

## El Valiente - Brouillon anglais

**Auteur(s) :** Malaquais, Jean

### Les folios

En passant la souris sur une vignette, le titre de l'image apparaît.

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EL 71111111

1

"Yes, sir. For the midnight watch. I'll be there. Do I sign here?"

The clerk nodded, stuck a yellow<sup>ish</sup> finger at the bottom of the sheet, and I signed. Hanging from a coiled cord, a shadowless bell<sup>test</sup> ~~test~~ as silly glass over his blotchy face. Shreds of shadow swept along the walls and the dingy window-panes. Someone opened the door, closed it without haste. The rain, ~~gushed~~ <sup>rolled</sup> indoors by the draught, showed its overload on the crowded tiles of the floor ~~cherry~~ <sup>tinny</sup>, ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> an army spreads on an enormous bed of saw, ~~disturbance of sherry~~ <sup>disturbance of sherry</sup> ~~glass~~. Splashing forward in water and steam, a man came and went next to me. He exchanged a vacant glance, ~~glanced~~ <sup>had</sup> a dry mouth and bald hammer-like ears. "Antiseptic to go to see..." I thought. "Should've gotten up earlier..." I skim on the ink of my signature, fingered the document with relish, contemplated my nails, placed my thumb on the railing between the clerk and me. "Life," I thought, "who says it stinks?" I didn't know what thoughts to ride, what gestures to make, joy was landing within me. I had no more business here, I had better leave it and wait your for that man with the frost-bitten wrists; in

but it hurt, because I, Boris Lushchikoff, I just got the only job <sup>it's</sup> ~~was~~ available on my shore. I folded the mailingspapers I received as I strolled about the Bellevue and slipped them in the pocket of my jersey. Constantly ripped up my tank and I shifted with pleasure. I suddenly felt very courageous, felt one with all sailors in quest of a ship, and above all with the newcomer, shivering and so patient, who I knew would leave empty-handed. "Should've gotten up much earlier..." I thought vaguely. I rubbed my hands, shifted from one leg to the other, shifted slowly. The clerk glanced a quick glance at me, rolled a cigarette with stiff fingers, and respectfully and the sea next to me was breathing, his mouth open. I could have stayed there a long time, <sup>there was</sup> ~~as long as I liked~~. ~~Along-past me~~, but blowing smoke through his nose the clerk picked up his pen and I understood it was high time I cleared out. Somewhat reluctantly, I flicked the visor of my cap and left for a last round along the greasy wharfs of the big gleamy harbor.

ent. I had another... factory

My hands buried deep down in my pockets, my ears tucked in the upturned collar of my jersey, I fixed the rain. <sup>the</sup> ~~impetuous~~ at a constant pace, the drizzle for some had been slowly drowning all things alive. The brownish brine of the shellings, the grey slabs of the hangars and warehouses, the stiff heavy tarpaulins, the tipsters, the black skeletons of the cranes, the lampshades in their blue jeans and the pedestrians hunched beneath their over-sized umbrellas, all that moved and all that didn't was soaked in water, bound to be jolted for life over-lasting by volumes of water, and even the formidable city which day <sup>by</sup> ~~from day~~ slanted not a degree further above the yards, even the handsome side city would spread over the city.

I entered a job and entered a boat. Then also started <sup>it's</sup> ~~along~~ the harbor. The place swelled of deep ~~atmosphere~~. I pressed myself up on



The animal, standing low headily, will not fight. "First time here  
with tooth," I said.

Her smile broadened, warming her gaze. The new <sup>pink</sup> ~~pink~~ will also  
 had beautiful teeth, she had even taught herself how to smile sweet-  
 icky, you could ~~see~~ <sup>feel</sup> that at a glance. Unfortunately, smiling with  
 such gusto took her nose over clothes, but that could not be helped.  
 She moved the table.

"Is that not" she said. "That represents 'Is that true?'"

"Start to feel for you. It makes me strong," and as I was about to speak, she adds: "It's called *Jeep*."

"You are you, Jerry?" I said. "Why I'm going to see. He would be  
you for a walk along the pier, on a <sup>fine</sup> Sunday morning..."

"To just?" she asked, drinking on the words. She pulled to her side and moved astonished as if it were someone.

"Yes," I said, waving my forefinger <sup>downward</sup> the side of the cap. "Yes, this very evening. On a big beautiful South American liner, baby." I looked her over. "It's <sup>so full</sup> ~~sublimely~~glad, you know, jump. It's as though I was going to catch up with the rest on the other side of the water."

which, as stated, are not self-evident.

She picked up the rug and left, heels clicking on the tiles. I could guess what she felt like now, it was always the same thing, those she liked will not cry, standing after the war, the summer, after some time when they finished. She started standing before me and her ring slipped on the glass. I was watching her, she was quite angry. Angry and obedient. Angry and obedient and without love for the quiet one.

little of water and sky, for the only country where you never land  
and get most death. These were just starting for the day, started it for  
himself; she could not be taken in by that. A half hour from her from  
her work, and without thinking she walked towards us.

"The truth," she called, "the truth is you're all dying to know  
if there's some women in these countries over there?"

She pointed her forefinger at the window and the sun shone on his  
other eyelid like a dreamer fighting with ghosts. I looked at the  
girl's shape and did not answer. I had not thought of the colored  
women in these countries down there, but it was something worth watching  
during eventually. I could see my shadow, the blonde I was to meet  
that very evening. To tell the truth she was not a big beautiful head,  
I had expected her at length from the date, and somewhat as distance  
and details allowed I had formed a pretty good picture of her appearance.  
Though she was not a perfect beauty when colored lady had  
needed a patching up not a jot of fresh paint, I had concluded that all  
in all the old tramp still held her shape. But that I am really con-  
cerned with comfort and security, these notions are so to speak alien  
to me, but I like the relationship, calling friendship as it  
were with the craft I happen to sell on. I like to have the feel of  
my ship, I like to hold her in my palm, as a craftsman his personal  
toy. Besides, I had been where with a long time that, to me, my old  
ship was as good as the most slender vessel. I stood up, paid and walked  
out.

I don't believe in intuition, as they say, nor in little forebodings  
which jump you whenever. But, as soon as I touched the blonde,  
that an unpleasant shivering started my heart. It was as if something



kept and struggling had not come up breath. But, glad to get me of  
 the city and the fog, I refused to linger over old wives' tales and  
 swiftly climbed the ladder, landing plain on the deck. There stood  
 along the deserted starboard gangway. There was not a soul to take  
 notice of me. I felt for my walking papers I saw on the water-wall  
 of this freighter, in perfect compliance with the maritime regulations.  
 The light on the ship which had brought me to the Falklands was  
 glimmering in the rainy night like a spark of gold in aqueous depths, and  
 even now I had the feeling of the irretrievable. I leaned over the  
 rail and stayed there, thinking. "To hell with it!" I muttered. "To  
 hell with it!" Night and fog weighed over the harbor, bleeding sky  
 and water and the black carcasses of the ships, and all things melted  
 in the same icy arctic, befuddling like coal-dust. "To hell with it!"  
 I went on thinking steadily. The whole universe was geysered with soft  
 water, the universe roiled with the shimmering smoothness of boiled water,  
 and beneath the huge expanse of sky there was not a dry square inch  
 that did not swell of rotten fish, and the blinding lights on the dis-  
 tant shore were also drowned, small yellowish lights trembled by some  
 clumsy hand with jagged vibrations. I hated that soggy climate, it seem-  
 ed as if rain and fog seeped between my skin and my blood, cutting me  
 like an axe, and the more I hated it, the more it gnawed at me. <sup>24</sup>  
 I had <sup>25</sup> not <sup>26</sup> been <sup>27</sup> up to feel the shaver under my feet, Liverpool in Decem-  
 ber was as good as dead, and I had shuffled my bones here long enough  
 to be wild for a piece of clean-cut sky. To hell with it! To hell with  
 to-morrow at this very hour, the Falklands will be rolling her two masts  
 along the coast of France, and in a fortnight I shall be sleeping strip-  
 ped to the waist in the fire-bellied penit.

But, creeping on the iron deck snatched me out of my thoughts. I  
 turned around — and was blinded by a beam of light. I waited for the



I was to have my first of thinking eyes, prepared to admit the dis-  
 crepancy collecting of presence about; but, enlarged under a strong  
 magnifying-glass the lantern showed itself like my people, swelling on  
 down as a search-light hypnotism a school of fish. I moved right,  
 then left, then tried to squat, but the beam would not let go of me  
 and I could see nothing except the rain shimmering in the lantern  
 beam. "Well..." I said in a subdued voice, eyes closed. I moved for-  
 ward, stopped on a spot, leaped into a soft bulging object and was vis-  
 ibly pushed back. I hit the rail with my elbow, hurt my knee, and  
 they kept pointing their light, silently, obstinately, as if conducting  
 an experiment in electricity on my person. A fog-burner looked on, and  
 we might be getting under steam, and so rather low I twisted my head  
 they would not release me from (under) that beam. The train seemed to  
 move then, it had been looking for a full minute by now, and it look-  
 ed as if they would keep me, for they had not said a word all through,  
 examining me as you would an extremely odd specimen. I went, helpless,  
 I was trembling, a nice place where I hoped to find that soft bulging object  
 I had leaped into, I imagined it was a belly -- when it spoke. It was  
 a frail voice, sharp definitely, infinitely shrill. "What are you up  
 to here, ~~handcuffed~~?" it blurted. Out end of the third carriage made  
 even darker by the light aimed at my people, these words could as well  
 belong to an ill-tormented crowd in the end of howling streets at a midnight  
 who ~~people's~~ only at her side. "There's a fellow for you," I thought; "you  
 can't call people ~~handcuffed~~ when you have such a ~~company~~ they are pull-  
 ing my leg, but I won't go for it..." And indeed I was not in the mood  
 to go for the eye and were passing and I was out of patience.  
 "I am trying to make a change at you, ~~and~~," I said, imitating  
 the fellow's thin voice. Then, in my natural human condition "Come on,

I was looking

that I was  
 very much  
 very much  
 almost happy

get into a shape



"Have you had enough of this?" I said, watching my eyes.  
 "Bright lines, looking behind that dam lamp... Put it out, for Christ-  
 sake!" I could make the sun out beneath the glass, reminding himself to  
 please me as though he were dealing with a dumb steer. I heard his  
 nose, passage in the dark, then after in his tenuous voice.  
 "My wish... the window has broken my wish-glass?"  
 "Really?" I said, eyes closed. "Really? What a pity..."  
 I suddenly turned over with painful deliberation with careful  
 curiosity toward my invisible man. "Well now," I wanted to tell him,  
 "Pain's taken shelter and half in awe, has about it?" But I said  
 "I wish-glass... To think I hoped I broke a couple of your ribs  
 for you..."  
 The fellow kept on, now did he lower his lamp. The wind had risen,  
 the dark turned under my feet over as the waves swelled and splashed  
 against the hull. In one corner, he was sure to get on and to the ad-  
 vance's walking-bridge; it looked as though, cut off by all around, we  
 were left aside in order to catch some likely food. The harbor resound-  
 ed with voices and oars, glittered with dull misty lights, and I didn't  
 dare leave the fear of a transverse blow. A long shuddered by, sails  
 swaying in the wind as water rose in the distance -- yet as close  
 I could make the rusty steel riding over the [?] the long busy  
 billowing of a firm, the hard blow of the beam on the shore, all  
 the hubbub of a harbor drifted over the water toward the [?], where  
 still as a stone, the man with the [?] kept us nailed beneath the  
 blinding beam. And, in the stream of the bulwarks and [?],  
 the man could be heard leaving silently.  
 Suddenly, as if making from a painful resolution, the man yell-  
 ed  
 "The elephant! The elephant!"

hand handwritten  
 right margin  
 English

His fingers snapped at my ears like a bunch of hags. He went down  
 screaming his teeth, for the volume died out in his throat. That  
 night, irritating and tedious a while ago, all of a sudden had a  
 disarming tone, as though a prime does turned voiceless and silence  
 his had started yelling.

