

The Wreck



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Dramatization of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic sailor's yarn
"The Wrecker"

by Christian Lanciai (2006)

The characters:

Jim Pinkerton, american adventurer
Loudon Dodd, Scottish failed artist
Norton, emperor of America
Bartender
The shipwrecked captain
His crew (see below)
Guests at the harbour pub "Black Tom"
Douglas B. Longhurst, millionaire
Harry D. Bellairs, lawyer
An auctioneer
An errand boy
Judge Morgan
Captain Arty Nares
His crew
A Chinese
Fowler and Sharpe, opium dealers
A British naval officer
Sebright, another one
Urqhart, naval surgeon
Higgs, butler
Mrs Higgs, his wife
Lady Ann Carthew
Stennis, old artist
Madden, artist, alias Norris Carthew
Captain Jacob Trent
Tom Hadden
Captain Wicks
Mac, Ulster man
Elias Goddedaal, boatswain
A sailor
The cook
Wallen
Brown
Amalu, Kanak
a prattling Chinese
other misfortunate crew members

The action is in San Francisco, on the Pacific, in England and France about 1890.

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The Wreck

Act I scene 1. The turbulent saloon of *Black Tom* in San Francisco.

- Pinkerton* Here he is again, the original of originals, to press me for money.
- Dodd* He doesn't need so much. He owns the whole world.
- Pinkerton* No, only all America, which is perpetually bankrupt.
- Norton* (*enters, an impressive bum with feathers in his hat and a large sword in his belt*)
Respect, please! Make way for the emperor of America!
- Bartender* Welcome, emperor Norton. We just wondered when you would honour us with another visit.
- Norton* Don't pretend any fawning, you cuntfitted pimptoads! Here you behave naturally no matter how much an emperor I am, so there! – A drink, please.
- Pinkerton* He starts early in the morning.
- Dodd* And keeps it up all day, I presume.
- Pinkerton* As long as he stays on his feet.
- Norton* But what do I see? Isn't that Jim Pinkerton himself sitting over there! What dirty business are you now engaged in to swindle yourself to another fortune? It was long since you paid me any taxes!
- Pinkerton* No, it wasn't at all.
- Norton* Yes, it was several days ago.
- Pinkerton* How much are you bent on squeezing out of me this time, you imperial bloodsucker?
- Norton* Two dollars will last long.
- Pinkerton* Thanks to fortune you are cheap as an emperor to keep in state. That's the only reason why you are allowed to be the emperor of America.
- Norton* It's called prudent politics. Wasn't it king Jesus who said, that the lowest would be the highest? That's making life an art, Pinkerton! I have no material pretensions but the higher dignity and integrity and therefore deserve every homage I get!
- Pinkerton* Exactly. Go to your drink now. You already talked me over too many times.
- Bartender* Your drink, your majesty. (*serves the drink on the bar*)
- Norton* My breakfast is waiting. Pardon me, gentlemen, but I must mind my obligations. (*pulls off with his rattling sword towards the bar*)
- Pinkerton* He lives high on boasting, but no one minds as long as it is funny.
- Dodd* What's really the use of his sword?
- Pinkerton* An ornament. The world renowned pianist Franz Liszt in Europe has a similar one which he drags about. It's the burden of the vanity mark of nobility.
(*Another gang invades the bar, hard worn sailors led by a captain.*)
- Great Scott! It's captain Trent!
- Dodd* Who is captain Trent?

Pinkerton One of five survivors from *Flying Scud*, which went down by the Midway islands. They were saved in the nick of time by the *Tempest* and have just come ashore. The captain must have been delivering his log account.

Trent Double rounds to all of us!

Voices It's captain Trent.

From *Flying Scud*.

Only four survivors besides the captain.

They really look knocked about.

Worse than the emperor of America.

The one there who looks ill, is that the Swede?

No, the Swede is not among them.

But they saved the canary. (*One of the sailors keeps a canary in a cage.*)

At least something.

A guest Tell us now, captain Trent! How did it happen?

Captain (after a few deep gulps) We had no chance. We had splendid weather all the way, and then suddenly the storm broke loose pouring all the wraths and curses of hell over us all at once. Heaven and ocean disappeared and gathered together as one attacking us from all sides. The ship went down to starboard when the storm came from north northwest. It was over in a few minutes. We were wrecked in no time. All we could do was to swim for our lives, and it was a hair's breadth from all of us going down. Fortunately the islands were in the way of the storm, but there was nothing to live on when we came ashore. If the *Tempest* hadn't passed by...

Another guest You were bloody lucky to be saved already the day after. There was no water on that island.

Captain Yes, but it was brackish. There was no wood though, so we could make no fire.

A third But how on earth couldn't you avoid the island? It is quite alone out there in the middle of the ocean, and it isn't big.

Captain No, that's not how it happened. We anchored at the island, because we believed there would be a coal station there. There was none at all. It's just a sand bank and coral reefs. But in the lagoon we were caught in a dead calm for seven days and then ran out of water, which already had gone putrid – that's partly why we anchored there. Late on the seventh day it started to blow a little, but we took the risk and went out, when suddenly the wind turned and the storm came, which drove us up on the banks. We had no chance.

Pinkerton (to Dodd, who makes sketches) Take the opportunity, Dodd. Such picturesque and weather-worn faces directly from a shipwreck you'll not find every day.

First guest How many died? Why did they die?

Captain John Wallen from Finland drowned when he tried to put out a boat together with Charles Holdersen from Sweden, who also drowned. They couldn't swim. John Brown broke his arm but survived. He can tell you about our struggle.

Third guest The ship with its cargo was insured for ten thousand dollars. The wreck will be auctioned tomorrow. Could the cargo have managed?

Captain All of the rice cargo is probably ruined, but we had some other valuable cargo from Hongkong as well.

3 What?

Captain Silk, tea, and other Chinese bric-a-brac. And that cargo lay further to aft. We foundered on the coral reef but passed across it and landed on starboard side in the sand, where she lies securely. The water entered from the front, so the cargo in the aft could be intact.

Pinkerton (catches on directly) There is our chance, Loudun! A wreck at no cost! We could have her for a hundred dollars!

Dodd It's rather far away.

Pinkerton But the cargo could be worth it! Consider! Silk! Tea! A whole ship loaded with Chinese treasures and secrets! This is for us!

Dodd You mean the journey there and the salvage must be worth more than a hundred dollars?

Pinkerton Many times more! A stroke of luck! We must take the chance!

Dodd If the tip is that hot, please keep quiet about it.

Pinkerton Of course! We'll immediately steal our way out of here and not bother at all about that bluffing captain's tall tales! (*Dodd and Penkerton sneak out. The emperor and captain Trent go on keeping court at the bar.*)

Scene 2. The auction.

Longhurst You are in the circle, Pinkerton. You can make any bid. So you believe the vessel is worth five thousand and you could get it for a hundred?

Pinkerton I talked with the captain. Here he is. (*enter the captain*) May I present captain Trent to you, Longhurst, one of the most honest captains in the world.

Longhurst Interested in the fate of your old ship, Trent?

Captain I was after all her captain.

Pinkerton Tell us what you think of the cargo, captain.

Captain There is not much value in the rice cargo. But the coconut oil, the tea and the silk cargo should be rather intact aft.

Longhurst And you estimate its value to five thousand?

Captain Also the brig was coppered last year, and it has about hundred and fifty ells of anchor chain. It's no gold mine, but she isn't worthless.

Longhurst Bravo, Pinkerton. You have free hands. Pay her fee for a hundred dollars and make a good deal. (*leaves*)

Auctioneer (finds all present) Well, gentlemen, what is your bid for it all?

Pinkerton A hundred dollars.

Auctioneer A hundred dollars bid.

Bellairs And fifty.

Auctioneer Sorry, was that another bid?

Bellairs Yes, it was – a hundred and fifty.

Loudun (to Jim) Obviously there are other interests as well.

Pinkerton He has no chance. – Two hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Loudun Who is he?

Pinkerton I have no idea. He looks shabby. – Three hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Captain (starts whispering excitedly with one of his crew members)

Loudun Jim, look at Trent. I'll bet he expected this.

