

Captain Dennis' cheerful whistle yet sounded as he "turned in" to his broad hammock. It was his fancy to sleep in a hammock, a good fancy, he said, that gave him a cruise every night and made him content to stay on land every day. But tonight he did not have a happy voyage. From stormy seas he reached a stormier port, waking with a start, from a crazy dream in which he had been captured by South Sea Islanders, and bound hand and foot to the earth, while a tall savage danced "Yankee Doodle" on his aching arm.

He told Lucy, at breakfast, that he would take his cruise in a new craft hereafter. Lucy poured out a clear, hot amber stream into his cup. It was a dainty cup. There was only one more like it this side the water so the captain said: that was Lucy's. He had picked them up in some odd corner of the world—he had never told anyone where but Lucy. They were very white and clear, with a delicate tracery of green, a long spray running round half way up to the rim. Lucy filled the cup just past the edge of the green spray.

"Yes," she said smiling, "You will have to sail as I do, now." Then she stopped.

But the captain, watching her day after day, tried to whistle away the voice that was telling him, louder and louder, "You will have to sail with Lucy, now."

And he looked hard at the great chair by the sunny south window where Lucy was always asking him to sit and read to her.

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His laugh sounded merrily as he reached his awkward left hand for his tea-cup. His good right arm must be put away like the old hammock. He could not use it any more. And Lucy smiled. But she was looking at the fingers that held the white cup. Was it her nervous fancy, or did the left hand shake slightly. The captain knew. He had felt it creeping closer. His tales were longer and jollier than ever, and his whistle did not tremble. But his face grew dark when he was alone, and he said to him-

self, "It's all the time, all the time. Only so much as an ant's foot goes, but I never get it back."

But on Thanksgiving day the captain always "celebrated." The evening had always the same ending—the stories and the "South Sea Island jig." It made him feel like himself, he said. Even when he had come to sit all day in the wide chair, he would start with a flush in his face when the clock struck eleven and, springing from his seat, challenge Martha to equal his time. Martha always said she was too old and stiff. And the captain answered, sometimes, that it was harder to keep still than to dance all the time.

It was a gloomy Thanksgiving on which Lucy must first feed him at the table. It had long been her task, but he had kept it a part of the Thanksgiving celebration to do this himself. And John and Martha had pretended not to see how he spilled his tea and dropped his cranberry jelly on the pickles. The South Sea Island jig made all the spectators laugh that evening till their handkerchiefs went to their eyes.

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It is evening. Lucy sits beside the captain's chair and reads to him. It had seemed to him that he would be cutting his last shore line, if he must give up his reading. Sitting in his arm chair, his book and papers before him, he sailed long cruises and visited the old ports again. He could not give it up, and he steadied his shaking hands, and held his papers with a grasp that slowly, slowly failed, until one day Lucy gently took them away. She knelt down before him and put her hands on his knee, and placed his trembling fingers on her brown hair. It was not long until she must lift those fingers, soft and white, wherever the captain's quiet voice told her. Only Lucy can clearly distinguish all his words, now. And the captain does not hear all that she is reading. He is beginning to lose even her voice out of the narrow, darkening space that closes slowly, slowly about him.

He sits in his chair and sees, through the shadows, a tall, leafless, towering tree against a crimson sky.