"Wasn't there anything wrong?" he was asked. The way he closed  
the book at me, I presumed he was short of stature. He was extremely  
distracted behind his business screen, wondering by the way he played,  
by the peculiar silence which recalled his posting, and the joke would  
very well get out of hand. I'd rather not trade <sup>(possibly)</sup> [him] for the glory  
of it, at least as long as it is <sup>possible</sup> [undisturbed] to <sup>continue</sup> <sup>to play</sup> <sup>in the</sup>  
<sup>a lot of ways</sup> without flinching, down, and besides it followed me to anticipate an offer-  
ing before the Jalisco had even got off. That was, those very fea-  
tures and appearance were common to me — except that he was short-  
legged, somewhat plump, and lacking from his shoes an eagerness — that  
was, strangely enough, <sup>quite as easily</sup> [displaced as with no hesitations] to get out of

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And of surprise or lack of breath, the man himself did not reply. An-  
ger flamed up mine. After all I am not that weak, and this hearted here,  
with a voice like an old hag, says he was asking me at me. "What el-  
ephants you talking about?" I almost yelled. He he slapped me, all right  
it was the reaction of a man I called admiral. Then, O.K., so what? "Well,  
speak up, sir!" I said with more rage than I usually show and so he kept  
silent, fumbling me with his domed lamp. I watched it from his hand  
with a quick violent gesture and blotted him in my turn. Either the un-  
expected loss of his probable suspicion deeply afflicted him, or the de-  
repression of my onslaught threw him aside, for he remained motionless, his  
eyes bulging like an owl caught by headlights. And an officer he was,  
indeed. A deep line revealing a scar cut across his forehead, his heavy  
jaw was clenched, and his steady front beneath an enormous strength.  
He was fat, rather puffy, wide as a door. Behind him, in the long pre-  
servation of the light, black figures stood in silence. I could have beaten  
him up or at least returned his slap, but it seemed as if it wouldn't mean  
so much. He he said to him without coming to him left or right.



The incident was closed.

I turned the light off, and after a moment's hesitation I headed towards the fore-castle. As I reached the place, I looked over my shoulder. The man was still bent to the ladder. The night seemed less empty. For several lights I had not seen before shone about. I walked down the first step and said in a quiet voice

"As for the elephants, sailor, I'll keep them."

II

For many under the misty sky, the sunsets of Portugal were vanishing into the stamp sea. The wind from the ocean heeled aloft, hurried on the deck a shilly squall streaked with the last smoke swirling along the gangways. In the stow-house (the hull stream door.)

Captain Jean Gilves gripped the glass of unbroken water held out by the steward. He saw red, he <sup>supposed</sup> ~~imagined~~ the heavens as if afraid he might drop it, then jerking out his fat lips he drank with disgust. On his lips, his hand <sup>stayed</sup> ~~remained~~ in front of his mouth, the steward watched him intensely. <sup>He</sup> ~~He~~ <sup>stayed</sup> ~~remained~~ as elongated man, his head <sup>stayed</sup> ~~remained~~ <sup>stayed</sup> ~~remained~~ in line with the captain's convulsed girding, and a gross bluish fever lit up his cherry-stone-like mouth.

The captain put the half-full glass back on the table. He stretched his legs, stretched a misery which had brought to his mouth an after-taste of content, and stretched

"Well now, sailors I want to see that!"

The steward smiled unpleasantly, pulled his head to one side, and

check:  
readable & full by  
in other side  
of something  
it's open wide apart,  
& covered.....

action should address what to see not out of love, even less out of  
 \* check: should this not be to his (see also the page, there is a  
 follow: p. 24, 1. 117)

Eller alone. He coughed, he spat under the lee, he wiped his skin to  
 his stomach's napkin. "I'll notice you, skipper <sup>that</sup> as you are," he thought,  
 thrusting his nose in his stomach's napkin. "I'll notice you," he repeated  
 to himself. An ardent fervor flamed in his olive-rose-like pupils.  
 He had no real grudge against the captain, but if the old finger got pol-  
 luted with his drug one of these days he was bound to feel bad — the  
 stomach knew that pretty well. A physician who takes off his three  
 glasses of medicine, one at noon, one at night and one in between, isn't  
 worth a rap. Who does he think he <sup>is</sup> very the pretty good man from South-  
 west? The stomach did not quite know who that father Jupiter was  
 and if there is any advantage in springing from his thigh, but he had  
 heard it mentioned by people who knew their business, so it must be true,  
 as for instance the saying "He takes notice of every <sup>thing</sup> he does" or something  
 like that. For twelve years now the stomach had been waiting at all  
 sorts of ships, he knew pretty well <sup>that</sup> skipper gave no suppers, and cap-  
 tain Juan Oliver was no better nor worse than any other old badly afflicted.  
 "Not of course that we'd stop him from smothering his death," the stomach  
 thought, rubbing his nose in his stomach's napkin. "And the others too,  
 sure as hell, the others too will kick the bucket, no mistake, they will,  
 and how <sup>is</sup> still a long way off." He gazed at the shaggy man as though  
 to spot an invisible collection, then coughed, bent over double. He said  
 they had a grudge against the crew, not even against Albo the mascot, but  
 he wouldn't move the smallest pot in the stomach's room if, as it may  
 happen, one and all fall overboard or break a leg or something like that.  
 He showed his throat, spat under the lee, and knocked on Odrege's door.

Though he prided himself on his Spanish <sup>secretary</sup> ~~secretary~~, finally picturing  
 them as restless navigators and businessmen who conquered the West Indies,



Look thing! Sample sold  
Signed up?

When Father O'Sullivan returned to the ship, at a time the Yahonga still  
out a downed figure, he was thirty four. Captain John O'Sullivan was not  
overjoyed with the new recruit assigned to him by the ship's command. Seem-  
ing to him suspicious, he did not care for greenhorns, and that Father O'Sullivan  
had nothing to say still was from the printer's; but it was no business  
of his to question the Company's decisions, and after all O'Sullivan proved  
to be a good man with a belief. Brightest out with under the Yahonga  
weighed under for the first time, and on her way home she was to call at  
Saginaw for a cargo of fish and oil. For the new engine it might have  
been a short successful voyage, if only because the Yahonga, her old  
friend, was not with her, usually remained a year or more at sea without  
leaving for St. Louis. O'Sullivan proved efficient, he knew how to  
sell and make and make, was not too young at all, a man who

not familiar with  
"bubbling in"  
any more!

captain noted highly, and though his presence was not particularly agreeable, neither was it offensive. However, at the beginning of the second month of war, in the midst of a storm between Faros and Santa Islands, Qingshi took to bed with a sore ear and tooth ache, and for three weeks, until the Yallanga reached Shanghai, he was not to be seen in the engine-room. The steward, who should have died to him through the door of his cabin, the steward -- his pin-stripe-like pupils dilated with fever -- said the engineer would surely die or something like that. It was difficult to know what was ailing him, for Qingshi allowed no one, <sup>to</sup> ~~near~~ he had so he spent his whole time, and occasionally he would be heard coming to the window of his room. In Shanghai, helped by the Company's representatives, and after various bargaining with the sanitary authorities, the captain obtained that Qingshi be hospitalized in the International Sanatorium. When the captain happened to think of this incident, his steady lip would part and with pleasure he would hear that his engineer was sitting with... again, he had almost choked with laughter. -- There! a sailor got red of mortification by an almost bounding a child still holding its pistol! ~~Indeed~~... To cut a long story short, the Yallanga had sailed towards Saigon, leaving Qingshi behind, and it took him about a year to regain the freighter he missed, when he arrived about the 15th of May, a sister-ship of the Company.

On the Yallanga all hands marvelled at his looks. Qingshi had put on weight, his ear had gone, a deep smiling line graced his brow, but above all the sound of his voice struck the ears, leaving them with a vague uneasy feeling. Now robust, steady, sure, it was heard unexpectedly, ~~usually~~ in unobtrusive. No longer pitched at middle register, it quivered in every key, as though some object stuck in his throat choked and stammered his vocal words. It was rather surprising... The captain

captain roared loudly, and though his presence was not particularly agreeable, neither was it offensive. However, at the beginning of the second week of war, in the midst of a storm between Norway and South Island, Gidrup took to bed with a sore ear and tooth ache, and for three weeks, until the Yalland reached Shanghai, he was not to be seen in the engine-room. The steward, who showed some food to him through the door of his cabin, the steward — his glass-eyes-like pupils dilated with sorrow — said the engineer would surely die or something like that. It was difficult to know what was ailing him, for Gidrup almost <sup>to some</sup> no one, until he had as to speak terrified himself, and occasionally he could be heard coming to the medicine of his room. In Shanghai, helped by the Company's representatives, and after various dealings with the railway authorities, the captain obtained that Gidrup be hospitalized in the International Dispensary. When the captain happened to think of this incident, his fleshy lip would part and with pleasure bearing that his engineer was stricken with... now, he had almost choked with laughter. — Recall a sailor put out of association by an ailment bounding a child still pulling the pants! (Gidrup)... It was not a long story short, the Yalland had sailed towards Odessa, leaving Gidrup behind, and it took him about a year to rejoin the freighter in China, where he arrived aboard the Shan Shu, a sister-ship of the Yalland.

