

"Contraband"

snowy canvas aloft. The very immaculateness of the vessel seemed to add to the horror, and it was a shock to even read the schooner's name, painted on a life buoy: *Rose of Gaspé*. I saw Vera standing alone, almost where we had first reached the deck. I waved my hand to her but she made no attempt to follow us.

A glance below revealed the whole story of accident. It was clear enough to be read instantly by a sailor's eye. The man in his efforts at escape, had chosen one of the smaller boats, but one staunch, and well equipped. No doubt it had been secretly prepared in advance, for the lockers contained food, and a beaker of fresh water was securely lashed to a front thwart. There was also a spar and sail aboard, safely secured, together with a pair of serviceable oars.

What had happened, as seemed clear to us, was this: a heavy brass-bound chest, of odd workmanship, and dingy appearance, had been stowed away in the bows. It must have been placed there with rope and pulley, for no single pair of arms could ever have lifted it over the rail. Then the fellow had clambered in, eager to be off, no doubt, and undertaken to lower the boat, standing probably amidships, where he could manipulate both ropes. But the forward rope must have jammed in the pulley, permitting the stern of the suspended boat to sag suddenly enough to send the heavy chest sliding aft. Before he could check the fall, or save himself by leaping overboard, it had pinned his legs against the stern sheets; and there he dangled still, his face buried in the green water alongside, his knees