Pinkerton Yes, there is something fishy going on. – Four hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton I must have Longhurst connected on this. Where is he?

Loudun He went out.

Pinkerton Fetch him! – Five hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Six hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Seven hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Eight hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

(enter Longhurst, sits down beside Pinkerton)

Longhurst I'll find out who he is. You can safely go up to five thousand. We'll take care of the bid.

Pinkerton Nine hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton He looks like being on the bum. Who would like to engage such a pettifogger?

Longhurst We'll soon find out with whom we are dealing.

Pinkerton A thousand!

Bellair And fifty.

(A messenger arrives with a folded note to Longhurst. He unfolds it and reads.)

Longhurst "Harry D. Bellairs, lawyer, defendant of Clara Varden, twice on the point of losing his rights."

Pinkerton Yes, that's what he looks like. – Eleven hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Longhurst No one with money could have resorted to such a weird type. He must be bluffing. Bluff as well, Pinkerton. If he passes five thousand he will have himself to blame. So this is your partner, Jim? Pleased to meet you! *(shakes hands with Loudun)*

Dodd And you. *(Longhurst leaves.)*

Pinkerton Twelve hundred!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Well what did you think of the great man?
Auctioneer Well, Pinkerton, a higher bid?
Pinkerton Two thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Captain (*grows pale and more and more tense and paralysed of excitement*)
Dodd Trent looks like getting soft. Give him another push.
Pinkerton Three thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton What do you mean? Are the captain and the pettifogger in league with each other? Why will they not let us have the wreck?
Dodd It smells fishy by far.
Pinkerton You said it. – Four thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Dodd The captain looks guilty.
Pinkerton There is something murky about it. But we will find it out. – Four thousand five hundred!
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton We have soon reached the limit. Longhurst set the limit at five thousand.
Dodd Make a bid of five thousand then and have done with it.
Pinkerton Five thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton What next?
Dodd I take it on me. If you wish to go higher, I will stand for it with all I own.
Pinkerton (*relieved*) Five thousand one hundred dollars.
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton What could it be? What do you think?
Dodd I have no idea. But look at that pettifogger. He will probably go to ten thousand.
Pinkerton Six thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton Seven thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton Eight thousand!
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton Nine thousand! (*more and more curious spectators are gathering*)
Bellairs And fifty.
Pinkerton Ten thousand!
Bellairs (*more and more smug, smiles*) And fifty.
Pinkerton Ten thousand and a hundred dollars! (*suddenly grasps Dodd, has had an idea*)
Dodd What is it?
Pinkerton I get it! A Chinese vessel! Opium!

Dodd (realizes the probability) You must be right. How much could the cargo be worth?

Pinkerton Anything without limits.

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Eleven thousand! – But Trent and the pettifogger must know the worth of the treasure. Or else he would never bid so high.

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Twelve thousand!

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Fifteen thousand!

(The audience is dumbfounded and hold their breaths)

Bellairs And fifty.

Pinkerton Sixteen thousand!

Bellairs And fifty.

Longhurst (returns, to Jim) You have crossed the limit.

Pinkerton It is my speculation! – Seventeen thousand!

Longhurst You don't know what you are doing. You are bolting in blindness.

Pinkerton My business mind never fails me.

Bellairs Eighteen thousand.

Pinkerton And fifty.

Bellairs Twenty thousand.

Pinkerton And fifty.

(Whispers and mumblings are heard from the audience: "Opium!")

Bellairs Twentyfive thousand! *(scribbles a note)* Could anyone get me an errand boy?

Dodd He is asking for directions.

Pinkerton He is asking for money. He has become uncertain. Shall I hit it now? It's probably the right moment.

Dodd Hit as hard as you like.

Pinkerton Thirty thousand dollars!

Bellairs Thirty-five thousand!

Pinkerton Forty thousand!

Bellairs (pauses, hesitates)

Dodd He has been bluffing all the way. Now he tries get some time.

Pinkerton He can't give up until his messenger has returned.

Auctioneer (raises his hammer, threateningly)

Bellairs Forty thousand and five dollars.

Pinkerton Forty-five thousand!

Bellairs Forty-five thousand and five dollars.

Pinkerton (thick) Fifty thousand.

Auctioneer Excuse me, Mr Pinkerton, did I hear you right? Did you raise the bid to fifty thousand dollars?

Pinkerton Yes, I did. Sorry that my voice grew thick.

Bellairs (rising, excited) I am sorry, Mr Auctioneer, but I'll have to consult my client on the telephone. I am representative for a gentleman to whom I just sent a note.

Auctioneer That is no concern of ours. I am only here to auction the wreck. Will you raise the bid?

Bellairs Fifty thousand is the bid that my client set as a limit, but if you will allow me a few moments on the telephone...

Auctioneer Nonsense. If you will not raise the bid it goes to Mr Pinkerton.

Bellairs I warn you. Be careful with what you are doing. You are here to sell the wreck on the account of the insurance company and not for Douglas B. Longhurst. The auction has been interrupted a few times earlier to give Mr Longhurst an opportunity to communicate with his representatives. These irregularities have raised some attention.

Auctioneer No one complained at the time. You should have made objections at once.

Bellairs I am not here to run the auction.

Auctioneer But I am. Fifty thousand dollars for the wreck of *Flying Scud* – one, two, three, (*hammers*) sold!

Jim So, Loudun, it's over. We own a wreck for fifty thousand dollars.

Dodd Can we pay it?

Jim We have to, in one way or another. We simply have to get that credit. Write a check of what you have. We'll meet again in an hour at Black Tom's bar.

(The auction audience disperse eagerly discussing the auction. Bellairs has an argument with the auctioneer. Jim disappears. When Loudon makes way through the crowd he collides with Bellairs' errand boy, who continues up to Bellairs with a note, who reads it – and lets his arms sink in despair, completely shattered.)

Scene 3. The bar.

Morgan Let me congratulate you on your acquisition. You and your friend stuck it out to the last drop.

Dodd We don't know yet if it was worth any congratulations. We were carried away.

Morgan Yes. Your counterpart drove up the price from a hundred dollars to fifty thousand. How do you know there was opium in the cargo?

Dodd We don't. My partner drew that conclusion as the only possible explanation to the attraction of the wreck for the counterpart.

Morgan Perhaps you walked into a trap.

Dodd No, I don't think so. But we bought a pig in a sack, and we don't know if the pig is a bird or a fish.

Morgan I have never witnessed a similar auction duel, and I can't understand how anyone could hire someone like Bellairs. It's mortally dangerous to entrust him with the least amount, and here he had free hands with fifty thousand. It can't be someone from San Francisco who hired him.

Dodd Perhaps he represented the owners?

Morgan No, the owners in London could not have anything to do with the contraband traffic of opium between Hongkong and San Francisco. At most I could suspect the captain, but I can't imagine him having any resources at all. Possibly he could act for someone here in San Francisco, but in that case that pettifogger would never have been hired. We move in circles in our speculations.

Dodd The captain and Bellairs did not know each other.

Morgan Are you sure? But the captain was deeply engaged.

Dodd Indeed he was.

Morgan I advise you to take the first boat to Midway. Or else someone could get there before you, and both captain Trent and Bellairs knew better than you what the wreck was all about. Good luck.

Dodd With whom have I had the honour of speaking?

Morgan Judge Morgan. Have a nice day.

Dodd All San Francisco has engaged in this affair because of its sensational worth. Yes, I think we really should speed it up. But where is Jim loitering?

(enter Pinkerton somewhat wobbly)

Well, how did it come off? Not very well, I trust.

Jim No, but I managed to select every penny, but we have only three months' time. We have to keep at it, Loudon.

Dodd Of course, Jim.

Jim That cargo just has to be worth fifty thousand. Or else... You remember that Bellairs was inclined to go higher?

Dodd Yes.

Jim If he could give us a hundred thousand for her...

Dodd Do you think it's possible?

Jim It's worth testing. I have asked him here. *(enter Bellairs)* Here he is.

Bellairs Gentlemen, and Mr Jim Pinkerton, I am willing to take over the deal without any charges at all for you.

Jim What does that mean?