In the Yalland all hands marvelled at his lapse. Gidrup had put on weight, his hair had gone, a deep winding line grooved his brow, but above all the sound of his voice struck the crew, leaving them with a vague memory fading. Some rubbed, some, some, it was heard unexpectedly, something in mid-air. No longer pained at stable register, it quivered in every leg, as though some object stuck in his throat strained and vibrated his vocal cords. It was rather surprising... The captain

looked his wife and daughter to pull at his elbow. When Ginzburg uttered the  
 "I was executed on today," the five made among his lips in five dis-  
 tinct tones. "Ginzburg" exclaimed Jean Giffes in reply. The first note,  
 Rafael Costa, always first of a five-man, declared that "Jean Giffes  
 Ginzburg had learned ventriloquism at the hospital in Shanghai," but the en-  
 gineer's glance made him eat his words and word him (from ever having a  
 thing at Ginzburg's expense.) This quiet yet energetic retort pleased  
 the captain, who had gratified whenever the first note was taken down a  
 peg, and though the engineer's voice had become doubly more disagree-  
 able he did not mind his being heard. Besides, since he and Ginzburg sat  
 only at ventilation and the latter quoted his words for the sole purpose of  
 setting, the <sup>picture of Ginzburg's</sup> ~~voice of~~ Mr. Talbot was restricted to the run in the boiler-  
 and engine-room, a state of affairs which in no way belated the ~~engineer's~~  
 wife's mother.

From Maine to San Francisco, from Newcastle to Naples, from Boston to London, the Illinois quietly passed along, and with no more fuss than would be the most two or three years passed by. Outraged and provoked, his figure grew stouter and his voice thicker; obviously, he had <sup>learned</sup> attended. His cheeks seemed pinked, his nose only <sup>learned</sup> thicker, but their hair and, to say it, they turned white and very <sup>learned</sup> not unusual for an engineer, he to be an officer. Though he was entitled to a yearly vacation he would fore-  
sight that privilege, and then perhaps the Illinois would have <sup>learned</sup> would eventually stand out at the previous part of call. Getting off and on the ship at places sometimes <sup>learned</sup> wide apart he would take long and early preparations rather than not fast at Pacific Ocean, and that it seemed he spent his holidays. This little game did not fail to indulge the captain, the first mate and the crew; yet, as the ship-carrying vessel as

The Company's policy... that was private business...

17

or  
Anyhow, it was  
nothing as a  
general ship.

objections, Juan Salvo had to follow suit. (The strategists indeed had to think the Company had some private reasons for giving Odessa a free hand. Why, they might even find the planish profitable, if only because Odessa did not draw a penny during his tenure. So that on it say, this was a change, it was saying you looked at it. It was a peculiar deal in everybody's view. The crew, divided by divergent opinions, gauged into several factions the day before last, his study last night, look to spreading an idea of his, a rich prescriptive idea of his, to wit, that the engineer might well be a revolutionary leader hiding on the Yallanda in expectation of a presidential election. As to Juan Salvo, he tended to think that this man Odessa must have a somewhat less gradualist motive to show the law of his country's estate, fraudulent bankruptcy, perhaps assault and battery...

But, one day, one day, the Yallanda happened to be in the water. The Yallanda kept standing her hull on the water, the sun traveled round the Yallanda, the sun traveled with her and flew, and nothing worth mentioning happened aboard; nothing worth, except that from year to year Odessa put on flesh, that his voice thickened up, that captain Juan Salvo's voice grew worse, that the first mate Rafael Costa executed a revolutionary coup, that the radio operator despaired to live his day of glory inter-rupting an S.O.S. message, that the steward did not despair to meet all bodies to the ship and he himself went to life insurance; local events indeed, not at variance with the ordinary growth routine of a freighter that between two continents. Thus the Yallanda was about to valiantly wind up her twenty-fifth year at sea without further ado than aging on the daily beat, when a most peculiar incident came to disturb the trans-acting business on board.

The steward and the cook first called attention to the strange and







up like aetherial, his eyes were ringed with grey and his lips swollen.  
"That's what it is..." he said, giving his employer a reassuring kiss. He  
nursed a wound on the peckery deck "Whatever the trouble, no matter how  
long, behold, we'll be wrecked blind." The steward smiled complacently,  
he knew it sure enough, no matter how heavy you are in the engine-room  
you'll still kick the bucket before the steam or something like that.

One hour later, saying thanks to the captain, he stood on tiptoe and  
solemnly announced:

"Mr. Lieutenant Quirgo is becoming blind."

The captain took a wily sip, told the steward he was a good-for-  
nothing, foretold he would die on the gallows. "Well, well!" thought the  
steward, drunk used to being called names. "For old age," he thought.  
"You sickly old (buster), I'll outlive you my dog!" Thereupon, laggard and  
garrulous, he disclosed that Quirgo was peering the deck with an electric  
lamp, stopping this and that, not knowing a man from another, jump-  
ing like windmills and gear, quite unable to find his way to the engine-  
room... The captain listened, drank his liquor and did not believe the  
first word of it; but when the cook, out of his wife, came and (upheld) the  
steward's tale, the captain started to wonder. He dismissed the two men,  
straightened his cap and walked down on to the deck.

He saw nothing peculiar that night; yet the facts were confirmed by  
the boatswain and Rafael Costa, who from the poop-deck witnessed the in-  
cident. The boatswain said he was caught napping by Quirgo's light,  
placed as it were on the spot, and finally freed after reaping a valley  
of curves. -- So, he didn't peak at whisky. No, he didn't seem overly  
excited. With a wry smile and paternal hesitation Rafael Costa hinted  
that if, all in all, his idea of a promiscuous talk value, it was quite  
possible Quirgo had started rehearsing in view of the day he would take

over the ship. "Quirpa I" thought Juan Calves, more annoyed at the  
 mate's remarks than at the engineer's antics. He sent for Quirpa,  
 called him to account. It took a good deal of arguing before Quirpa said  
 he had suspected some flaky business about; but he would not disclose  
 what business, nor why he found it flaky. It was preposterous, as  
 showed as Costa's showed instructions, and anyway Quirpa overstepped  
 the mark by making the rounds. The captain didn't know what to make of  
 it, he couldn't get a thing out of that fat stubborn animal, not a  
 thing at any rate by scolding him. Juan Calves was too well seasoned  
 a sailor to believe in the efficacy of threats, you might as well flare  
 up at a barometer reading stormy weather. It worried him. He noted  
 with irritation that his authority had no grip upon the surly darkness  
 behind which Quirpa was estranged. He was not even sure he had the  
 prerogative to order Quirpa off the Gallegria. That quarta second Quirpa  
 day, he was to all appearances in good odor with the ship-owners. You  
 needed iron-clad facts, facts the company could not overlook, as for  
 instance professional deficiency. But then Quirpa was a good engineer,  
 at home with high and low pressures, and he knew how to squeeze the most  
 out of the Gallegria's asbestos boilers. He had a psychic sense of  
 sorts for engine-fallows; just by listening to the piston-strokes he  
 could predict to the minute the jacking of a valve, of a cog. As for  
 charging him with repeated breaches of sailing regulations... In the  
 course of his long career Juan Calves had come to know many a taciturn  
 fellow, and since he himself often preferred the solitude of his bridge  
 to the company of men he could hardly have him fired on the ground that  
 Quirpa kept him for days on end. When Quirpa took to playing with his  
 lamp and ~~persecuted~~ the next evening, and the evening after, and all the  
 other evenings that had spread over the seas, Juan Calves thought he finally  
 got his man. However, since several reports to the Company had re-  
 mained unanswered, he abandoned the engineer to his nocturnal whims.

at roughly twice he would bob up in front of a man, utter a long into the other's face, spit him in silence and say in his terrible thin voice:

"What are you up to here, Andromeda?"

Upon which he would turn off his light and disappear.

III

"Andromeda" thought Juan Galvez as he minded at a cigar with his porcelain teeth. "Andromeda" These bastards were poisoning him. He passed up and down his narrow cabin, furious at the cook, that bastard son of a bastard, furious at the steward, that thief son of a thief, the one spoiling his stay till your stomach was a-fire, the other sly enough to pinch up your unfortunate water! He rang the bell, ordered a drink which had brought to his mouth an after-taste of plume sauce. "Andromeda, goddammit!" He had called Quiroga in and now he was at a loss what to do with him, standing there, hands in his pockets, his enormous frame propping up the wall like an emergency beam.

Hands in his pockets!... Juan Galvez was not a stickler for etiquette, he didn't give a rap for the external tokens of respect due to a sea-captain, but Quiroga's irreverence verged on affront. The steward poked his wasp-like face through the door, was hailed a thief, met with the promise of a hangman's noose watching his sorry neck, disappeared with a complacent smile. Quiroga kept on, his jaw filed bravely, his back washed a third of the partition. The captain strode back and forth, using his best to soothe his blood, doing his best to <sup>regulate</sup> his outburst of anger which blurred his sight. Goddammit, he was not a peccadogger, too generous of sailors lucky enough to have

called under his command would testify to it in all honesty, but he looked from -- at least whatever <sup>of it</sup> reached the skipper's bridge. Any worthy captain knows that a ship at sea is not a nursery, and Jean Galvez prided himself on understanding a few basic facts of life. On board they baffle, fight, get drunk, but -- he sail with all among other things they attend to their jobs, and once the shores are out of sight they will paddle the old bar till she reaches new shores. Provided his craft was on the right track, Jean Galvez knew better than to meddle with the crew's private affairs.

The steward brought a bottle of gin, a flask of rum, and a glass of brandy, which he handed out of sight smiling complacently. Quirque wiped his mustache, the captain walked from one <sup>side</sup> of the deck to another, fighting off ~~blows~~ and anger. "Damn!" he felt like shouting into Quirque's face. "Damn!" he felt like shouting at his chief engineer who stood there motionless, silent and massive as a totem. "Is there any to be said?" What a pity you couldn't find out an officer like a plain steward... let it was simple, the captain's stateroom, simple and devoid of fancy speculations: down there, beneath the steep ladder which led to the commander's heights let the deck be at dagger drawn with the stanchion, let them split in to gnaw, gnaw their pay, trade blows or scuffle together. -- ~~hurry~~ the law at sea was broad enough as long as the craft ran smoothly and the captain was spared arbitrating the matter below. He couldn't imagine a more frustrating and for that matter humiliating situation, than to witness over loaded guns, a black eye, a violent pair of pants. A man could break a couple of ribs, fall headlong into a hold, burn himself to the bone, -- ~~anything~~ provided they didn't bother the captain, nothing was of importance. It was clear-cut, understandable, and certainly the crew preferred that responsibilities be thus neatly defined. In

the other hand, the pettiest squabble turned into a formidable affair as soon as the skipper's authority was dragged into it. Peace, well-being, sleep -- all crumbled. Though he didn't go as far as to make the Company for advice, he was none the less bound to hear both sides, interrogate witnesses, inflict penalties, ferret out someone on discipline, and so forth; to top it all, he must spend endless nights writing reports, and the clear result of all that hissing was of course aggravation for everybody, himself included. But when perchance an officer got himself into a row, when such an unheard-of thing occurred on his ship, Juan Gilvez felt that among the variations of his master's will was an honest captain in the exercise of his duties, worried of that kind were most apt to hasten his death.

