

"Oh, he?" said Jackson contemptuously. "He never gets over being seasick."

After dinner Wyatt tried to read for an hour or two, and then, finding he was still unable to sleep, put on a waterproof coat and went up to the hurricane deck, and walked to and fro on the starboard or windward side, right under the bridge. What was the good of going back to England? She would still remain in the East wandering from one place to another. And all the time maybe she would remember and her heart would ache as his did.

"If I had gone last week," thought Wyatt, "I shouldn't have met her here. I wish I had gone!"

And then, above the steady sounds of a steamship and the wind and the sea, he heard a cry for'ard, as the man on the look-out reported something. He moved from the shelter of the for'ard deckhouse, and standing by the starboard rail, saw a faint red light on the bow. He hoped the sober little second mate had charge of the deck. And then, above his head, he heard Simpson's thick and raucous voice. He looked ahead again and still saw the red light. But a squall came up out of the south-west and he lost it. And six bells was struck for'ard. Then he found Jackson at his elbow.

"Dirty night," said the purser. "I wish I was going home with you, Wyatt. Who's on the bridge now?"

"Simpson," said Wyatt, "I heard his voice. I just saw a red light out here."

"Oh, I've seen the whole sea like a chemist's shop," said the purser, "and Simpson running things so close that I've fairly snivered. He holds on and never gives way till he has to."

He went to the starboard rail and looked ahead, just as the steamer on the starboard side blew her whistle as if in alarm. As he and Wyatt stood waiting and wondering, the mate apparently tried to cross the other steamer's bows, and when he found that he could not, instead of starboarding his

helm, so that he might possibly have scraped clear with help from the other vessel, he ported it and swung the *Lyceemooon's* after part right across the other's bows. A collision was inevitable, and Jackson and Wyatt saw it. They ran over to the port side.

"Holy Sailor!" said Jackson. "She's into us! I thought it, I thought it!"

The whistles of both vessels screamed uselessly, while Wyatt stood as if he were a rigid, carved figure. He saw the black bulk of the oncoming steamer, saw her red and green lights gleaming, and her mast-head light shining above them. And as Jackson caught hold of him and pulled him backwards, the other steamer lifted upon the sea and came down on them. She struck the *Lyceemooon* aft of midships and cut her right open ten feet inboard, splintering the plates and decks and all the upper works of the boat deck with a hideous grinding noise, as sparks flew from the shattered iron. Just over Wyatt the green starboard light shone calmly. Above it, on the fo'c'sle of the steamer that had struck them, he heard men shouting. And as the vessel slowly withdrew herself Wyatt seemed to wake out of a paralysed dream. He caught hold of Jackson and said—

"Where's Mrs. Herman's berth?"

Jackson looked at him and nodded without being able to speak. But at last he got his words out and pointed down with his shaking hand.

"Just down here, old chap, just down here, where she hit us!"

And Wyatt ran down into the saloon, thrusting his way past the passengers who were streaming on deck in their night gear. As he went down he felt that the *Lyceemooon* was already listing to port. He turned about to find the starboard alleyway, and even as he did so the lights went out. And Jackson was once more at his side.

"I'll find her if she's to be found," said the purser. "The *Lyceemooon's* going, old son!"

"I'll come with you," said Wyatt hoarsely.