Bellairs That my client takes over the wreck without any losses on your part.

Jim I am sorry, but the wreck is ours, and we intend to keep it, if you haven't got more to offer than that.

Bellairs You must then know more about the wreck than I. My impression was that you bought it for a price which wasn't at all congruent with the value of the cargo.

Jim I would then rather prefer to negotiate with your client directly.

Bellairs That is unfortunately impossible.

Jim Why?

Bellairs I could call him, but I can't give you his address.

Dodd I already have his address, but it's of no use.

Jim (surprised) How did you get it?

Bellairs Then you don't need me any more. Goodbye, gentlemen. *(leaves)*

Dodd It doesn't matter. He isn't here any more. It was a certain Mr Dickson with a very English accent. I happened to hear when Bellairs called him up after the

auction and got the number. Then I called him myself to hear who it was. As soon as he heard it wasn't Bellairs he hang up.

Jim What did you tell him?

Dodd I asked him why he wanted to buy *Flying Scud*.

Jim And he rang off and immediately departed in a panic?

Dodd That's how it seems. He had paid his rent for a week in advance.

Jim This affair constantly grows more mysterious.

Dodd To say the least. And he left without any baggage with only a small hand bag. But that's not the worst of it.

Jim What is the worst?

Dodd There was a ship leaving today for China and Honolulu.

Jim You mean...

Dodd It's a possibility if not even a probability.

Jim He got away to get there before us! What did you say his name was?

Dodd Dickson.

Jim An ordinary name. It was probably not his real name.

Dodd I don't think so either.

Jim We must immediately get started and fix that schooner, so that we get on our way! But we must have a captain and crew. Why not hire that captain Trent, who knows something about what it is all about?

Dodd It's not possible.

Jim Why not?

Dodd He has left.

Jim He as well??!!

Dodd He and Brown and Hardy and the cook – all the surviving crew except one person.

Jim Who is missing?

Dodd Elias Goddedaal, the boatswain, the Swede. He appears to have been lying sick all the way home from Midway.

Jim Then you investigated everything.

Dodd As soon as it started to smell of a mysery I became interested. The mystery has constantly grown deeper since then.

Jim And with a vengeance. We can't let it go now, Loudon. We have to get to the bottom of this now.

Dodd Exactly my conclusion.

Jim Even if you have to do it alone.

Dodd What do you mean?

Jim You shall go alone to Honolulu, Dodd, and manage the wreck. I have to stay here and hold the fort. Do you think you can make it within ninety days?

Dodd If I have to I must.

Jim Exactly. Necessity has no laws. You just have to make it.

Dodd I will make it.

Jim And I trust you, partner. (*They cordially shake hands and drink to the bottom to each other.*) Do you know what our toast is?
Dodd Our success?
Jim And a third part. Why do you think I can't follow you?
Dodd Business?
Jim One business. My wife.
Dodd (astounded) Are you married?
Jim Not yet. Tomorrow. We will be just in time before you leave. Welcome to my wedding.
Dodd Jim! I almost thought you had let me down
Jim Never. You never let me down. A marriage only actualizes your ability to stay true and expands it. Only a man who is faithful to his wife can also be faithful to his friends.
Dodd So we are to salvage the fortune in her name?
Jim Cheers to that! (*They heartily toast each other again.*)

Act II scene 1.

Captain Nares I just wish to know what this is all about.
Jim You got the whole story, Arty! There is no problem!
Nares That's what makes me suspect a problem. I have never sailed with anyone over me before.
Jim He is not over you! He is just a super cargo! He will only mind the business! You run the ship and the voyage and see to it that we reach our destination and accomplish the salvage. He is actually with us just to check what can be salvaged. He is a land-lubber, Arty! A failed artist! I found him in Paris where he was botching about ridiculous statues, why I made him interested in better business instead and tempted him to San Francisco.
Nares What kind of a man is he really?
Jim A Scotsman.
Nares That is at least better than an Englishman. But it is an English ship we are supposed to plunder, isn't it?
Jim Yes.
Nares That makes it more attractive, and I like the challenge of it. Captain Trent and his gang have sailed in advance to get there before us, but we will catch him up. You have my word on that.
Jim That's why you are hired.
Nares Is it really about opium?
Jim It can't very well be anything else.
Nares How did you plan to unload it? I am not used to smuggling opium.
Jim It would be best if some smaller ship could unload you before you reach the harbour.

Nares That can be arranged. And if captain Trent gets there before us anyway?
Jim Shoot him down.
Nares There are alternative methods.
Jim Use any method. We must salvage this deal. Or else I will make the worst bankruptcy ever on the American west coast.
Nares We shall make it. I never said no to a challenge. That's what makes you want to go on living.
Jim That's the spirit. I knew I could trust you.
Nares We sail tomorrow.

Scene 2. The empty galley.
(*Enter Nares with Dodd. They take a seat.*)

Arty Nares Well, my super cargo, we have concluded our preliminary investigation, and nothing makes sense. We found the wreck, which wasn't any wreck. Captain Trent ought to have reached here before us, but he has not been here. Do you have any inkling of what could have happened here on board this ghost ship?

Dodd You are the expert. I understand nothing, but you have drawn your conclusions. You know what a wreck ought to look like and can compare this with others. I can't.

Nares This is no wreck. There is no hole in the hull. It never foundered. And this galley was not abandoned in any haste or panic by sailors escaping for their lives. They have been sitting here in peace and quiet having their coffee and smoking their pipes. The cups are emptied with coffee-grounds left in the bottom. The cigarette fag-ends are carefully put out and butted. No lifeboat has been launched in panic that could have led to the death of two sailors and a broken arm of a third. The fresh water on board is not at all putrid but perfectly potable. There was not much water to pump out of the ship. She could have been made afloat again and calmly sailed back to San Francisco.

Dodd The mystery thickens.

Nares Indeed. The only certain thing is that captain Trent appears as a downright liar. Everything he has told is perfect nonsense. Nothing fits, nothing at all.

Dodd And then we have the coffers.

Nares Yes, everyone has brought with him what he wanted, they are all open, except that of the Chinese, who has left all the most precious items of a Chinaman including an opium pipe and his supply of opium. If all the others brought all they wanted with them in peace and perfect order, why did the Chinaman leave all his possessions locked up in a coffer if he wasn't dead? Well, what do you get out of the exotic collection of humanities in the ship`

Dodd Someone on board has been very literate. Here are Shakespeare's collected works and several classical novels, here are encyclopedias and unusual

maritime instruction books, but most remarkable of all is the lead-pencil and the sketch book.

Nares Why?

Dodd They belong to an artist. I was an artist myself and know with what instruments an artist works. No one can write with this pencil, because it is the sketch pencil of an artist. To all this is added the photography.

Nares The photography?

Dodd Yes, I don't know how to explain it. I found a photography of the ship's collected crew.

Nares Well?

Dodd The captain of the photography is not captain Trent, and the four surviving crew members are not on the photography.

Nares How can you know that for sure?

Dodd When Trent and his companions entered Black Tom's bar, I made sketches of them. Here are the sketches. Could you find any one of them looking at all like anyone of the men on the picture?

Nares I'll be damned. The wrong crew on the wrong ship? And the paper from Sydney dated thirteen days before the shipwreck? How could they have got that paper in time from Hongkong?

Dodd Here on the photography are all the names written of the crew members. Captain Trent, John Brown, the Chinese, the Kanak, John Hardy, they are all here, but those were not the types that appeared in San Francisco. They all appeared under false names taken from this ship, except possibly Elias Goddedaal, whom I never saw.

Nares But wasn't he also in San Francisco?

Dodd Yes, but he did not appear with the others. I heard he was ill.

Nares In brief, it's a total mystery. The only thing that fits is the name of the ship. Everything else is just an unfathomable incomprehensible overwhelming charade.

Dodd Yes.

Nares I am sorry, Dodd, but the more I find out of this ship, and the more the mystery outgrows our minds, the more convinced I am that you and Jim Pinkerton have drawn the worst blank in you life.

Dodd But why did that pettifogger raise the bid? What was his interest in this mystery abyss of a ghost ship?

Nares We still haven't found out everything.