Anger thumped at the captain's temples, hissing distended the captain's stomach. It was high time he put an end to Quiraga's feeling around. As officer, he <sup>was</sup> to be skilful with a wrench, and in fiercer with the ship-cannons, had to abide by the rules of the game. That Quiraga, it was a fact, he could handle a wrench, but he handled blunder with even greater ease. Ah, to hail with ship-cannons spreading in their swivel-chairs! To hail with them and their protégé! Juan Gilvez had a notion that his patience -- and the crew's -- was giving out. He could, if need be, forgive the engineer his lack of a circus wrestler, his trill of a voice, his devices of a spectacle man. But now that Quiraga carried out his nonsense to the point of assaulting a member of the crew, it was no longer <sup>just a quarrel at a particular point</sup> a matter of jokes or whims. At 2.30 p.m., within sight of Lisbon, shortly after the harbor's pilot had taken off in his tug, Quiraga rose from table, went quietly down to the boiler-rooms and proceeded to struggle the Russian sailor scuttled in Liverpool. The man-

"handle blunder" implies he was good at settling disputes, making up to maintain etc.  
That Quiraga, it was a fact, he could make those engines do anything, but he was even better at making trouble.



her-lands, an officer and the second engineer witnessed the scene, but before they could interfere the Russian had broken loose and grabbed a tool in self-defence. The four men said they heard Gidrege mutter "My elephants... my elephants...", and the officer, who understood some English, translated (for the captain) Demikoff's intention, adding that he crossed his string of profanities with "is to the elephants, you filthy, you can shoot them up your arse!" The captain <sup>repeated</sup> cross-questions of them separately, then all together, sent for the Russian. Demikoff recounted the incident, denied offending Gidrege in the least, explained how the very evening he boarded ship it happened the engineer blinded him with his confounded lamp, slapped him, then yelled he wanted the presentation of one or perhaps several elephants. Well, no, he didn't want to make a fuss of it, having been told the men was given to provoking nightly, lantern in hand. Of course, he had not the slightest idea for what kind of elephants the officer <sup>had in mind</sup> ~~blinded~~. "If that's so," inquired the captain, "how come you yourself have been heard mentioning elephants?" Demikoff said he had done so unwittingly, as a mere retort flung at the officer's head. Before he was dismissed he asked the captain for permission to disembark at the next port of call, "because," he said, "I'll just have to throw your man overboard if he takes a fancy to strangle me once more."

Such was the state of things when, out of all prisoners and rather furious, the captain took upon himself to drain the shooses. That Gidrege must either fold up his Russian act, or resign. He stopped in front of the ward short and, back turned to the engineer, he said:

"Now, what's all that strangling business about?"

Gidrege neither moved nor answered. The captain spun round, and



a sharp glance at him, shrugged his shoulders. "She or some other?" he said, pouring himself a drink. Looking through the port-hole, Gidrops didn't deign to speak. The floor of the cabin vibrated with the heavy churn of the propeller. "Answer when your skipper addresses you!" commanded Jean Calves.

He wiped off his lip, and his finger suddenly <sup>dropped</sup> ~~clashed~~ against his thigh <sup>with a clatter</sup>. He felt energetic and quite determined to put that Julian Gaidrops Gidrops in his place. The master within him was getting the better over the tired apathetic man. He helped himself to more gin, lit a cigar. "Monsieur!" he thought softly.

"Gidrops, you just had a run with a lumberhead. I hate such trouble about my ship. I demand of you a detailed account. I'm listening."

Gidrops reacted no more than if he had been deaf and dumb and blind. The captain clattered and unclattered his fist, laid his hand flat on the table:

"Order Gidrops, if you persist keeping silent I'll have you arrested for attempted murder."

But a knock stirred in Gidrops's hairless chest. Jean Calves waited for a while, then rang the bell. Almost immediately the door swung open and the steward entered. The captain was about to give an order, when <sup>while</sup> the tall figure of Charles Verlain leaned in the passageway. He pushed the steward aside and announced:

"A wire from the Company, Sir."

Jean Calves took the sheet, read the message. Gladly as a professional agitator, more as a carp, Gidrops peered at the port-hole at the white frothing sea. Smiling complacently, the steward yanked his reluctant-like

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1

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that Quiroga had been chosen head of the new Republic. Why not? What's it to be but a huge cock-and-bull story passing in circles? Why not instead that a nice coincidence... And a lucky stroke for the crew by the way. As for himself, the new President might even entrust him with a high position in the Navy... His thoughts ran on that he couldn't keep up with them. He dashed forward and entered the captain's cabin.

The sight of Quiroga, impressive and <sup>effrontery</sup> as if <sup>disdainful</sup>, the sight of the captain, tense and <sup>effrontery</sup> as if <sup>disrespectful</sup>, <sup>confirmed</sup> the first mate <sup>in</sup> the merits of his speculation. However, he didn't have the opportunity to congratulate the President, to pay him homage: the captain's words took care of his very last sighings:

"The stops at Havana and Colon are cancelled. Wire the Company while received, falling heading directly Puerto Rincón. Save the ship's bearings taken and proceed accordingly. That's all."

Rafael Costa went out backwards, lifting his leg high over the plinth. He bumped into the steward who, eavesdropping behind the door, stifled his cough in his steward's apron. He panted joyfully at his ribs, rushed down the ladder. Five minutes later all hands aboard were seething with excitement: the first mate had proclaimed sternly that the Revolutionary National Council had just invested as ruler Adnan Klados Quiroga as its President and that an air squadron was to escort the Epilante into Puerto Rincón.

Meanwhile, in the captain's cabin, Quiroga had flushed crimson on hearing of the ship's altered course, and Juan Calvo saw the moment when his man would at last speak up. In fact, Quiroga flipped his whitish hands <sup>in</sup> a series of disconnected gestures, opened his mouth as though to fill it with air and mumbled:

"Yes... You cannot do such a thing..."

He took a step, leaned his trunk from forward, hands upon, arms stuck to his thighs. Jean Salves nodded questioningly, as if wondering whether he could indeed do such a thing. Rather anxious to put an officer under arrest, he would never forget all about it, but of course he was master on his board and had the power to do whatever he deemed right and in compliance with <sup>the very</sup> international sea regulations.

"Quirpa," he said, "you'd force me to it. Nobody could distract me from putting you under arrest if such is my will. Why did you attempt to strangle that Russian bunko-hand?"

"Yes... you cannot head towards Puerto Barrios!" yelled Quirpa in his thin voice. "You can't compel me to go there! I must <sup>go there</sup> (Siambar)! Have the ship pull in at the first port of call!"

He was standing a yard from the captain, his pupils dilated, his hands upon as if to receive an offering. Jean Salves threw out his chest. Blood rushed to his congested face.

"Caradai!" he thundered. "You're overstepping the mark! The ship's course is none of your business! I don't meddle with whatever takes you ship here, that's your concern, but for sure I'll steer the craft as I shall find it fit! Quirpa, for the last time, will you answer..."

"I won't go to Puerto Barrios!" exploded Quirpa. He belated himself tighter and his voice thinned out till it became almost inaudible. Then, pulling himself together, he breathed noisily and uttered:

"That man isn't... isn't a bunko-hand... He stole my elephants... He was hired to steal my elephants... my..."

His voice broke down. Jean Salves stared at him with infinite curiosity. "That stocky little fellow, maybe he's wise!" he thought. "How-

trai Five years aboard with a loop! For the second time in his life the Valiente's skipper almost passed out with uncontrollable laughter. He gripped the table, his body loosened into countless little joyful jerks, while from his wide open mouth laughter trailed forth in an avalanche of hissing. "In-oh-re!" His hands returned, leaning toward the captain as if mesmerized by his false teeth. Quiroga was puffing heavily. Out of breath, Juan Galvez slumped into his chair. "A story to tell the pulc at the club... Some story..." He nipped his forehead, breathless still, but quite relaxed. He felt in a jolly mood.

"And these elephants?" he asked genially. "Those elephants, do they mean much to you?"

Quiroga flipped his hands wildly, and the next thing Juan Galvez knew he had disappeared. For a moment the captain thought he would look him up after all; but the Valiente was on her way home, so he decided it was simpler to leave things as they were, pending Quiroga's final discharge in Puerto Hermano. He rung for the steward, told him to bring a bottle of rum, and proceeded to enter the day's events into his log-book.

#### IV

#### The Journal of Don Juanito Quiroga de Gallegos y Quiroga

( Excerpt )

1925.

May 21. Unbelievable! Stupendous! J. told me he loved our father,



207 <sup>3</sup> ~~5~~ Once more I. found me to Las Comas Bay. You'd think he  
knows <sup>enough</sup> but was righteously spot, that bay, but was emphatically terrible,  
<sup>(and a wonderful experience to)</sup> you (wonderfully) Mary Stuart, queen of the Scots. I wonder why  
<sup>(wonderfully)</sup> marvelously! If he doesn't invent something else, I guess I'll end up  
loathing all bays, all the queens of the Scots.

July 22. As usual, we were back shortly before midnight. On the last bench in the boat he likes to hold my hands, to feel my hand on his shoulder. But there all he seems to keep quiet. To-day, though, he spoke about his mother. She had, he said, golden hair, shiny eyes, a laughing mouth. (I was <sup>live</sup> sad.) And, of course, just as Mary Stuart, queen of the Scots. I must remember to get a picture of that lady. To ensure

August 21. J. seems more grim than usual. He didn't open his mouth the whole evening. I wonder what drives me to him. He is so grim, seems so tormented, I feel like shooting him up as you would a howling child. His love... He hasn't mentioned it since... since about that he ever said a word about it? Oh, on reading this wouldn't you think I regret it? It's plain enough! Yet I believe he stirs my curiosity. It's really curious about him about his odd reactions, his very body. About the waxy feeling he gives me, <sup>something</sup> quite akin to a shudder of fear. Maybe I'll know more when he kisses me. But will he?

Richardson While J. holds my hands I won't the lights on the beach till my eyes close, I listen to the water splashing against the boat till my ears close. His cramped feet bend to toe, I choose to drift into slumber and because he never a finger, I say:

*"Education is power for your thought."*



Julian, naturally, was thinking of me. Filling his arms, he wrapped me up in his thoughts.

