

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.
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(Continued from Saturday.)

The engineers, always aggressively belligerent when the engines of the *Nashua* were under discussion, nosed to the top of the conversation. One of them said it was a fine thing to know where you were, especially if you weren't likely to leave there very soon. Another observed that it was the habit of the sea to have the water pour out a bit of scrap iron with their cocoanuts, for fertilizing purposes, and the supply was likely to be increased before long. "The Captain flushed a dull red," turned his fishy eyes on the junior and asked if he would like to run this show. The junior spluttered something into a glass of water, adding that he was sorry, sir. There was a pause while the Captain mused; then the Captain mused: "Too soon. Wait till you're fifty or so."

"What for?" inquired the executive, voicing general bewilderment. "Being sorry?"

"Yes, or laughing at the Pacific Ocean."

No one had. All remained vaguely uncomfortable. He was trying to lighten the situation, ventured cheerfully: "I'm not laughing at it. I'm keen on it. It's as good as a war."

He was given the fishy blue eyes and the words: "As good—huh! That's good!"

The meal ended in a nervous silence. No one knew what he meant. Kit never knew.

v.

Two sounding parties were sent out in motor dories. Their orders were to start close in to the surf on the reef and work north and south, respectively, sounding every two hundred feet or so for a mile to two miles and at the same time try to ascertain the width of the reef. Kit was placed in command of the dory ordered northward. Two seamen in dungarees got in with him, and off they chugged.

There was a smooth swell running under a colorless but brilliant sheet of clouds. One of the seamen, Jones by name, a blond, gawky, blue-eyed youth, became sick and stayed sick, the color of the sky, but less luminous. Kit ventured a word of humorous condolence, which fell on Jones's ears as well, but Jones, being a creature, ignored everything except the engine.

They reached the appointed place, shut off the engine and began casting the lead. Masson took the oars and rowed between casting places; Kit handled the lead and made notes as well as Jones, being useless for the day. Kit was quickly absorbed in his work, casting and noting: two fathoms, three and a half fathoms, five, seven, five and a half, eight, ten, nine. The reef was slowly sinking.

In a direction north by west. He could fairly feel it under his feet, the restless polyps swarming at their task.

The line showed nineteen fathoms. "It's one hell," said Masson.

Kit looked up. The sky was dull gray all over; a dark gloomy afternoon. An hour and a half before sunset; he said as much, adding that they were hardly more than a mile from their starting point. Jones looked at the smokeless stacks of the *Nashua*, more than two miles distant, and sighed.

A gob of rain fell on Kit's cheek. He glanced quickly. "Sort of dark in the southwest. What's the time, Masson?"

"Five-forty-eight."

"I'd like to finish this up properly. Three more, and we'll call it a day." He felt the lead strike for the third time. "All right, Masson, put her about and start up. What's the time?"

"Five-thirty-seven."

He noticed that Masson did not say "Eight." A sullen, untractable type "Sort of late. Don't want to take chances with this tropical twilight. We're all right, though."

The engine was slow in starting, and Kit began rowing to gain headway. He glanced at the southwest; it was pitch-black. There was a dead calm; a few drops of rain fell tinkling on the water, and made gray splashes on his white blouse. A faint awful moan became audible in the southern quadrant, slowly rising. After a few minutes the engine started, with loud irritated snorts.

The southwest had swelled incredibly, blotting out half the horizon as if with black smoke. "Gosh!" said Kit, "we're in for something. Give her the gas, Masson," and he started rowing again.

A minute later it was on them. Kit took off his blouse and stowed it in the tool box, to keep some things in the pockets dry, but almost before he could get it in it was drenched. A squall came, the wind screaming, scraping the swells into wrinkles like those on an old man's face, then blotting them out in a cross chop. White crescents of foam flared up.

"We must be getting near," said Kit, raising his voice over the din. "What was our course?"

"About one-ten."

"I'll steer. Give me the compass."

He took his seat in the stern, tiller in right hand, compass in left. The wind had risen to a continuous roar; the waves from the southwest had piled up so that it was impossible to keep the dory from yawing. He wondered how much she had saved while Masson had the tiller, after the horizon was lost.

Six o'clock; it was almost totally black. The storm—it was not a squall but a steady rising gale—filled the world. A horrible sickness, not seasickness, but something a thousand times worse, gnawed at Kit's stomach. His temples throbbed beneath his dripping hair. His cap was drenched; he threw it off.

"We must be about there. See anything, Masson?"

"Not a thing."

"She'd have all her lights burning by now."

"Sure."