Dodd No. It feels as if we are further off from even the beginning than ever.

Scene 3. The crew on deck.

Nares Listen! We have toiled for weeks and not found anything to meet our expectations, but we know there must be opium somewhere on board. We haven't given up yet. You have complained and quarrelled and wished to give up, and I have

continued pushing you with lashes and beatings and kicks. Now your super cargo here wishes to test another method, namely carrots. Maybe that will suit you better, you donkeys.

Dodd (steps forth) As captain Arty said, there must be opium somewhere on board the wreck, and we must find it. To encourage and stimulate your efforts I hereby offer 150 dollars to the one who first finds the smuggled opium in the cargo. If anyone can find out where it could be, he will have 125, and the rest will go to the one who finds it. So I wish you the best of luck on your good hunting, my friends.

Nares You have laboured hard and with efficiency, but you could do even better. To make you do it I increase the bid to 250 dollars in gold.

All Hurray!

Various voices We shall find it!

Go on demolishing the ship, boys!

We still have much to do!

Get going!

A Chinese I have suggestion.

Nares Let's hear it, Chong.

Chinese I have great experience.

Nares We are waiting.

Chinese Man smuggle opium in rice.

Nares How can you smuggle opium in rice?

Chinese They pack in mats. In mats could be opium.

Nares All right, boys! We have six thousand sacks to investigate. Each one shall be cut up and carefully examined.

The crew Get going! To work!

The rice mats!

That's the last chance!

(The crew starts immediately and dissolves.)

Nares I am afraid it's really the last chance, Dodd. If we don't find the opium in the mats, there is no opium.

Dodd Until the next man, who comes here and finds the wreck, accidentally stumbles on it.

Nares We'll see. The Chinaman is probably right. There are no more clever smugglers than the Chinese.

Act III scene 1. The galley.

Nares I am afraid it's over, Dodd.

Dodd Yes, it's just to admit that we have lost the game.

Nares Some hundred pounds of opium is not enough.

Dodd It's utterly incredible! Out of six thousand bales of rice we found opium in only twenty!

Nares The Chinese was right. Without him we wouldn't have found anything. But I expect it will hardly cover your and Jim Pinkerton's expenses?

Dodd At best it will cover about 15 percent.

Nares I am sorry.

Dodd What do we do now?

Nares Go home. But first I beg to take care of the wreck in my way.

Dodd Granted. It's worthless anyway.

Nares Exactly.

Dodd When did you first begin to suspect that the wreck was worthless?

Nares Almost at once. When we found the ship money with all the receipts. A captain is responsible with his honour, honesty and life for the expenses and salaries of his crew. At a shipwreck the ship accounts with all receipts is the first thing he saves. Here everything was intact and untouched. That captain was no real captain.

Dodd Where do you think he is now?

Nares We shall never know. We shall never know who the false captain was who appeared in San Francisco. We shall never know what happened to the real crew of this ship. We shall probably never know anything.

Dodd I have another final riddle for you to add to all the others.

Nares Well?

Dodd I found a wreck fire on the shore.

Nares A wreck fire? But they were rescued almost the next day after the shipwreck?

Dodd That fire had been burning for weeks.

Nares But there is no wood on the island.

Dodd No. And they hadn't taken any wood from the wreck.

Nares Another shipwreck from an earlier year? No whitened human bones in the sand?

Dodd No. The wreck fire was rather recent, not older than a month.

Nares May the devil take this hell island and all its phantoms from that damned ghost ship, which is a downright liane jungle of mysteries! Let's leave at once.

Dodd By Honolulu to at least sell the opium.

Nares Of course.

Scene 2. The harbour of Honolulu.
(*Sharpe and Fowler come climbing on board.*)

Nares Welcome on board, gentlemen.

Sharpe We are looking for Mr Loudon Dodd.

Dodd That's me.

Fowler We are here by the instructions of Jim Pinkerton.

Dodd How is he?

Sharpe Not very well. Bankruptcy and nervous breakdown.

Dodd Already! But we have only been gone for three weeks!

Fowler That doesn't help. He had one liability too much. The bankruptcy involved debts of 250,000 dollars.

Dodd Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars!

Fowler He could only raise seven percent.

Sharpe Then his health broke down.

Dodd And his young wife? How did she take it?

Fowler She takes care of him.

Sharpe But we are here on business, and we know what cargo you saved from the wreck.

Dodd Gentlemen, one moment, please. This is shocking news, which I have to discuss with captain Nares before I can make any decisions.

Sharpe We must deal with this at once. The customs have already seen us. The anchoring of your ship here by Honolulu was not exactly invisible.

Dodd If the customs had observed us they would have been here already. I am not used to making business under the threat of a gun.

Fowler Give him a break, Sharpe.

Sharpe Okey, Mr Dodd, you have ten minutes. (*leaves Dodd in peace with the captain*)

Nares I am sorry, Dodd.

Dodd This is the worst cold shower. I never suspected that he was insolvent.

Nares You must help him. He is your partner and has done everything for you.

Dodd You mean sell the opium to those rascals, act as a criminal opium smuggler and provider for the good cause of helping out my partner from the hospital?

Nares I see no alternative for you. You can't be moral against the directions of destiny. You just have to follow.

Dodd You will then be my accomplice.

Nares Yes, I will. I take that risk. We have after all made friends on this failed enterprise. I can't let you down now.

Dodd Thanks, captain Nares. Then you give me no choice.

Nares We are in the same boat.

Dodd Call back the dealers. (*Nares whistles, Sharpe and Fowler return.*)

The opium cargo is yours for 70 dollars a pound.

Fowler How many pounds is it?

Dodd A hundred.

Sharpe Only a hundred? There must have been more in the ship?

Dodd I am only selling a hundred.

Fowler The market price is 40 dollars a pound.

Dodd Not in Honolulu. There it is 80.

Sharpe We can blow and send the customs on you.

Dodd If you leave the ship without a deal we shall weigh anchor at once. For me it's the same.

Fowler 60 dollars, Mr Dodd.

Dodd Well then, 60 dollars. The cargo is yours. Take care of it at once and disappear.

Fowler (gives his hand) A pleasure to do business with you, Mr Dodd.

Dodd (accepts it) I hope it will be for once only.

Fowler (calls) Send some people to unload the cargo! At once!

Sharpe We shall manage this before midnight, Mr Dodd.

Dodd I sincerely hope so.

Nares Our men will help.

Dodd The better cooperation, the higher efficiency. It will benefit us all.

(They get down to action.)

Scene 3. A joint in Honolulu.

Dodd You don't mean to say that you are from *Tempest*, the ship that saved the crew from *Flying Scud* from Hull?

Officer Yes, and that was a sad shipwrecked lot indeed. The captain had both his arms in slings, and the mate had broken one arm. A third one was badly wounded...

Dodd And Elias Goddedaal? Was he one of them?

Officer Of course he was there, but that was not his real name. He was an Englishman and recognized by Sebright. 'Hi, Norrie!' he said when he saw Goddedaal, who then turned pale as a corpse for being recognized and was hospitalized at once for the rest of the journey.

Dodd Would it be possible to meet this Sebright? Is he here?

Officer (calls) Hey, Sebright! Here is someone who wants to ask you some questions about your pal Norrie Carthew!

Sebright (appearing reluctantly) Why are you interested in him?

Dodd I was the one who bought the wreck of *Flying Scud* and was ruined in the bargain. Would I then not be interested in the story of the wreck?

Sebright Norris Carthew is a member of one of the finest families in England. We went together at Eton. I immediately recognized him and wondered what he was doing here as shipwrecked, but he was so shocked by being recognized that I couldn't see him any more. The doctor took care of him.

Dodd So he is of a rich family?

Sebright To the highest degree, and sole heir after the death of his elder brother.

Dodd I begin to discern the connection. Would it be possible to see the doctor?

Officer Join us tomorrow at the gunroom, and you will meet the doctor and all who were on the *Tempest*. Come for dinner, by all means. You are invited.

Dodd Thanks for your kind invitation, and I will be glad to attend.

Scene 4. After the dinner.
(Dodd alone with doctor Urqhart.)