September. Yesterday, just before taking leave, he said:

"Rosalia, you must part with don Ricardo Callegas y Santres..."

There was such astonishment on my face, it made him blink. (That I part with my husband! But what is he saying for? I can't be satisfied that to see him once or twice a week I (take up) drinks at the seminario, childbearing for my friends, mourning for my father.)

"You like that old man better than me, Rosalia." He hurt my fingers, saying that. And he was handsome, my little Julian. He was at last, like a man.

October 1st. To-night, hardly were we in the house

"Rosalia, if you don't part with don Ricardo Callegas y Santres, I'll kill him."

For a second I had the impression he was about to hit me; instead, he rummaged in his pockets and produced a gun. I had a silly reaction: I surprised as though (I was the one he meant to suppress.) And it was I who rushed in his arms and hugged him tight. My heart was pounding wildly. And delightfully. I remained still as a post, and he didn't utter a word till we were back in town. I managed to have him leave his gun in the house.

"Rosalia," he said, "don Ricardo Callegas y Santres is twenty years older than you. I can't bear your neglecting me for that substitution pettiard."

My husband's preserved gentleman-killer is not only dumb at times, he is also blind. It isn't getting my father.

October 22. I bought a new gun. A big firearm. I threw it in the water.

Julian  
my husband

you a general term -  
"santa of course"  
modified slightly  
style.



it [all the more readily (as he could better conceal)]

"But what is it you tried to conceal from her, Allan?"

"Nothing she might have found in my pockets," he said rather evasively.

I tried to reason with him, to convince him that his idea of seduction had taken shock. (I was well inspired not to antagonize, even to pretend giving in.) I asked for time to think it over, then not even to think it over; to get ready, then not even to get ready; just to go and fetch my jewels, then just to go and kiss my younger brother good bye.

As we were about to part (till to-come!), all of a sudden I had the feeling J. was almost happy I was not sleeping with him here and now...

What a mess, holy father of God!

(Excellent idea to write it all in this notebook. If Ricardo comes to hear, they'll see for sure it's not my fault.)

January 11. Pilar was right! Her scheme proved perfectly successful: an abduction is irreversible, because vindictive as I know him, my husband would have no hesitated done by the whole detective force in Europe and America, forcing me to reintegrate -- as they say -- the matrimonial <sup>conjugal</sup> ~~domestic~~ <sup>domestic</sup> ~~circle~~ to render my husband isn't the proper solution either, because Ricardo's ghost would stand between J. and me forever after; on the other hand that Ricardo is old, closer to his grave than to a second youth; he's afflicted with gravel, gout, rheumatism and torticolis (together with Pilar we looked up a medical encyclopaedia); I expect to inherit his money, say if he dies with God's help, and J. and I shall live Jove's young dream side by side... J., holding my hands, kept silent.

Oh! What a few months' respite. Dear, dear Pilar!

luckily I didn't take  
it with my head &  
outgoing side, and  
even went as far  
as to pretend going  
in.

March 12. Could you dream of a better friend than Pilar? What a  
brilliant girl! I followed her advice more and told Father every-  
thing. I asked him to help us get rid of J. I was a little worried  
about how he would take my confidence. How did that? He took it in  
the best possible way. It was almost too good -- but maybe I am mistaken  
-- there was a playful glaze behind those beautiful tortoiseshell glasses  
as he heard of. In fact, he was completely charmed. (It isn't his  
look that is so convincing...) He surely asked me questions...

"What's that... young man's business?"

"He's a technician in one of Mother's magazines."

"What about him to correct? He'll go to Father's, the fact there  
is no line as the flower in Paris. Besides I'll give your father a  
little thought."

April 12. I'd have expected more resistance. You'd think that in  
spite of his education and tender years, J. grabbed the idea of depart-  
ure or you would a life-long. What a character... I just can't make  
him out. Of course, he appears but I think it was more pretence. It's  
frustrating. Well, he ~~must~~ leave within a few days about one  
of Father's magazines. As I shall say, I promise. With his idea of  
a newspaper, the conflict he broods on, his vision of playing the con-  
queror, coupled with a restrained, a confident ~~and~~... ah, no-  
more said, he gets on my nerves. I refuse to ~~be~~ ~~any~~ ~~long~~ ~~with~~ ~~him~~

April 22. I went to the pier. During a sentimental display, I invited  
Pilar along. Well, I don't know his strength and strength, my little Je-  
sus! He was standing next to a lump, while Pilar poked up and  
down close by. Chany, without me, J. kept silent. I suppose he had a  
few things to say. He could have mentioned his passion, his ~~work~~, he

unless you have  
some behavior  
over on, a number  
'saw how' or 'that'  
would have made  
appropriate.

could have demanded a pledge of everlasting fidelity, and what not. But not half South light, he just held my hands. I could see, between the hanger and a wring, the ship's pump-deck where two men kept glancing at us -- probably watching wranglers. So I, to put J. at his ease and boost his prestige in the minds of those fallen up there, I put my hand on his shoulder and gave him a quick kiss. Well, not far off, he took a peal of laughter which sent the two men leaning over the rail. J. turned livid as though he were about to faint. Delightful try!!

Shortly before he embarked I gave him the ship I wore on my finger, a beautiful solid gold jewel. "Keep this as a token of me." I thought it would make him happy. He waved, then literally snatched it out of my hands. He'd have thought he was going to trample it. He went aboard without uttering a word, without once turning back.

What an ugly freighter, that Yelagid.

March. I hear J. is sick. Supposed to have been let off somewhere in China. Wrote him a note to cheer him up.

1920.

September. Father mentioned to-day that J.'s skipper reports J.'s acting queer. Big deal! Father says he ought have to put him ashore. It speaks for.

December. According to father, J. refuses to spend his time off back home. What kind of quirk is that! Well, all the better! Father complained it's aggravating; it means up bookkeeping, etc. I wonder why. I insisted at length that J. be left alone. Father is a push.

1920.

May 18. Father states that J. -- my "young man", as he calls him --

My dear girl  
1921 to 1922



though he's a good engineer, makes a poor sailor. The skipper complains  
at J.'s pushing quarrels with the crew. (That skipper exaggerates, I  
am sure.) Be that as it may, there's a good reason not to rescue J.  
from his ship. I asked father whether he'd prefer that J. pick a <sup>fight</sup> ~~fight~~  
with Ricardo. Or with us.

1932.

February. I believe J. has forgotten me well and good. He hasn't  
written for three years.

When, off the Farallon Islands, Odruga was stricken with scurvy and  
consequently put ashore in Shanghai, he thought that wild attempt had  
~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> the debt to release him from his now and hateful occupation. He  
strongly regretted following Emilia's advice. He wouldn't deny any  
more how he had let himself be talked into it. He hardly remembered the  
reasons Emilia invoked to encourage him taking to <sup>the</sup> sea. To travel after,  
waiting afar for Don Ricardo Gallagos y Sordas to pass on, he felt he  
had agreed to that in a state of utter thoughtlessness. He swore he  
would go home as soon as he left the hospital and take Emilia with  
him, away from her husband. As far as he knew, he was over that of  
such a stupid ailment as his, and he was sure he would be rid of it in  
no time; but three weeks of acute pain and belated regrets awfully  
worsened his condition. He was quarantined, had to undergo an operation,  
then a second one, and then at last he was not free of all phenomena

had altered the tonal quality of his speech. He noticed with astonishment <sup>that</sup> he didn't know his own voice; it was as if a stranger were talking through his lips. At a loss, his physician could not or would not explain to him that oddity; he evaded the issue, bent about the bush, then finally declared that from the cellular tissues which coat the parotid gland, the germ might have migrated into his vocal organs. Osrope took alarm, took exception, demanded that he be cured. Kept under observation, he spent several months at the hospital, hoping after Rosalba's letters which had grown scarce, hoping after a recovery which had grown doubtful. Not only was his voice waiting away, but furthermore he put on pounds of unhealthy flesh. They finally assured him there was nothing to worry about, that he would soon get over it, that he should at once avoid tiring his throat, and that the air of the open sea would do the trick. -- A year after entering the hospital at Shanghai he rejoined the Heligra moored in Kieny and weekly resumed his duties aboard the freighter packed to the limit with smelly bales of wool.

In his present state, he wouldn't think of going back to Rosalba. No doubt, she loved him; no doubt, she would have borne the unpleasant tonality of his new voice; -- yet he was vaguely scared at the idea of facing Rosalba. He had not disclosed in his letters the symptoms of his ailment whose nature, besides, he didn't know, and she in turn avoided asking questions which might embarrass him. Osrope thought one <sup>could</sup> explain about a fracture, a pneumonia; but how does one <sup>ever</sup> confess a thing which leaves you with a feeling of wastel? He realized that in spite of the doctors' forecast his voice withered month after month, and that slowly but surely he was putting on weight. He ate less, maintained an almost stolid silence. It was of no avail. And he ate, he look decent,

went to sleep twice a day, he discovered with real English still another affliction: the struggle of his pillow system.

How?  
He feared he was under a hallucination, then he feared he would lose his mind. In his cabin, door locked and port-holes closed, he would feel his belly, massage his throat, pinch his cheeks. The image in the looking-glass was indeed his, but barely so, as though reflected by a distorting mirror. When time came for his vacation, instead of going home he ran to Paris, consulted ten doctors, had blood-tests taken, revealed off the story of his childhood, his adolescence, drilled upon his parents' and grandparents' case-histories. According to his notes, shook his head importantly and wrote prescriptions. From Southampton, where the *Helios* had last anchor for a few days, Odrops hurried to London, resumed his round of specialists: the allopathists stuffed him with drugs, the homeopaths inundated him with bastils, and all emptied his purse for him. He saw a healer in Hamburg, a quack in Prague, went on a pilgrimage to Lisieux. At Oche, a small country doctor wriggled with rheumatism and belated like a rope glided over a wire he had his sample, glided over an orchard he had his visit, asked: "How long since you went near a woman?" "Short... about three years and a half," said Odrops after a short hesitation. "And you've been at work?" "For almost two years." The physician plucked a pear from a branch: "Doesn't eating you much, does it? I mean women?" "No, not much," said Odrops, stopping short. "Not at all, does it?" "Not at all," confessed Odrops, turning pale. The doctor rubbed the fruit on his sleeve, had a sniff at it, took a bite. "That aren't quite ripe yet, dear sir; I don't dare offer you now." He scratched the back of his hands, patted a specialist who had come alongside, took a fresh bite at his pear. "Will get pretty good teeth, you know," he assured Odrops. Then, abruptly, his man-

used to show him a day, he discovered with real anguish still another affliction: the strop of his phren system.

learn?

