

Porter, "well, dear me, really it's most extraordinary! Shall I tidy up that piece of string and put it in your string bag?" she asked.

"It's not a piece of string," said Captain Porter. "That's the lead line." He looked at her out of his little china eyes. "Passengers are not allowed up on the bridge," he continued.

"Quite right! Very right!" Mary agreed emphatically. "We must keep out the crowd. . . . I'm the chief officer's wife now," she added.

"Um," said Captain Porter.

"Mrs. Dixon, Junior," said Mary, smiling bewitchingly. "That makes a difference, doesn't it, captain?"

"Yes, maybe it does, maybe it does," acknowledged Captain Porter, in a mild sort of way. He walked to the rail, and began to study the shore through his telescope. Mary, with ostentation, stooped, picked up a small piece of fluff, and threw it over the side.

"I do detest untidiness," she said, edging up to the captain. "Can you see anything?"

"They are launching their boats," said the captain. "We shall have to get a move on." He walked to the forward rail. "Dixon," he shouted to the mate on the forecastle head. "Slip that anchor altogether. We can't stop to heave it up."

"You're not going to throw it away?" asked Mary.

"I am," said the captain.

"But it will be a long time before they can row out here."

"We want to get away before then," the captain explained shortly.

"Then what's to become of them?" asked Mary, grown serious all on a sudden. "You're never going to leave them behind? Why, Colonel Tingle would be awfully ill. He's not a bit used to it."

"They'll be all right," said the captain. "I know the