Dodd I now understand the whole story but can still not quite understand it. That's why I have turned to you.

Doctor I am afraid that I don't understand what I could help you with.

Dodd The secret of Elias Goddedaal/Norris Carthew. It was he who by a representative tried to buy the wreck, why the price was raised to exorbitant levels, why all got the impression that it must be extremely valuable, why we got it for such a price that I and my partner were ruined and he ended up in hospital after bankruptcy and a nervous breakdown. I just want to know the meaning of it all.

Doctor All I can tell you is that there was an excuse for everything.

Dodd How is it possible?

Doctor I can't tell you anything more.

Dodd You isolated the shipwrecked after he had been recognized by an old student fellow. Why did he have to be isolated?

Doctor On his own request. I can't tell you more.

Dodd I have had the mystery explained to me in a flashlight, which only gave me a glimpse of the entire mystery. I ask you to help me on, if you can. Or else I must promise you that I will continue my research.

Doctor Unfortunately I can't help you. I have no contact with the patient any more, and as a doctor I have to observe the obligation of silence. But I can't hinder you from carrying on your research.

Dodd Thank you, doctor. At least you will not then obstruct me.

Doctor I wish I could help you more in your difficult bankruptcy, but unfortunately my duties as a doctor will not give me allowance.

Dodd Thanks anyway. *(They continue drinking and enjoying.)*

Act IV scene 1. Black Tom's bar in San Francisco.

(Jim sits alone at a table with a glass of whiskey. He fits well into the rough lot of bums and human wrecks of the harbour. Enter Dodd.)

Dodd Jim! To find you here!

Jim Welcome back, Dodd. As you see, things have changed.

Dodd I got your letter in Honolulu.

Jim At least I am out of the hospital, but there is not much left of me. So the wreck was a total flop?

Dodd It didn't cover more than 15% of the costs.

Jim That's better than what I could muster. I could only scrape up seven percent of my debts.

Dodd But how could the debts grow so astronomical? The wreck cost us no more than a fifth of the bankruptcy!

Jim I fooled you all the way, Dodd. You must forgive me. I withheld most from you, since you were young and inexperienced and really just a poor artist from Paris. I couldn't initiate you in all my business.

Dodd So besides the wreck you had a lot of other precarious enterprises going on?

Jim Mildly speaking. Forgive me, Dodd. Finally the bubble burst, and at least it was not your fault. It was all caused by myself and completely my own responsibility.

Dodd How much do I owe in the bankruptcy? What is my share of the debt?

Jim I am sorry, Dodd. Have a drink and pull yourself together. You need it.

Dodd (quickly gets a double and sweeps half of it) Tell me the worst, Jim.

Jim I did as well as I could, Dodd. I really tried hard and worked day and night to try to satisfy the creditors, but the business was too much muddled up. I couldn't sort it out.

Dodd A figure, Jim. How much?

Jim Try to take it as a man, Dodd. I had to sacrifice you.

Dodd Sacrifice me? How?

Jim Your part of the partnership. I never put you into it.

Dodd What do you mean?

Jim I had to keep you out of it, Dodd. You wouldn't have understood anything anyway. That would only have made it worse.

Dodd To the point, Jim. I followed you in everything. When you asked me to write a check of what I had for the wreck I took all I had. I never kept anything from you. How much do I owe?

Jim Don't you understand? I never made you my partner formally. I kept you out of my business. It was simpler that way.

Dodd Which means?

Jim You have no part in the bankruptcy.

Dodd What the devil do you mean?

Jim You don't owe anyone one cent.

Dodd (tries to recover, completely disconcerted) And you apologise for that? You have a bad conscience for that? Jim, you are much better than I thought. So the entire bankruptcy is only yours and no one else's?

Jim You have no right to give me a single cent, Dodd. Can you forgive me?

Dodd Jim, this calls for a celebration!

Jim The bankruptcy?

Dodd That you delivered me from it! And when I came home to San Francisco there was a letter from Scotland informing me that my grandfather had died and left me seventeen thousand pounds. Seventeen thousand pounds, Jim!

Jim What's that in dollars?

Dodd It can't be measured in dollars! It's a fortune! An inexhaustible fortune!

Jim Dodd, don't joke cruelly with an old broken man.

Dodd It's no joke, Jim. You have played a joke on me all the time by insisting that it was a crime against me to keep me out of the bankruptcy. But I can't keep you out of my happiness! Fetch your wife, and let's go out and celebrate in champagne!

Jim Dodd, it isn't true!

Dodd It *is* true!

Jim Tell me that I am dreaming.

Dodd You are awake! This is reality!

Jim (lower) Does that mean that you pardon me?

Dodd Don't be silly now! Come and let's do all San Francisco and celebrate!
(*drags him out*)

Scene 2. A noisy pub in London.

Bellairs Honestly speaking, I don't understand why you have followed me all the way to England if it was not to share my purposes.

Dodd On the contrary, I started following you only to anticipate you in your purposes.

Bellairs I have never been so surprised as when I found you on the same boat across the Atlantic as I.

Dodd I will make the situation entirely clear to you. After you first tried to fool me into your trap...

Bellairs It was no trap. It was a generous offer.

Dodd Shut up. After I commanded you never to try to make any contact with me again, you nosed up the address to your former employer by those marine officers of the *Tempest* when they visited San Francisco, whereupon you immediately left for the only purpose of looking up your confidence man in England to press him for money.

Bellairs It's not that simple. I have a divorced wife to support, and I am barred from practising as a lawyer in San Francisco. Do you know what that means? I have no livelihood.

Dodd You should have done better as a lawyer.

Bellairs I did perfectly well as a lawyer! I just had a stroke of bad luck! I was swindled! My wife deserted me! I have fought hard all my life and never got anything out of it! And then this Dickson turns up like from heaven and gives me authority to dispose of 50,000 dollars just to buy a worthless wreck. It was my life's biggest deal! And you slipped in on the same banana peel by that bankrupt swindler Pinkerton stumbling into the same deal – and gets away with it! You bought the wreck, you could take care of the cargo undisturbed, which no one else ever learned anything about, not even your partner the bankrupt swindler Pinkerton, and for some reason you burned the wreck before you abandoned it. When you come back to San Francisco you party on all the bars in town with that bankrupt swindler Pinkerton bathing in champagne, as if your bankruptcy was something to celebrate,

and afterwards I learn that you have received a fortune from England. Who could have given you that if not the mysterious Mr Dickson? I am not so stupid as you think. I can add two and two. I must take for granted that Dickon, who commissioned me to buy the wreck for at most fifty thousand, must have paid you to destroy it. And why do you pay to have something destroyed? To get rid of evidence! So *Flying Scud* had a secret which Dickson was willing to pay anything to have it buried alive!

Dodd You are mad.

Bellairs No, only desperate. That deal was a gold mine, and I want my part of the gold. I have a divorced wife to think of!

Dodd Poor man. I will make sure that you will not have a penny of that Dickson, alias Norris Carthew, whom it is my duty to protect against you, since he has a right of privacy and since *Flying Scud* probably is a sensitive trauma to him. So for your own sake I ask you to leave him in peace. Instead I will pay your return journey to San Francisco. Without doubt your divorced wife is waiting for you there. I will gladly give you a support of 25 dollars a month as long as you need it, so that you will manage.

Bellairs (rising, furious) I didn't ask for any alimony! Who do you think you are? Do you think you can treat a hard working lawyer in any disgraceful way? I am educated! I know the entire English poetry! I know my Shakespeare and my Edgar Allan Poe! But you are a swine if you think you can use me, trample on me and humiliate me! I could never think that of you!

Dodd Take it easy, Sir. I never wanted to insult you. I only wished to help you.

Bellairs Help! By turning me into a beggar and receiver of alimonies! By sending me home to the mob in San Francisco, who will just flay me like they flayed your colleague that bankrupt swindler Pinkerton! Tar and feathers! That's what you offer me!

Dodd Try to pull yourself together, poor man!

Bellairs Never! I am an honest man and have never done anything dishonest! I am a victim to this false world of only swindlers and opportunists! All America is corrupt, and only I am honest and honourable! (*lower*) You should have known better, Mr Dodd, than to make an enemy out of me! (*leaves with false pride*)

Dodd Talk about American double standards. That's the language of a true American blackmailer! (*finally has his beer*)

Scene 3. The castle of Stallbridge-le-Carthew.