He feared he was under a hallucination, then he feared he would lose his mind. In his cabin, over looked and port-hole blinded, he would feel his belly, massage his throat, pinch his cheeks. The image in the looking-glass was indeed his, but hardly so, as though reflected by a distorting mirror. When time came for his vacation, instead of going home he ran to Paris, consulted ten doctors, had bloodlets taken, read out the story of his childhood, his adolescence, drilled upon his parents' and grandparents' case-histories; several took notes, shook his head importantly and wrote prescriptions. From Southampton, where the Hyacinth had <sup>stayed</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>for</sup> a few days, Odrago hurried to London, resumed his round of specialists; the allopathists stuffed him with drugs, the homeopaths inundated him with tonics, and all accepted his purse for his. He saw a healer in Hamburg, a quack in Cologne, went on a pilgrimage to Lister. At this, a small country doctor crippled with rheumatism and tutored like a rope glacial over a vine he had his sample, glacial over an orchard he had his visit, asked: "How long since you went near a woman?" "About... about three years and a half," said Odrago after a short hesitation. "And you've been at sea?" "For almost two years." The physician picked a pear from a branch: "Doesn't notice you much, does it? I mean women?" "No, not much," said Odrago, stopping short. "Not at all, does it?" "Not at all," confessed Odrago, turning pale. The doctor rubbed the fruit on his sleeve, had a sniff at it, took a bite. "That wasn't quite ripe yet, dear sir; I don't dare offer you one." He scratched the back of his hands, patted a spud who had come alongside, took a fresh bite at his pear. "Still got pretty good teeth, you know," he assured Odrago. Then, abruptly, his man-

my head sideways: "Did your people hurt a lot?" Quiroga kept silent.  
 "They became quite swollen, didn't they?" Quiroga kept silent. They  
 took a few more steps and the old man placed another piece. "A physician  
 can't do a thing if he doesn't know the facts," he said. "Why don't  
 you tell the truth?" "What truth?" yelled Quiroga. "I don't know," the  
 country doctor said softly. "It wasn't me. Or if it was, it  
 got way down into your genitals." "Where is?" whispered Quiroga. "Into  
 your testicles, dear sir." Quiroga sat on a bench and started crying.  
 Over the sunset roofs of the small harbor, over the hilly countryside  
 laid out with vineyards, the sun was gilding the heavy grapes.

The more years passed, swallowed up by the <sup>midnight</sup> unglamorous sea. A  
 modest unit in the big family of trading vessels the Illuminé pulled her  
 pet-bellied hull on the crest of the water, and on her board lay  
 Quiroga's distress. His voice, his appearance, his odd behavior had  
 become too familiar for the crew to rouse heated controversies beneath  
 the low ceiling of their quarters. Though each man cursed his pet theme,  
 two main currents prevailed: the dark mist in Quiroga's predicament  
 some ill-fated love affair, and the engine-room — taking issue with  
 the deck on sheer principle — credited the officer with military pre-  
 tensions. On one point they did agree, though to avoid making jokes at  
 Quiroga when he was around, for fear of his quick heavy hand. He, some-  
 times, kept silent, all but starved himself, spent hours in front of his  
 mirror. Rosalia wrote seldom, yet she wrote happy days were in sight,  
 Don Ricardo Gallaga y Andres would be up, would be healthy; she  
 thought often and much of her darling Felicitas, prayed to her patron  
 saint that no harm befall him, asserted usually her indefatigable attach-  
 ment; she praised his pathos, his wisdom, begged him to persevere,  
 urged him not to come back before due time; she kissed him on his temples,  
 on his eyes, "on your pricking cheeks, your Rosalia your love!"



21

George despised her large wild head-dressing, covered quivers, and  
quarries, heaped her Ricardo Collage & Bantre's longevity, pressed  
to leave himself with <sup>his father</sup> ~~patience~~ <sup>patience</sup> were there. Progressively, this ex-  
change of letters acquired for him a quality proper to a seasonal rhythm.  
He considered it as to the fulfilment of a rite whose allegorical  
meaning he no longer understood, and he barely noticed that one day the  
correspondence ceased, as of itself dried up. Healia and her Ricardo,  
<sup>his father</sup> returning home and this vanished freighter, past and present and future  
dissolved in his mind into one single confused vision. He wouldn't be-  
lieve his was a real ailment, it was a curse they had cast on him —  
they, the doctors, the winds, the sea, a curse which was to vanish as  
rapidly as it had appeared. But he had to be alert, ready to act. It  
was as though they had locked him up into a skin which was not his own,  
as though invisible powers had forced him into a skin which was not his,  
and he contrived to peep slightly the ship's masts and masts, lantern  
in hand, terribly conscious he hunted bogaboos for he knew it was but a  
nightmare, his tormentors but dream-monsters. Yet he spent nights on end  
running from peep to peep, hiding in the shadow of the gangway, eye  
down, finger at the ready on the switch of his lamp, not out to posture  
as a lonely silhouette and frighten it by the darkness of his attack  
and the blinding of his lamp. Little by little this gave him great sa-  
tisfaction. Indifferent to the crew's rebuffs, to the anger he stirred  
up, openly quarrelsome, he pursued the struggle. Were the sea high or  
dead calm, the sky cloudless or swept by the winds, he would lie hidden  
in some dark corner, still, silent, eyes on the watch and ears pricked,  
in wait for the gangway guard who had taken hold of his body. During  
these lonely vigils, when the turn of his topleen blundered in with the  
shell, when beneath the shingles patch of the moon the sparkle of the

never blinded with the glow of his easy eyes, Qiruga felt as if he expanded marvellously, his limbs the stretch of a bridge, his chest the nave of a cathedral, and the sea was not vast enough to hold him, nor the <sup>expanses</sup> ~~expanses~~ powerful enough to stir his late raptures. Healed as a stone, he sank, fast root to the strongest waters of his anguishes -- and he smiled. Day night, day night the heart would beat, would pump like a glass under the heel. That day, that night, as he would permit sorrow, quietly, peacefully, the way you squash a lemon with your nail. And, changing her course at the erratic demands of maritime trade, the Ilumin withdrew the veil of smouldering hate.

It was Qiruga's fifth year at sea. One evening, as he searched for a new battery to fix on his light, he found at the bottom of a drawer a small encased purse. He looked at it over with interest, pulled the silken strings there, left in oblivion, neatly wrapped, needle's slip had waited for its fate to be accomplished. Heavy, polished, not sure he ever saw it before, Qiruga held the jewel at the tip of his fingers, ran his thumb along the delicate figure, felt it, rubbed it on the lapel of his pyjamas. Four tiny eyes made of black pearls stared at him with the distasteful sterility of things dead suddenly infused with life, and Qiruga sensed that slowly and in silent degrees the trinket's dark gaze distilled toxic vigor into his blood. His heart started thumping. He took a step, and as if intoxicated he staggered on the edge of his bunk; upright in the hollow of his hand, equal in their pentile-shaped legs, flanking their basin, the two elephants of the slip coiled into one around for him the luminous virility of all species alive. In a sudden flash the revelation came to Qiruga that the wealth of his strength and power was restored to him. His hand clenched the ship, and from his shoulder to the joints of his fingers his whole arm

of <sup>acquired</sup> ~~acquired~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ job.

quivered with lust.

Donforth, Odiroga's nocturnal partner, stripped of their initial  
negativity, acquired a new incentive. A light had crossed his mind,  
as dazzling as all that drew back in awe. He grasped that, in his pre-  
sent condition, he was the inverted image of the middle, virtue, deep-  
voiced authentic Odiroga; grasped that if he was prevented from return-  
ing home, from picking up the thread of his life where he left it, it  
was because they had strangled his dream — not him, the engineer, but  
him, Odiroga, the friend of Basile and the foe of Don Ricardo Calles  
y Sastre. — He was aboard. Thus, with an iron-clad conviction he  
continued his nightly rounds, determined at all costs to free himself,  
should he have to dismantle the ship. Redoubting in alertness, heedful  
that nothing leak out of his maneuvers, patient and crafty, he subjected  
the boat to methodical searches, roused the holds, probed the <sup>cargo</sup> freight,  
scrutinized <sup>holdings</sup> <sup>in the hold</sup> larders and cellars. Unknown to him, he revived the an-  
cient <sup>ghost</sup> <sup>of the man who lost his shadow</sup> <sup>body and soul</sup> passion of the  
pursuit of his true self, anxious to identify the eternal Julian  
Ricardo Odiroga in the features of those he encountered in the bow of his  
day, he knew he faced a rugged fight; yet the possession of his elephants  
~~was a guarantee of~~  
his nearest and ultimate victory.

One night, as he was entering his cabin after a lengthy investigation  
in the mail-chamber, he found the door ajar. This astonished and upset  
him at the same time. He was not in the habit of locking his door, it  
had never occurred to him, but at that moment he felt he had been unfor-  
tunately misled. He rushed to the drawer where he kept the clip. Did ~~He~~  
they ~~talk~~ with his elephants? With the symbol, the token of his an-  
thems? He became <sup>but</sup> perfectly that the virtue of his trophy was <sup>not</sup> the  
good of the army, and though no one should know of the clip, he feared

that from the captain's door to the mast all plotted to finish it from him. He checked the bolts on door and window, blocked the port-holes. Considering the noise involved, he thought of hundreds of ways he could stow the jewel, <sup>and then</sup> thought of some of hundreds of ways an entire ship could catch him. Three times, six times a day, he would shift the clip, now finding it safer between the mattress and the frame of his bunk, in a jar of hair-ties, in the bow of his bath-tub, now inside his slippers, in the thick of a bolster, in the hollow of a dead battery. He tried to loosen a plank in the wall, considered drilling holes in the table legs, but as no contrivance seemed fool-proof he decided to carry with him the elephantine. That would put them definitely out of reach.

It was in Liverpool, an hour or two before weighing anchor. After he fastened the clip on to his watch-chain Odgers went down to the engine-room, glanced at the pressure-gauges, gave orders to get up steam. A drizzle swept across the gangway as he returned into the deck. He buttoned up his jacket, patted his belly; it made him almost happy to feel the friendly curves of the jewel on his liver. He had just vowed never to part with his elephantine, that was an excellent idea, when an unfamiliar presence caught his attention. He knew what happened next: Odgers hurried forward, thrust his leg in the man's face. The stranger tried to dash, then aimed Odgers in a manner which made his head with a bang. There was a short brawl, and the elephantine vanished. Odgers was petrified with horror. Unable to utter a word, to make a gesture, positively annihilated, he let the stranger go -- go and set the seal to his wounds and when, whisked out of his grasp by the boatman's man who had come to pull in the commodore's ladder, Odgers started to dash after the thief, he had already disappeared to the crew's quarters. During the six days that followed Odgers executed a plan of action, and on the

"Fortunately, he didn't answer," I said.

