

little time for reflection. A small boat was lowered, and the earl, with a hasty adieu to his son, Jack, and Graham, descended the ship's side with the Spanish envoy and rowed away to the *Enterprise*.

"We are fated to see the inside of a French prison after all," Jack said to Graham.

"I don't know, Stilwell. We have both been in their hands once, and did not stay there long. I can hardly believe that our luck's going to desert us at last."

"I don't see much chance of our escape this time, Graham. Six ships against one are too great odds even for English sailors. The smallest of them carries as many guns as we do, and once a prisoner on board a ship there is no slipping away."

"We are not prisoners yet, Jack, and I don't think that Mordaunt will strike his flag without a struggle though they are six to one. He is just his father over again as far as courage goes."

"Well, I hope, anyhow, the earl will get away," Jack said. "If it hadn't been for all those state papers he is burdened with I am sure he would have stuck to the *Resolution* and fought it out. It would be just the kind of desperate adventure to suit him. See, he has reached the *Enterprise*, and she and the *Milford Haven* are spreading every sail; but although they will leave us behind I question whether they will out-sail the French. They are coming up fast."

"It will soon be dark," Graham said, "and they may be able to slip away. You may be sure the French will attend to us first, as being the most valuable prize."