Higgs Our lady at least came out today.

Mrs Higgs That was about time. She can't just go on sitting in her room grieving all the time.

Another servant Was there any special reason for her coming out? Was there any news?

Higgs No, but two people have been here today asking questions. Americans. The first was very inquisitive and apparently a lawyer but smelled of drink. He was the classical type of a pettifogger.

Mrs Higgs What did he want?

Higgs The whereabouts of the young master.

Mrs Higgs Did he learn it?

Higgs Yes.

Mrs Higgs What did you tell him?

Higgs That he was gone for a journey. That's all we know.

Mrs Higgs Alas, yes. What about the other one?

Higgs He also came from America but was originally a Scotsman. Like the young master he was also a drawer and interested in art. He regretted that the pettifogger had anticipated him and had hoped to halt him from disturbing here.

Mrs Higgs And what did the Scotsman want?

Higgs We shall know when he comes here. I invited him.

Mrs Higgs But our old lady will also be here.

Higgs Yes. That's why I invited him. Then we shall know even more. (*A knock.*) There he is. (*gets up and opens*) Welcome, Mr Dodd.

Dodd Thanks for your kindness to invite me. I regret that I didn't get here before that pettifogger.

Higgs He didn't bother us much, and he has already left.

Dodd So? Did he find out anything?

Higgs He learned that the man he was looking for was gone away. May I ask you in my turn, why you both are so interested in the young master? What has he done to get a pettifogger from San Francisco to hunt for him?

Dodd He employed this lawyer in lack of better knowledge in San Francisco for a misfortunate affair, which I unfortunately became part of. Since then I have acquired some sympathy for your 'young master' and would like to protect him in the capacity of his colleague.

Higgs As an adventurer?

Dodd No, as an artist.

Mrs Higgs Here is our old mistress.

Old Mrs (gliding in) I see that you have company.

Higgs Mr Loudon Dodd from San Francisco, madam, but really a Scotsman.

Old Mrs San Francisco? Has he met my son?

Dodd Unfortunately not, madam, but indirectly I have been in touch with him and would like to meet him in the capacity of a fellow artist.

Old Mrs Alas, he should have been allowed to become an artist! All problems with him started when we wouldn't let him become an artist! Our family, Mr Dodd, belongs to the most ancient, noble and respected families of England. We always held the highest positions in society.

Dodd I presumed as much when I came here and was overwhelmed by your castle and the magnificent park.

Old Mrs Yes, it carries responsibility, Mr Dodd, which my younger son refused to accept. My older son assumed the responsibility but was killed last year in an accident. Shortly after that my husband died. Your colleague, my younger son, is the only one who can carry on the family. Everything depends on him, but we don't know where he is.

Dodd He has left America, and we assumed that he had come home.

Old Mrs He came home but disappeared again after only a few days and promised never to come back. That's enough for me for today, Higgs. I thank you and am tired and have my tears to dwell on with my memories until I die since both my sons are lost. I can't bear it much longer. (*rises. Higgs immediately does the same to help her out.*)

Dodd An impressive woman, straight, proud and unbroken in spite of many sorrows. Is there no other heir to this impressive estate?

Higgs Only the deceased son's daughter. Norris writes letters to her and is very fond of her.

Dodd From where?

Higgs From France.

Dodd What place?

Higgs No return address.

Dodd No postage mark?

Higgs Illegible.

Dodd May I see. (*Higgs presents a few letters.*) Here is a C, and here is a Y. CH something. Here seems to be an L. Chailly! Of course! The artists' colony! I was often there myself, the paradise for foreign artists! Whistler and Sisley were there and many others! Thanks a lot, Higgs. I will go there at once. Just tell me, why did he leave again so soon after having returned home?

Higgs He quarrelled with his mother. He was always uncompromising and self-willed. He always preferred simpler people, especially to his friends at Eton and Harrow and society people. He hated all establishment and did anything to escape any kind of social responsibility. No one could ever get him right.

Dodd And apparently not even himself. I have found two foundered ships in his tracks. Obviously I have a mission to fulfill as his colleague in art and fate, since I understand him.

Higgs Good luck, Mr Dodd.

Dodd Thank you, I will need it.

Higgs Thanks for the visit, and welcome back.

Dodd In his company in that case I hope. (*bids politely farewell*)

Mrs Higgs Do you think he stands any chance of getting our master right?

Higgs If he doesn't, it's hopeless.

Scene 4. Barbizon, Chailly-en-Bière.

Dodd Stennis! Old friend! So you are still here haunting the place!

Stennis Dodd! What has brought you back to France? Did you not abandon all art ambitions?

Dodd Yes, I jumped the frying pan and ended up in the fire, which now brought me back here, the last place on earth I thought I should have any reason to visit again. But haven't you yourself outgrown it long ago? Isn't it a bit melancholy and almost pathetic never to get out of old patterns and tracks?

Stennis Still I am not the oldest one here. There is another Englishman who is over thirty, and he is outrageously rich. He has designed the greatest studio here and wallows in good wines and fine furniture and made himself popular among the boys for his permanently open house.

Dodd Who is he?

Stennis He is called Madden and paints real good. There are some of his pictures here.

Dodd Yes, they are not bad at all. Is it impressionism or realism?

Stennis It's mostly imaginative.

Dodd But they are quite convincing. This one, for example.

Stennis The shipwrecked. An extreme fantasy.

Dodd I am not so sure. You see, I recognize that island and have been standing on exactly the same spot from which this painting was drawn.

Stennis With the shipwrecked? These emaciated, ghostly and mutilated men? Surely it must be surrealistic. A rich gentleman from the aristocracy of England could hardly have experienced something like that.

Dodd I am afraid he could have experienced anything.

Stennis Here he is. Ask him yourself.

Dodd Although we almost know each other we have never been introduced.

Stennis Do you mean to say that you know him?

Dodd If I know him!

Madden Hi, Stennis! Who is this?

Stennis A newcomer but an old friend of mine. He says he knows you.

Madden I don't know him.

Dodd Loudon Dodd, at your service. We spoke once on the telephone.

Madden I have no memory of that.

Dodd I only had time to ask one question, and then you rang off and escaped.

Madden My God! The telephone guy! Was it you?

Dodd Yes, your wreck buyer.

Madden Good God! If you knew how many sleepless nights I suffered for your sake! How I have wondered about you! Who was he? What did he want? What did he know?

Dodd I can assure you that the worries were mutual. Why did you press the price of the wreck? It drove my colleague to the worst bankruptcy of the west coast!

Madden I am sorry.

Stennis I can see that the two of you have much to discuss. I might as well leave you together, since I won't understand anything anyway.

Dodd Yes, please do, Stennis. You will get the whole story later. First I must hear it myself.

Madden And I must hear your story. I have many questions for you.

Dodd You can start with explaining the two crews that were exchanged.

Madden I might as well give you the whole story from the beginning. Prepare yourself for the worst. My mother could not endure it.

Dodd Was that why you left your family place?

Madden Yes.

Dodd Well, you may begin. I am used to the worst.

Madden I must then begin with my background.

Dodd I actually visited your home in England and learned a great deal.

Madden But certainly only a part. Did they tell you that I was the black sheep of the family and a hopeless case from the beginning? That I was absolutely indifferent to the family, its great past carrying large responsibilities, our immeasurable riches, the career and future, which angered my father and school authorities to madness? That I started early associating with the lowest kind of people, street urchins, scoundrels, bums, outsiders and ruined artists, failed playboys and alcoholics? That the only ones of my own class that I liked associating with were detached drop-outs like myself, expelled and outcasts on the way down like myself? That I was sent to Australia with a monthly support, for which I was only allowed to show myself once a month to our lawyer to get? That I took a job as a navvy and got a taste for simple hard labour together with the coarsest workmen, the last thing I was educated for? That I rejected my support to earn my own living working hard? That I became part owner of a ship and took charge of an expedition as a member and leader and therefore lost my support?