I struck my neck, my throat, as if to remove the last marks of an evil hand. Some thirty men were listening, leaning against the green-colored walls of the foreman's, sitting in their beds and gathered around the table. Some were guffing, and his voice slipped beneath the huge steel ceiling, growing in its wake other guffers. I walked in spite of grief.

"Think it's funny?" I said to him in particular. "... Well, my heart was in my boots. I'll be happy if I know what he had up his sleeve when I last met that day. The Belinda was an old run down boat, <sup>nothing</sup> ~~not~~ altogether like your prize de luxe liner. As all objects there, no polished gongs, just a few ill-assorted shovels and a boiler fitted with three furnaces, three little portals as easily stuffed as a whale with pop-corn. Good heating surface, as obvious you'd say we were fired, up the North-American boiler and on, to keep it blasting at Hall's temperature. Now, there was a coal-baler for you!"

They listened in silence, somewhat incredulous it seemed. "I could be it for ten years, looked for the bear pitcher. I'll die of thirst in this point," I said. "I walked up my, helped myself to another



"The old bottle! The sun's hot, when there's at least in quiet waters, but what a bottle! It was about two o'clock, on a Saturday. We were feeding her without respite, watching her up-hill our arms nearly fell off, for no power had one of us imagined that the pressure would handle down. She'd wear she was looking through and through. The second engine, a white-haired giant with a foreman's jaw saw to it that things every half hour. The coal dumps were back of us, with each showed we had to spin round, left for the coal, right for the furnace -- a smoking-pit here, a smothering-pit there."

I mimicked the scene, looked at my hands intently, heaved up arms as though to help an invisible load, grabbed the pitcher. It was empty.

"No beer -- no story!" I said, knowing where I stood.

"The whistle more than you talk," said someone. "Here, and don't get around!"

He put a pitcher on the table, <sup>and</sup> where the golden froth of beer quivered in rhythm with the ship's vibration. I <sup>swigged</sup> a mug, then another, then still another one -- out of sheer brute force.

"What was I saying?" I asked.

"Something about your superheater," a voice growled.

"Yes, my superheater..." Well, to keep it warm you respect your crop of blisters. The pressure rusted off the bones where, the supply of water was erratic, so that besides stoking the furnace and watching the manometers we had to keep an eye on the water-gauge. The equipment did include a magnetic warning-system, but of course the first one rattled, or the relay burnt out, and the hand was inevitably reading five -- or past a number or any. All in all, we hardly had time to loaf. Once Liverpool the sea was rough, and that day the sun wind was as even yet

stuff almost analysis  
changing - slow for  
drinking - my without  
stopping (cheer yelling)

"could feel them there the worst heat the summer had been her about."

I stopped talking, to your speech was now over. They stared at me with round eyes as though they never heard of a ball beaten by any one. I clapped my thigh, shifted, moved, filled by my own.

"You're pretty embarrassed," I went on. "Your self didn't compare with your fighting them down, then let them down your line a little more, you can hardly hear them, but the Volunteer seemed up on a hill already, the driving shaft worked the whole work and the poor horse looked like a lashed mule. A hell of a destruction. I was hot, half roasted, dead tired. Drooping my head, I took off my shirt, wiped my face, cleared my throat, that doesn't do when you spit out — and it was then that the engineer tried to strangle me."

I stood up, took a few steps, sat back on the bench. I suddenly recalled that repeating my adventure with College spent no more than the events themselves. I wanted to collect my thoughts, change my words, but the man wouldn't give me a chance.

"Will right. And then what?" said somebody.

"Then..." I began to bite angrily the end of my thumb. "I think I heard the latch being opened, steps coming down the ladder, but I didn't know what. Then, all of a sudden, I was gasping for air. The man's walked up to me from behind, suddenly, laid his hands on my throat with a kind of carelessness, so as not to strangle me, as in the clearest way possible." Again I stretched my neck, my throat, and the same gaffer as before burst forth, sharp, juvenile, stupid.

"Funny, but the thing I remember best is the feel of his mouth along my neck, as though he were a man. You'd think they were shaped just right for my neck, my neck shaped just right for them, and that I'd taken off

*Widened mouth  
English  
surprise.*

my story we couldn't stand in their way. The two businessmen, the grocer and the second engineer said afterwards that he showed his knee in the wall of my back and that, <sup>but Jeffrey was</sup> ~~half-conscious~~, I shivered like an eel. I didn't know who touched me...

"And the others? Didn't they come to the rescue?"

"They..." I said. I pondered, striving at my words. "Maybe they didn't think of it on the spot... In such circumstances, how do you expect a guy to think? On experience sometimes, you know, then you react -- if you can and when you try to tell the facts, they seem so obscure you might as well invent them altogether. <sup>Once</sup> After he had me at the wall, a series of motions sprung in my mind which were split-second. I say 'spring' because that's how I remember it, restless like springs. I imagined that the Belinda had desperately run around, that I fell headlong into the furnace, that I was buried beneath a mountain of coal, that I was throwing up my tongue, that my arms were pushed out of their sockets, you see, like pebbles shot from a sling. I pulled myself together only when, his smiling face next to mine, I heard his equal -- but there, from far away -- speak 'by elephants...' 'By elephants...' It seems to me now that if he hadn't spoken a word, content with just killing me in silence, without words, I'd have let my soul be dragged out of me. He was not so sparing of words, he said me too many that time. Feeling my head moving like a shuttlecock, I turned at half-way round and lunged forward with all the strength I had left. He grooved three or four yards, I pushing, he <sup>slipping</sup> ~~sliding~~, his fingers gripped to my throat, and then he slipped on a patch of grease and fell backwards, with me on top of him."

I drank two cups of beer. The pulse of the engines was deep and

steadily, so steady it took attention to notice. The clock read 10 p.m.  
I drank another mug of beer, then another.

"How long did it last?" I asked her. "The second engineer, the Web  
bunker-man and the premier witness it had all been very sudden. Maybe...  
anyway. O'Rourke released his grip only after we buckled down, one astride  
the other. I picked myself up, instantly Red arose over me, grabbed a  
shovel within reach of my hand. He rose up, steady, powerful. I  
could see his arms dangling, his fingers wide apart, violently slight in  
the glow of the furnace. He didn't try to attack me again. I remember  
his cuffs, so amazingly white by eyes ached. He waited patiently for  
me to know him ~~at~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> comment; then he climbed by the ladder  
and disappeared through the hatch."

"You should've climbed him with your shovel, for Christ's sake! What  
was the matter with you?"

"Nothing. Nothing was the matter with me. Only later did I know  
it over. Later. The late, I believe, for instance, that I shouldn't  
have abused him; it was as though I'd beaten out a child who'd accused  
me of stealing a toy he himself misplaced. Those elephants, I don't  
know what they meant to him, or were if they existed outside his fancy,  
but he was sad at heart about them. I should've told him, I suppose,  
that I didn't have them, those elephants of his, that perhaps he lost  
them during our break, the evening I <sup>came there at</sup> ~~shared~~ Liverpool. No, that's  
what I should've told him, with simple and convincing words... It might  
have relieved him. And so too, it would have relieved me. Afterwards,  
I mean now. Well, in the spur of the moment, I could only urge him into  
being gored by all the elephants of the jungle, and he kept silent, kept  
taking it without a flinch, as if really it were his due. How could I

know... That was, something possessed him, wanted him. He wasn't up  
to it. Perhaps, had I said the right word, instead of sending better  
up a blindfold father deep, to see the illuminating <sup>\*\*\*</sup> light, possibly as far  
any under the good eye of the dark future. In certain better one was,  
descending for a long time a rock in a wilderness's yard, an odd thing  
pattered up with puffs and bits of air — still she was a ship... Well,  
Gibson disappeared through the hatch. I was in bad shape, my head was  
aching, I could barely jump or move of air. The others helped me sit  
on a chair of wood, then as a drop of rain, then went back to their sto-  
ries for the pressure was dropping. I couldn't go up <sup>to</sup> the deck.  
The air down below was foul even for a man who hadn't just escaped being  
skinned to death, yet I couldn't let them do a share of work. After a  
few minutes, waiting and waiting, I was back at the furnace. 'Take it  
easy,' they said 'we'll manage without you for now...' They couldn't  
have asked really, but I couldn't bear looking defeated to the point of  
hitting the wall. I held out as best I could and, yet, when at last  
we were relieved I thought I'd never gather enough strength to climb  
up the ladder.\*

I washed down two rounds of beer. I couldn't tell whether I was that  
thirsty, but the bitter taste of stout helped me overcome my uneasiness.  
I left the table, leaned against the wall, in the protective shadow of  
a steel beam. I tried to remember the words of the illuminating I was caught  
in the drift of my own story, lingering over now a detail I had for-  
gotten, and which, as I proceeded proceeded, seemed to surge out of ob-  
literation at the very sound of my words. It was as if were thinking aloud,  
as if I pushed deep into myself, and far from reflecting on the important  
absence of the man predicted on me.