He steered left. There was no use in going further in the original direction; they would pass the cruiser hopelessly. Ten minutes, he here twenty degrees, the wind helping. Then he dared go no further and steered dead astern. Twenty minutes, in the teeth of the gale, up and down the hissing waves, half an hour; forty minutes. He could not bear to stop. No light anywhere; only the green phosphorus on Masson's wrist watch, and on the hideous waves.

"We've lost her," he said, and shut off the gas.

"It'll lift," said Masson. "We'll be able to see."

It did not lift. Adrift—he was afraid to use more gasoline, with some vague idea of needing it more later—they ran with the gale. By turns he and Masson took the oars, to keep the dory's head in the wind. The waves rose slowly under them; the dory would poise on their heads for an appreciable time and then sink slowly into the trough.

Jones, the silent member of the crew, was sick no longer, but became articulate. Above the roar of the gale they could hear him moaning as he sat huddled in the bow. "Oh, God my God, we're lost. . . . Oh, Jesus Christ. . . ."

"Shut up!" said Masson with a snarl.

Kit felt for him, and for Jones as well. "Jones," he said, "it's all right. They'll send out for us. They'll know we've got to go with the wind, and follow us. All we've got to do is to sit tight. Cheer up, now."

He was glad he said it. He certainly felt better for it, and he thought the two others did. Jones uttered no more words, but continued sniveling and moaning, uncontrollably. Darkness, emptiness; wet wind roaring and roading; stinging rain; huge seas sending the dory up and down, slapping jets of cool spray into

it. And somewhere amid these furies of mind and water were electric lights, dry bunks, chintz curtains and safety.

THE NEBBES



THAT'S WHO I AM.



Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess
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Barney Google and Spark Plug

Well, Ayway, Barney's Got the Ship's "Log."

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck
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BRINGING UP FATHER

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SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus
(Copyright 1924)



New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTVRE.

New York, Oct. 26.—A page from the diary of a modern Samuel Pepys. Early up and as fair a day as ever I saw. So to breakfast at a neighboring inn and Willie Lewis, the puglist, there and told me of his hard fight with Carpenter years ago.

"Back home to do my stint, but the day too glorious with sunshine, and so away again, but could find no one in the mood for pleasure, which is a pity. And further convinced the world is in need of more play boys.

In the evening to a dinner and Karl Hoblitzelle there and his wife, Esther Walker, whose crooning songs have so delighted me on the phonograph. Home and to bed, where I read Mark Twain's autobiography until near dawn.

One of the amusing skits in a recent musical revue was one called "Justifiable Homicides." Each incident was just a flash and ended in death by pistol. Among those slain were the woman who crowds ahead at the theater box office, the clerk who tries to sell you a cap when you want a straw hat, the man who slaps your sunburned back and the fellow who inquires if it is hot enough for you.

The idea has great possibilities. I suggest the man who has never been any place but New York and Jersey City who goes to see one of the imported Parisian singers. She is rarely beautiful, nor can she sing or dance. Yet he applauds until he blisters his hands. He no doubt wants to give the idea he knows her. Isn't that cunning?

The other night I sat behind one of those. He ran to the molar type of beauty and had a profile like a young humming bird. He couldn't be stopped after the obscure French music hall chanteuse did one of those so-called eye rolling ditties. Even the head usher came down to give him a withering look. A day or so later I saw him again. He was not the boulevardier he would have liked us all to think. He was demonstrating a new fangled chafing dish in a drug store window.

And that reminds me that most window demonstrators have stage ambitions. There is an employment agency on West Thirty-third street that furnishes them to proprietors of stores giving special window displays. The manager tells me all he knows for jobs. He says they get a special kick out of appearing before crowds even though they appear in a window demonstrating a patented pie knife or what not. A window demonstrator is paid \$24 a week.

The language of the Long Island movie lots is rather gory, yet when explained is quite simple. A player may turn up to be told: "You'll be killed today." That means his part in the picture is finished. When the director cries: "Smack your spots!" that means the spotlights must be thrown on the players. "Hit queenie in the head" means the spot on the female star. Every female star is a "queenie." The yell of "chocker" is to reduce the size of the spot. "Clinch" is for the hero and heroine to embrace. And "Take it" is for you to blink your eyes and fall on your face. Of course, each director has his own few choice bits of jargon, but as a general thing the movie patois is about the same in New York as it is in California.

The legitimate stage also has some odd phrases. Such as "Dim the lights," "Upstage," "Downstage" and a thousand more that are meaningless only to the initiated.

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JERRY ON THE JOB

ALWAYS COMPLAINING

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban
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How to Start the Evening Wrong.

By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield
A Good Time Was Had by All.