Dodd I learned nothing of all this. They only said that you were gone away. But why did you lose your support?

Madden One of the conditions for the support was that I would stay in Australia with the bums and homeless in Sydney, so that the family knew where I was and could be kept as far away from home as possible. If I left Australia my father felt that my kin could not feel safe from me any more. That was the cause of this inhuman condition, which I did not hesitate to break. Precisely when I was leaving I had a letter from my lawyer who asked me to contact him immediately. It was too late, and he had to wait for six months until I got back.

Dodd What happened?

Madden Everything happened that shouldn't have happened. Imagine the worst that could have happened, and make it double. Then raise it ten times.

Dodd Shipwreck?

Madden If only that had been enough. To begin with we were incredibly lucky. Our captain Wicks was an experienced business man, and when we went ashore on

the Gilbert islands with our cargo of copra we soon found a buyer with whom Wicks negotiated a fortune. We were blessed. On top of that he had a freight contract on San Francisco, so we headed straight for San Francisco.

Our wind was fair to begin with, but then suddenly it changed to west and grew squally and troublesome. The ship was deficient but fastest on the Pacific Ocean, no one could overtake her, but the masts and the sails were half rotten. My companion Tom Hadden was at the helm when the disaster occurred. Suddenly the foresail was torn and split in two, Tom lost his head, the mainmast boom went over, in a moment the mainmast had cracked a yard above the deck, all the mainmast rig disappeared over board, and the foresail mast followed. There we were splashing in the middle of the storm in the open sea without masts a thousand miles from Hawaii. Our situation was desperate, but only forty miles ahead were the Midway islands, and someone knew there was a coal station there. Mac, our hot-tempered north Irishman, said it was a bluff, but no one believed him. He proved right.

Dodd So you went in a lifeboat to Midway island and found yourselves marooned there without anything?

Madden Exactly. We only had our money, and all we could do was to make a fire to call the attention of the first ship that would pass by. Midway lay in the fairway from Honolulu. It became *Flying Scud* from Hull, under captain Jacob Trent, an experienced skipper since forty years but also a ruthless business man. We trusted him, but he took no chances. It was Mac's terrible temper that triggered the tragedy.

Act V scene 1.

In the galley of *Flying Scud*

Trent You wonder why I invited you for this magnificent supper with the best food and gin and sherry galore.

Tom Hadden Captain, ever since you found us on Midway you have treated us with silk gloves and kept us at a distance without letting us know your intentions.

Trent You have been treated as well as possible, as any shipwrecked would have been. That's the law of the sea. Sailors must help each other and cooperate to survive. But you proved rather well off with rather plenty of cash.

Captain Wicks We have explained the situation, Sir. We have given you the log, we have openly declared our business on the Gilbert islands, so there should be no further question marks.

Trent There aren't any either. But you happen to have made an unusually splendid deal by Butaritari, a deal far too brilliant to be bypassed, as I happen to be an old business man. My best years were as a pawnbroker in the harbour quarters of Hull. I have a nose for money, and the case is, my friends, that I can not take you on and bring you to San Francisco for nothing.

Tom Of course, captain. We are willing to pay for the passage, although we have lost our ship and the freight.

Trent You made such a glorious deal that it smells of a swindle by far.

Tom Your price, captain.

Trent Two thousand pounds.

Wicks Two thousand pounds! But that's the entire profit!

Trent You are welcome to remain here on the island if that's your preference.

Tom Captain, it's unacceptable.

Trent Not to me. It's my last price.

Mac (*getting up*) Captain, it's pure blackmail.

Trent No, it's a reasonable price. Your log could be faked, you are a suspect lot to say the least, most of you are pure land-lubbers, and you have a considerable treasure in your luggage which stinks of deceit. In brief, you are a risky crew, and I can't take any risks.

Madden Captain, I thought you were an English gentleman.

Trent I am only a business man. You made a good deal, and I am not the worse for intending to profit by it.

Mac (*losing control*) You damned extortion parasite! (*pulls his knife, can't control himself, captain Trent tries to back out, turns to escape and gets the knife in his throat, falls among the chairs under the table spurting blood.*)

Boatswain Elias Goddedaal You accursed pirates! (*grabs a chair, clubs Mac who goes down with a broken arm, and goes on hitting blindly everyone around him, smashes the head of Hemstead who goes down dead with a broken scull, continues beating the dead Hemstead like a maniac, mad of fury beating the chair to cinders, then Carthew (alias Dickson) draws his revolver, aims and fires. Goddedaal cries out in a scream of pain and falls over his victim.*)

Running feet are heard above, and the deck becomes visible. Mate Henderson shows up on the stairs, and Carthew shoots him down.)

Carthew (*calls*) You have weapons, almost all of you! Use them! We have no choice! We must get up and clean the decks. This is an extreme emergency!

(*They rush up on deck, which now gets fully visible with the rig, where the crew of 'Flying Scud' climbs up in a panic. Carthew is the first one to come up with Wicks close behind, then Tom and Amalu, they trample on Henderson's body while Hemstead, captain Trent and Mac remain lying below. Brown from 'Flying Scud' runs down below to hide under deck. Also this is visible.*)

Wicks Tommy! Mind the foresail mast! Kanak! Stand by the main mast! No one must come down alive!

A sailor (*from above, pleading*) Mercy, captain, mercy! We have done nothing and understand nothing!

(*Tom shoots him down, and he falls down dead on deck.*)

Rom Cook! Hardy up behind the foresail!

Cook (*shoots, misfires.*) These damned pistols are only good for misfiring!

Wallen(*up in the rig*) Don't shoot Hardy! He is only a boy!

(*Tom shoots him, he is hit in the jaw and screams of pain, exposes himself, Wicks gives him a second shot, and he goes down dead.*)

Wicks Hardy is still up there. Someone must climb there and get him down.

Tom He must be dead, the way he hangs there dangling. Then we have Brown who went down below.

Wicks Someone must go down there and finish him.

Tom (*starts arguing*) Not one more! They were all innocent. And Brown was a decent boy. Spare him!

Wicks You are finished, Tom. If we leave a single one of them alive, we shall all be hanged.

Tom Not me! (*hurries to the rail and vomits*)

Brown (*from below*) I promise not to make trouble! You shall have what you want! Just don't kill me!

Carthew It will only get worse if we wait, and then we can never do it. (*goes down*)

Tom No, Norris, no, no! (*tries to stop him, hangs on to his clothes.*)

Carthew Tom, you are all washed up. (*heaves him aside and goes on.*)

Brown No, mister, I wished no harm! I don't know what the captain did to make you so furious, but we had nothing to do with it! Spare me! I promise to keep my mouth shut about it all! No one shall know anything! (*pleads on his bare knees with clasped hands when Carthew lifts his gun on him, pulls the trigger, - and it misfires.*)

Carthew No, I cannot do this. (*refrains and goes back up*)

Wicks What is it? Couldn't you finish him?

Carthew He is completely shattered and as soft as a girl.

Wicks We can't make any exceptions. (*goes down in determination*)

Brown No, mister Norris, you mustn't do it! (*can't see who it is. Wicks shoots him down in cold blood and goes on shooting until the magazine is finished, then runs away from there.*)

Wicks Damn it! A regular extensive massacre! (*the cook hulks and cries with him*)

Carthew Mac lost his control but he is still alive, and we must try to save him.

Wicks And we must get rid of all the bodies. They can't be left hanging up there in the rig or bleeding down the whole galley and forecastle. But if I go up there (*points at Hardy's hanging body*) I will only fall down.

Cook (*rising*) Then I will have to do it. (*goes up the rig and heaves the body into the ocean.*)

Mac (*from below*) Well? How are you up there? Is there anyone left?

Carthew Everything is ready, Mac. They are all dead.

Mac (*groans*) My God! (*faints*)

Wicks We can't manage the rest without gin. We will have to use the captain's supply.

Carthew Cook, wash the decks.

Tom (*recovering somewhat, rising with difficulty*) We must get the bodies over board. They can't just lie here staring us in our faces.