"I'd have let things as they were, what's the use of complaining, but the others went blabbing away, and toward the evening I was summoned to the skipper. Except for my neck dappled with bruises, I was feeling all right. As I reached the fore-castle I met the steward, a guy with a head like a drunken rat's, drooping shoulders, and a cough which beat him in the middle. The skipper had the expression of a bare knelling, fleshy cheeks, and a big fleshy nose with a florid tip. He was annoyed, I could hear his grumble, "~~huh~~... ~~huh~~..." and turning the screw as he went. My report took a good fifteen minutes, and all the time he kept bawling angrily. He fired his lungs one by one but sometimes they came in pairs. It was rather remarkable. Just looking at him you would understand that his job, the crew, the ship and the sea weighed on his stomach. When I walked out, I bumped into the steward; obviously, he was eavesdropping. That evening of a man, he was a queer character. They said he was terrified of dying at sea, but above all of being committed to the deep. He thought of it day and night. His one solace was we'd all drown before anyone had the pleasure to <sup>be sleeping</sup> ~~bury~~ his overboard, back <sup>first</sup> ~~forward~~. It was also known that he expressed himself almost exclusively in sayings, and that he was ~~as~~ stuffed with them to the point of choking up harbor and starboard. He gratified me with the benign smile of a father confessor <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ shouldering ~~shoulder~~ ~~down~~ their sins, then rubbed his nose in a piece of cloth. 'Any one easy on, or something like that,' he said with sugar the grin of a bishop on his pastoral rounds. Well! There was only the touch when he spread his sayings; quite to the contrary, he asked his for enlightenment, for the gist of the matter as to speak. 'There'll be a death,' he added, bent double with coughing. I left him there prophesying to his heart's content, and walked back to the crew's quarters. Needless to say I had become, thanks to the events, the object of general

attention. My to-do with the engineer and the beggings of compensation; everybody was lost in guesswork as to the reasons that led Quiroga to attempt strangling me. Due to his spirit of sticking a lump in people's faces when a man bore him hatred, and more than one stated he would settle accounts with him. My adventure encompassed the whole crew; each and all felt assailed in my own person. The ill-effects concerning Quiroga were mutual. Apparently disengaged to no purpose, he sailed through sheer volition, he was driven by some obscure whim, and so on. I heard with no little astonishment that he was supposedly the leader of a revolutionary coup which took place in Puerto Rico the day before -- just tonight! I forget to tell you that there was another queer stick around, a Venezuelan named Rafael Costa, the first mate, a sweeping bodyguard as ubiquitous as a pilot-fish, a fellow you'd gladly bet for the rest of his party over the flankstaff and riddle with arrows. He was responsible for the good things. There were a nice lot of battles on the Holland, almost at work, fomented in the heat of passion, no more stupid than the next man. I don't say they really believed that the tongue-tied, half-crazy engineer was preaching civil war, it was the silly, but nothing would stop their politicking. What a bunch of wrong-laws, of circus confessions! Well they're born dissenters, born sectarians. Hate, berrations, promulgation, they relish it! The partitions in each of their rooms and the ship became a huge meeting-place split up into several rooms waiting and excited battles. They forgot Quiroga, whose name now seemed to bring forget his lunatic, his nightly prowling... They yelled themselves hoarse, banded together according to distasteful affinities, personal preferences, then distended with increased zest, yelling on and reviling each other with names in

tion of arguments. By midnight, the dispute had swung from the ridiculous to the sublime, verging on an apothecia of sorts, for the sole glory of raising the devil. A week later, even as we lowered the life boats, they were still exchanging such other with as much conviction as if they'd stood in Hyde Park Corner, not right here, on your very ~~SEASIDE~~ <sup>SEASIDE</sup>. You hear them shouting all day long. A regular equal of ~~stallions~~ <sup>stallions</sup>!"

"Right," someone approved. "It's the one that feeds the humming-birds down there, in the rear hold, where they've put up your buddies. There are about twenty thousands of those birdies in the twelve huge cages, noisy and stinking enough to stir up a corpse, but your friends, no, it doesn't seem to bother them."

"Yes," I said. "Tap-dancing, that's their way to <sup>live</sup> ~~show~~ the world."

I poured myself a drink. They followed suit, and for a few minutes the huge changed hands. The clock read a quarter after eleven. I ran sitting on the edge of a bench moved and woke up with a start, as if waiting for that interlude to break loose, again that silly, powerful laughter burst forth, brief, sharp. With shuddered steps, I began to pace up and down past the enormous table fastened to the steel floor.

" meantime the Yelania sailed into warmer seas. Dream was to be the first part of sail after Lisbon, I think; but, sideways, we altered course. It was all the same to me. Oke or my other spot, I'd planned on <sup>putting in</sup> leaving board anyway. I wouldn't tell whether ~~where~~ agreed or not; for one thing, I was sure he wouldn't stay there and then. I probably was the only one who, to a certain extent, took him seriously. I suspected a purpose in his conduct, a definite aim, an intention -- in short; suspected he was involved in a kind of difficult







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time; but, excited by the day's events, he'd grown liberal so to speak. Sharp, a bit stooping, lost in an evening white jacket covered with stains, he moved away, led by his caplain which hung from his nose. And all around, crowded in tobacco smoke, the politicians were raising Cain."

"Never mind the politicians," interrupted someone impatiently. "What about?"

"Well!!! Two days later I had my last 'conversation' with Odrege. It was shortly before 11 a.m. We were off the Paramount marais. The sky had finally cleared up and I was busy washing my clothes on the deck. There were five or six of us scrubbing our shirts and pegging them on strings, when, coming out from behind the windlass, Odrege caught me by the elbow. As though I would consent his exit, I knew instantly it was he. Water streamed down my arms, and yet the touch of his hand felt dry. Brandishing a cake of soap, I spun round. A bubble of foam floated in the still air and came to rest on his brow, but he didn't react, more livid than a corpse. Not a gleam of life in that face, except for the dark gray of the eyes. The sea was blank. We were sailing on the tranquil waters of a lake. It was the first beautiful morning since Liverpool, and it seemed nothing unpleasant could occur on such a day. The men who were scrubbing their shirts drew closer, on their guard and ready to come to my defense. Odrege, by an instinct of sorts, either not approached and formed a ring round us. Odrege held on to my elbow, limply as a letter of fact, and I, soap in hand, stared at him. Every-one about us stood still, only the gentle flustering of the linen and the hushed ripple of the sea beneath the bow could be heard. Arriving on the scene, like the insect settled at the edge of the circle between the legs of a sailor, intensely, as if she were early for the show. They

with the dark  
in the dark  
in the dark

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all waited for the contest to begin, a contest in which one of the men-  
Gardens would have to bite the dust. Our darling, little woman, slid-  
ed into the window, <sup>from below</sup> perched right over Orlene's head, he whis-  
ed and waved at me. "That's him, <sup>the man</sup>!" That's him! It's your son!" he  
appeared to say. I felt we'd been standing there for ages, all of us,  
tense and motionless, indifferently so, when at last Orlene stretched out  
his free hand, a hand open, white, extraordinarily smooth. There was  
a shuffle among the men, there was a sigh of relief, but already I knew  
nothing would happen that week end wasn't meant to strike. And, in-  
stead, he whispered "The elephants... Oh... Give them back to me...  
No... No..." Oh, perhaps he was about to say, "No kind..."

All eyes were riveted on me. As I was talking, my face had become  
quieter and my words firmer. "It's Orlene, for Christ's sake!" I yelled.  
"He's wholly on this big thing of yours!" I poured a mug of beer down my  
throat, then another, then another. "No..." he kept repeating, "No..."  
I couldn't take my eyes off his dead face, dead for a long time, so dead  
it didn't look like anything I knew. That...

I broke off again, made my headless drunk, one by one. Nobody cut  
into my silence this time; they knew better than to prod me. I staggered  
at my headless, making their drunk like when I'd. Maybe I was short  
of words, maybe I just feared an objection, because all of a sudden my  
voice grew very loud. "Then, suddenly, a tear ran down his cheek!  
There, high! There on his face blotted like fat lines washed in water!  
In front of the crowd! In front of those men who all had a grudge against  
him! Under the clear sky! Oh, I, ready to step in, ready to be kind,  
ready to answer by God that I never saw elephants outside the zoo, I  
grabbed his wrist and slammed the door with the big wet smack of a knee





already his lower lip parted over some flared pearls, then, unexpectedly, the William heaved out of water. I say 'unexpectedly...' well!

I sat on the bench. There was no beer left in the pitcher, not enough to quench a fly. I lifted my mug in silence, wearily. The hand was hard, the table's edge pressed on my stomach, I was as sore thirily than a drunk and out. I resumed walking, slowly, rubbing my knuckles smart.

"First," I said, "first, for a split second the steel floor buckled under me, walls in a slow upward thrust, as though the ball gently gripped in its middle. Next, in that same second as it rose, while rumblings, caldrons, pots, skillets, platters and other bottles fly off the back, sideboards, dressers and racks all together spill out their contents. Third movement is a rubble of bones and crushed plates. Cristobal's big stone lampens and breaks in sections, a cast-iron grate knocks down the nook among the debris of his den, and hurled off my feet I slid speedily sliding the whole length of a corridor right into the officers' messroom. I recall, the very last detail, of it all, how extraordinarily lucid I was, and even as I tumbled on my back I was thinking 'I know it... I know it...' I was swept backwards, head foremost, sure I'd fracture my skull -- and I felt elated. Yes, I was jubilant... Here they were at last, my punishments, my exorcisms! I was relieved as though I'd won a bet, as though I'd successfully undergone a slight but difficult test. Already the ship was listing heavily to port, for as soon as I managed to stand up I was thrown to the left and went stumbling into a corner. The list was such that to keep upright I had to negotiate the angle of wall and floor and follow the skirting-board. I heard a noise of running steps, shouts, curses, and then the characteristic gurgle of swirling sea -- eddies retreating at the walking wheel you



heartily, but without any more and Gidrege threw him over the rail. One of the lifelines finally hit the sea and a bunch of men rushed into it, head over heels. (Frankie lost they should be sucked in by the eddy when the Palisade, shoon-full with water, would against and sink, they shoved off hurriedly. They hoisted in the first mate who splashed about helplessly and peevish way, were showing the (herring-pond.)) Notwithstanding, slightly bent backward, Gidrege roiled over the disaster. I was fascinated by him, so much so that I forgot to swim by him. Half outlined against the gliding sky, half against the swirling blue sea, his silhouette called to mind some obscure valiant deity. He looked at us from his swaying post, blankly, arms outstretched, hands open. His torso had the color of white varnish, his breasts were two bags of fat riding the fat tide of his stomach, and tufts of dark hair crept from under his arm-pits. Next to me some man tailed with the toggles of the second lifeboat, jammed to perfection, and in the pause of the evening day their closure died away miserably. The other boat had stopped within ear-shot, neat and black against the red disk of the setting sun. Taking a deep puff at his cigar -- he who never smoked -- Gidrege disappeared as if he'd plunged into a pit, reappeared at once, this time carrying the captain -- the body of the captain. He lifted him above his head, one hand clamped to his neck, the other to the vent of his pants, and effortlessly threw him seaward. The body described a short curve, missed a snag, then sank in a quick gush of foam. The men had finished demolishing canteens and windows, the lifeboat was being hoisted down, but I couldn't take my eyes off Gidrege. Again he assumed the posture of a monstrous statue, arms dangling, hands open toward the sky, toward us, toward the world he was leaving, that was leaving him.

A.T.

The boat rushed the water, swerved on the waves, and with two strokes



I remembered. I took a swallow at my heart.

"You're you to-day, Jerry?"

"Oh, fine, sir," she stammered. She slowly filled my glass.

"Didn't work out on that ship of yours?"

~~What down~~  
I quaffed my wine. She had beautiful teeth and a skin that tanned with the shadow.

"Yes, on the contrary," I said.

She moved away with a broad smile, then returned carrying some ham and bread.

"Eat," she said.

I winked toward the sleeping man across the table:

"Same customer since the other day?"

"Hm!" she said, glancing over her shoulder. "He's the boss.

Eat, it's good for you."

~~There, it's good for me,~~ I said.