away in the direction of the band. Dick found himself unable to move a finger.

Music struck up again. An old tune. No one got up to dance. No one moved at all.

Colonel Everett stood as one crowned and robed with authority. Slowly, as if a heavy, jeweled cloak dragged at his heels, he turned and walked away.

The band played with maddening repetition. On and on wailed the sad little melody . . . *Kathleen Mavourneen* . . . on . . . and on . . . and on. . . .

ON ONE of his half-hourly visits to Mark, Mr. Amyas saw a tall, hatefully familiar figure standing outside the

room. Colonel Everett's face, barely recognizable now in its dark, lean wolfishness, confronted him with a grin.

“Very conscientious! Well, make the most of your time. You won't be sick-visiting much longer. I'll take the boy off your hands soon—very soon.”

Mr. Amyas opened the door and closed it softly, abruptly in the other's face. He felt better for the small act of defiance. After midnight! . . . He choked back the cold, numbing sense of defeat that threatened, and crossed over to the bunk where Doctor Fielding watched.

“I've something to say to you,” he began in a low, urgent voice. “No use telling you before—I wasn't sure of Captain Ross. And it's a remote chance anyhow. However——”

He explained briefly.

“I see.” The doctor looked up, his eyes dead fires in a worn, ravaged face, “It all hangs on whether Everett *knows*, and if he does know, whether he will have the chance to communicate his vital knowledge. The only certain factor in the crisis is that Everett *as* Everett does momentarily take possession of himself again.”

His companion assented.

“I admit my knowledge is limited. But I'm staking everything on it. And I have persuaded the captain to this point of view. About Mark——”

“Yes. If Everett speaks, Mark won't need the second injection. Very well. I'll wait for fifteen minutes after midnight. Then—if no message comes—I will use the needle.”

The corridor was empty as Mr. Amyas went out again.

“I don't know,” he confessed when he regained the bridge, “why the infernal fog leaves us alone up here. Vernon is reserving his powers, leaving us to the last—his strongest enemies. There must

be laws and barriers in every state of existence, and Vernon must be prevented from touching us—yet!"

"My first mate's given up now, driven away," the captain informed him. "There's no one at the wheel. Luckily the ship's heading north, right out of the fairway. No danger of a collision. We're going dead slow, too. Three more hours of this. Three more hours! My God, Amyas, if Everett doesn't come—doesn't tell me!"

"He will come."

"But he may not know. He may not know."

For the hundredth time Mr. Amyas reassured him. For the hundredth time Captain Ross turned to pace up and down the bridge, his ears tortured by the incessant, insistent whistle, rising to maniacal fury, then dwindling to thin, distant, unearthly piping. He had tried stuffing his ears with cotton-wool. It was useless—worse than useless. It increased the torment; his brain had felt like a hollow tube; the whistle shrieked through it, red-hot, searing as a flame.

And up and down the long, bare, gleaming deck below, to and fro, drifting, shifting, a horrible, seeking, wraith-like thing of fog loomed, hovered, eddied, wavered to nothingness, re-formed once more.

And northward through the dark sea drove the ship—haunted—lost—blind! her slow, discouraged heart beating in heavy rhythm. Northward to her doom.

ALMOST midnight. On the bridge Captain Ross and Mr. Amyas kept watch. Almost midnight. A new moon. Hard, bright stars. No wind. And the low continuous wash and ripple of following seas as the *S. S. Dragon* drove on her unguided, crooked course.

In Number 14 on deck A, its occupant moved with quick, uneasy steps. The sinuous grace, the wicked, glancing eyes were changing. Something of fear, of doubt, of grief showed every now and then, like a star's clear shining between dark clouds.

"It's very far off—very far off." His voice was crisper in spite of its note of anxious, painful doubt. "I can't remember—I don't even know what it is I must remember."

A sudden convulsive shudder took him. A sudden darkness dimmed and blurred his features. His head went back with a jerk. His hands grew taut with fingers that clenched and crisped like talons.

"Fool! Fool! What am I doing? What am I thinking? Almost midnight. A few short minutes and I will pass through. The door stands wide. I will pass through."

He glared at the tall figure reflected in the long glass of his wardrobe, leaned forward as if speaking to the image mirrored there.

"In a few more minutes I possess you utterly. Body—living human soul—all mine!"

The face in the glass returned his glare, grew gray and wavered. Its harsh and wicked lines smoothed out. Thought, emotion, effort showed in the mirrored face—stirring—changing it as wind changes the face of water.

"No! No! Stay here. You shall not go! I command. I command. I rule you now."

But the eyes in the mirror did not match the voice. They were steady, resolute, brave. And a new voice answered the challenging words.

"I am Tom Everett. I am myself. And I must speak with the captain of this ship."

He turned from the mirror. All soldier now—squared shoulders, erect, decisive, disciplined. He moved toward the door; his hand was on the latch when his body was torn and wrenched as if by torture. He fell against the wall.

"I must—speak——"

His voice grew thick and indistinct. His hands made blind, arrested movements. He lifted his feet as if he stood in quicksands and fell with a choking cry and hands at his throat. Stubbornly he dragged himself upright, dragged open the door and stumbled into the corridor. Moving more strongly now with every step he took, he made for the deck above. From the bridge Captain Ross saw him coming, heard a faint calling through the night.

"Captain! Captain! Are you keeping watch?"

"Here! On the bridge! Here, Tom, here!"

The colonel moved swiftly in reply. He seemed to slip his fetters, came running. Next moment he had gained the bridge and stood with clear gaze on his friend.

Mr. Amyas fell back. It was between these two now.

"Tell me! Tell me quickly! I am ready. I will give all I have—body and soul, to save you!"

Everett looked deep into the agonized face confronting him.

"Yes—I see you are—quite ready."

A shrill piping sounded far off—drew nearer—nearer.

"Now!" cried the colonel.

He thrust a thin, long knife, trophy of the East, into Captain Ross's hand.

"We must go together. We must fight him together, afterward! Will you come with me?"

Below, the decks were blotted out. Fog

rolled up . . . blind white world of terror . . . closing in with the whistling, tearing shrieking of the damned.

Captain Ross took the knife, grasped it strongly. Understanding, then profound triumphant joy illumined his worn face.

"Ah! Now I see the way! Wait for me, Tom! Together . . . yes! . . . together!"

He flung up an arm and struck with sure, strong aim. Everett fell, the knife deep in his heart. The captain pulled his sharp blade free again, stood up. One tremendous shout—thunder-clap bellowing above the wind's shrill squeal. The bright blade flashed again, sank to its hilt in the captain's own broad breast.

As he fell, stars and moon and foaming sea were blotted out from Mr. Amyas. The night was filled with the howl of rushing winds. Blackness descended. The ship spun crazy and demented under him.

In mortal terror he heard the thrashing roar of battle all about him. His heart grew colder than his icy hands. A world of yelling darkness where all the winds of hell tore loose.

But louder than winds, high above the devilish tumult shrilled the whistle, ceaseless, shrieking its menace, its everlasting hate. . . .

Utter silence. Silence, huge as the empty dawn of time. A wide, sweet sense of freedom filled the universe.

The watcher stood, breathing the clean salt wind, blessing friendly stars and moonlit water.

He woke like a dreamer and looked at his watch. Five minutes—only five minutes that agony had endured after all!

He knelt by the quiet dead, profoundly sleeping, utterly at rest. They were freed as Mr. Amyas knew himself to be. The dark soul of Eldred Vernon was destroyed.