Wicks The worst will be to cleanse the rig. Give me a hand here. (*has brought up captain Trent and some bottles of gin*) The operation will be easier with some anaesthetics. (*drinks and sends the bottle around*)

Carthew (*heaves captain Trent over board*) Are the supplies unlimited? We shall need it all.

Wicks Yes, they are practically unlimited.

Cook That Chinaman is still alive. (*produces a prattling Chinese scared out of his wits*)

Wicks Heave him over board, and he will be quiet.

Tom (*to the prattling hysterical Chinese*) Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! (*heaves him over board. The prattling goes on until the splosh is heard.*) That was the last one.

Carthew What about Brown?

Wicks He can stay where he lies. He has at least seven bullets thorough his head. I can't manage any more now.

Carthew Neither can I.

Tom Neither can I.

Cook More gin! (*drinks covetously*)

Tom What have we actually done?

Wicks Don't talk about it. Let's just forget it and forgive ourselves.

Carthew That's what we never will be able to do.

Tom Right.

Cook Drink your sense away, and then we'll manage.

Tom Yes, empty the brains and let's forget everything.

Wicks Get that poor Mac up here for the devil's sake! He is lying down there unconscious with a broken arm!

Carthew I will get him. (*goes down and salvages Mac*)

Mac, it's all over now. Wake up. Get up. We have gin up there.

Mac (*wakes*) My God, Norris, what have we done, and it's all my fault!

Carthew That greedy captain couldn't have an idea of that he was dealing with the most uncontrollable north Irishmen of the seven seas.

Mac I can't say how sorry I am!

Carthew Come up now and have some gin with us. We must secure your arm.

Mac My God, Norris! (*Norris helps him up on deck.*)

Wicks (*when he sees him*) Are you still alive? We thought you were dead.

Mac I wish I were!

Tom Hemstead is dead, and that's enough.

Carthew Busted scull and blood all over the galley. We will never get that blood washed out.

Wicks Don't talk about it now but drink.

Amalu Yes, drown the crimes in the intoxication. Let the drink take over control when there is no more sense left.

Mac I can't say how sorry I am, boys! It's all my fault!

Wicks Bullshit, Mac. That captain dug his own grave. He should have known better than to try to squeeze money out of shipwrecked.

Amalu It was pure blackmail!

Tom Yes, it certainly was, but we massacred an entire crew.

Wicks As if we didn't know. Don't remind us, Tom. Have a drink instead.

Tom That's what I am doing, but do you think that's enough to get around it?

Amalu We could always try. We have liquor enough. You could drink yourself mad on salt water. Perhaps, if we try really hard, we also could do it on drink?

Wicks We don't drink to get mad, you chicken brain. We drink to clear our minds and get some detachment from the problem.

Carthew What is the problem?

Wicks What do we do now? We have corpses in the cargo and a ship on our hands that we cannot handle.

Tom You are the captain. Can't you navigate?

Wicks A brig is not the same as a schooner. This rig is as much more complicated as a cathedral to a village church.

Amalu So we are in the same boat as before and are still shipwrecked. Nothing has changed except that we have become murderers and pirates.

Wicks Yes, we have a ship with infinite supplies in our hands which we cannot handle.

Mac And we took it and murdered the entire crew, and it's my fault! Hang me, fellows!

Carthew Shut up, Mac, and hold your arm still while I secure it. We'll manage out of this jam somehow.

Mac Yes, to be sure.

Tom We still have our money. We don't have to pay for the voyage to San Francisco.

Amalu Instead we are stuck here.

Wicks I know. There is only one thing for us to do. We drive the ship ashore and get away in the whale boat to Honolulu. We have never seen *Flying Scud* or heard anything about her and have never known her crew. What happened here has never happened.

Carthew Would we then just suppress it all without minding it? No, it won't work. It's even too late now. Have a look over there.

Tom By heaven! Smoke on the horizon!

Carthew And it is approaching.

Wicks It could be a warship.

Amalu We are lost! We will be hanged!

Wicks Not at all. We have to think hard now. We must clean up this mess and set the brig on the reef, and there is only way for us to get away with it.

Tom What does the genius suggest?

Wicks We take on ourselves to be the crew of *Flying Scud*. I am captain Trent, you, Norris, is the boatswain Goddedaal, and so on. We have to make up a credible story about our shipwreck and our lost companions. We ourselves have never existed.

Tom Captain, you are a genius!

Amalu It's our only way out.

Carthew It's taking a chance, but it might succeed.

Mac Everything was an accident caused by my lack of self control and the greed of a rotten British captain – a bad combination.

Wicks On my honour, indeed. But we must get to work at once. Norris, or Elias Goddedaal, we must update the log book at once, so that everything fits.

Carthew You are still captain here, Jacob Trent. We just have to follow your orders.

Wicks No more drinking. We must sober up totally at once. Boatswain Goddedaal, throw the liquor overboard. Cook, wash away the blood that's still on deck and in the galley. Throw the last body over board. This must be a clean and proper wreck until the rescue comes. Tom, help me navigate the ship safely on ground. From now on we must never make any mistake again. Mac, keep calm.

Mac Ay, ay, captain. That will be easy with this broken arm.

Wicks Don't forget the fire on the shore! They must not miss us! We can still make everything turn out right!

(All become busy and efficient. Carthew lets the liquor go overboard.)

Scene 2.

Carthew Judge me now, colleague. Am I worth to be let alive, who shot Elias Goddedaal to death and took part in a massacre on an entire crew?

Dodd It was self defense.

Carthew Was it? The boys in the rig under age? Brown who begged and pleaded for his life? Hardy and the Chinese who was thrown alive to the sharks? No, Dodd, it was not self defense, it was premeditated murder. Only captain Trent's death could be considered a homicide, since Mac did not know what he was doing, but all the others were premeditated murders in an unequalled raving wild and mad mutiny caused by exceptional madness of greed. The captain wanted our money, and we wanted to keep it. For that, half a dozen persons were murdered for nothing. It was raving madness and nothing else.

Dodd Did no one find you out?

Carthew Only the doctor on the *Tempest*, but he was a true doctor with a true doctor's full understanding and obligation of silence and helped us through with a unique and remarkable tolerance and humanity. He understood that if anything at all of the truth would come out, it would only get worse and chose instead to bandage it.

Dodd What became of the others?

Carthew Mac ended up badly. He was knifed in Chile. All the others managed and went on with their wild adventures with a vengeance. I believe captain Wicks even ended up a marine captain in the Chilean fleet. Only I buried myself alive, until you found me. You now have the whole story. Judge me hard.

Dodd On the contrary. You already did that yourself, so no one else needs to do it any more. But we have both considerable experience of seafare and business in the South Seas. Why don't we team up?

Carthew And form a company? Like me with Tom Hadden and you with Jim Pinkerton and carry on as swindlers and adventurers?

Dodd You'll have to admit that we have a certain talent for it.
Carthew So that I would remain without a family, lonesome, marooned and
outcast without belonging anywhere?
Dodd It's at least a free life without obligations.
Carthew I could end up a painter like Gaughin.
Dodd Pinkerton is back in business. He could help us with a starting capital
and a ship to start some freight traffic with.
Carthew Why not? I always wanted a decent ordinary job.
Dodd I give you the chance.
Carthew I accept it. (*gives his hand. Dodd accepts it.*)
 Can you forgive me the deplorable auction?
Dodd It cost neither you nor me anything, and Pinkerton's debts would have
sunk him anyway.
Carthew So we can start from scratch?
Dodd Or else I would never have come with the suggestion.
Carthew We need a bottle of wine for this. What about a specially wily and
dangerous Rousillon wine?
Dodd That sounds challenging enough.
Carthew Cheers then, my friend, for a never ending future in the South Seas!
Dodd May we never get tired of it, no matter how many wrecks and
shipwrecks we leave in our wake!
Carthew We managed the worst and are still afloat.
Dodd And we'll probably keep that way, Norris Carthew, or Mr Dickson, or
Madden, or perhaps even Elias Goddedaal from Sweden?
Carthew Call me whatever, Dodd, as long as I don't have to be myself.
Dodd May the sea take care of our secrets and bury them alive.
Carthew To have them preserved forever to never be forgotten.
Dodd Amen.

(They drink each other's health.)

Curtain.

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