

in the lee of the island, and the water chirped and gurgled around her rusty, sea-washed hull. The gang came down into the cabin, quietly and like shadows.

"Now," said McDonald softly, when all were assembled, "the other craft may be inside that lagoon, an' she may not. She may have reached the island an' cleared out again, but I don't think so, as we must ha' bin on her heels all th' way from th' Falklands. I have a hunch that she's inside thar', as they'll spend some time searchin' fur that cave among them boulders. Ef she ain't thar', it'll be plain sailin' for us, but I'll lay my hat that she is."

The red-haired man paused and gave a glance at the clock.

"Th' Skipper an' I hev a plan which we'll carry out to-night without any delay if we mean ter git what we've come for. Cookie and Morris 'll stand by th' vessel here. The rest of us'll take two dories an' go inter th' lagoon. Ef the other vessel is layin' there, we'll board her an' try ter work her outside here. Git th' hatches off, sails loosed an' halliards clear. We'll hev ter do some spry work, maybe."

The men nodded, voicing their endorsement of the plan by stolid grunts.

"How about guns?" queried Sam Johnson. "Them sealer fellers are all armed."

McDonald opened a locker and produced three revolvers, while the Skipper drew two repeating rifles from under his bunk mattress.

"They're all loaded," said McDonald. "Th' Skipper an' I will take a revolver each—Johnson kin take the other. Slocum an' Corby kin take th' rifles. You other fellers kin use what ye like. Come on, now, man th' dory tackles an' git two dories over."

Simons tumbled into one dory with three of the gang, while McDonald commanded the other with Johnson and Slocum. With hearts beating hard with