

SPIRIT OF THE PACIFIC

ALSO BY WALTER L. WILLIAMS

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SPIRIT OF THE PACIFIC



Walter L. Williams



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*In deepest gratitude to
spiritual teacher and adept editor,
Toby Johnson,
for all his help and support.
His books have been such an
important guide to me for
my thinking and my life.*

*This book is dedicated to
Lena, Thanya, and Quanjai.
The blossoming of their mahu spirits
has been a great joy to behold.*

PART I

Escaping Slavery



1

Aleutian Islands

Yoshi was gone. Eddie Freeman wept. Loss, loss, loss—that’s all his life seemed to be. Yoshi had taught him a better way to think about that reality, but now Yoshi too was gone.

The next day Eddie pretended not to know what had happened to his bunkmate on the Boston-registered whaling ship named *The Cape of Good Hope*.

“Have you seen Yoshi?” he asked one after another of the crewmembers. Nobody could answer, of course, since Eddie was the only one who knew what had really happened during that cold night in 1861 as the vessel anchored off the coast of Unimak Island. They’d stopped briefly to pick up a native guide to pilot them through these treacherous waters in the frigid North Pacific. After passing the Aleutian Islands, they would be heading north into the Bering Sea.

Eddie felt increasing anxiety over the loss of his friend. He went up to the deck and, with alarm in his voice, questioned other sailors. “Where’s Yoshi? Have you seen Yoshi? Where is he?”

Eddie caught sight of Captain Mowbray at the helm of the whaler. He steeled himself for the encounter. He was going to have to put on a good show. This was the man he had to fool. When Eddie had grown up as a slave in South Carolina he had learned to lie well. With white men having total power over black folks, the only protection a slave had was often a good lie. It was only a year ago, in 1860, that Eddie was still enslaved, so he was able easily to call upon those talents.

"It's Yoshi, Sir. Yoshi's gone missing. I'm scared something bad's happened to him..."

The Captain was startled. "What do you mean something bad happened to him? Dammit, I can't afford to be losing another man now!"

Eddie kept his face contorted in an expression of grief, but inwardly smiled. This is going to work, he thought to himself. His show of grief was real, even if he was dissembling about the actual details. He was still reeling from the death of two of his close friends. He'd seen so much disaster on this whaling ship's sea journey to the Pacific.

He knew the Captain was vulnerable to that same fear of unexpected disasters at sea. Bad luck comes in threes, doesn't it? Or fours? How many were they on by now? Eddie hoped the Captain believed in some superstition like that.

"Well, boy, when did you last see him?"

"Yoshi was in bed with me when we went to sleep," Eddie reported truthfully. There was no shame about that. "Sometimes he got up and walked around at night in his sleep." That wasn't entirely true, but it was close. "I thought he was getting up to do his meditation, you know..."

The Captain nodded in agreement, though he rolled his eyes. Everybody onboard knew about the Japanese sailor's obsession with his Buddhist religion. They'd all seen him sitting at the prow every evening with his legs crossed and his hands together in prayer, chanting under his breath.

"But I don't know...One time before I followed him. I sure didn't think he was meditating. Looked like he was sleepwalking on the deck." Eddie let out a deep sob. "What if he walked in his sleep last night and went right over the railing?"

The Captain, a short, wiry man, balding but with a wild shock of gray-blond hair that always stood out from his head as though he'd been struck with St. Elmo's Fire, looked increasingly nervous. He reached out clumsily and pulled young Eddie against the stiff black wool coat across his chest in an awkward attempt at comfort.

He called to the Portuguese sailor who'd been on night watch, demanding if he had seen or heard anything. When the sailor answered no, Eddie got hysterical.

With the Captain, the night watch and a couple of other sailors trying to follow him, he frantically ran about the ship, looking in every possible hiding space. Everyone knew of Eddie's closeness to Yoshi, and they sympathized with how he must feel to lose his mate.

Eddie's act was necessary, or the Captain might have suspected there was more to Yoshi's disappearance than met the eye. Eddie worried the Captain might order a search of the Aleut village on the island. Desertion was always a possibility when a crewman disappeared when a ship was near land. The sailors on a whaling ship such as this were kept practically like prisoners—and for good reason. The Captain needed every man he could get to meet his quotas for his financiers. He wasn't about to let anybody out of their contract—unless, of course, if they died on him.

Eddie's show of emotions was convincing. The Captain and the others, not having any reason to think otherwise and knowing nothing of Yoshi's previous life among the Aleut native people of the island, believed that the little Japanese teenager had fallen over the railing during the night and drowned. "It's too late to go back, isn't it?" the Captain questioned the crew, leading them toward the obvious decision he'd already come to. "The water's frigid. Nobody could live more than a few minutes. They'd freeze solid. It's been hours now, hasn't it, Eddie?" The Captain seemed genuinely sad, but his sorrow at losing still another crewmember was balanced by his anxiousness to get into the Bering Sea. That is where most of the whales were. Since *The Cape of Good Hope* had arrived late in Hawaii, and missed the whales' migration there, the Bering Sea was their last opportunity. There was no more time to lose. As Unimak Island disappeared over the horizon, the Captain did not order the ship to go back.

Captain Mowbray put his arm around Eddie in a fatherly embrace. With sympathy he said, "You can take the morning off,

my boy. You must have some grieving to do. But keep your ears peeled in case we sight a whale. We'll need you on the longboats, grieving or not. You know that."

Eddie nodded and went below. As he lay alone in his berth a little later, crying his heart out, the young native of the South Carolina Sea Islands—now on the other side of the world—tried to convince himself he should be cheerful. But why did Yoshi abandon him, Eddie thought over and over.

Eddie knew from the beginning of their friendship that Yoshi's secret purpose in being on this whaler was to get back to his home on Unimak Island. Eddie had grown to love the Japanese teenager, and in Hawai'i he had also met his beloved Aikane. Now he was without them both.

Eddie felt personal grief for the loss of his friend's presence, even more intensely than the sadness he felt when his other comrades among the crew had died in the freak accidents that seem to go part and parcel with the whaling trade. Eddie cursed his fate that he'd ended up on this godforsaken ship with this hellish job. He had become enslaved again.

When Eddie reached Boston he thought he'd escaped the fate of an African born into a life of involuntary servitude in the South. Between his sobs for the loss of Yoshi's smooth touch against his chest—so different from the Captain's clumsy masculine gesture—and his fear of being caught in a lie, Eddie felt guilty at deceiving his comrades. But he did not give up his determination to do something to help destroy the institution of slavery. If there was anything useful Eddie was going to do with his life, something beyond himself, he had a feeling that it was going to be to help destroy the institution of slavery. How he was going to attack slavery while he was stuck out here in the Pacific Ocean he did not know, but he remained steadfast in his determination. His mind was in a whirl as his sobs for the loss of Yoshi occupied his feelings. He had no idea what the future would bring.

Eddie knew the others on board shared his pain. Everyone believed Yoshi had been victim of yet another tragic accident that

had plagued this crew. Eddie felt guilty about causing their pain. From what he'd learned from his Buddhist friend, he thought that his deception must be creating bad karma all around. But he could not risk telling anyone the true story of Yoshi's disappearance. One slip on his part and the Captain would go in search of the escaped crewman, if not now then when they returned to Unimak. They had to pass by the island again on their return voyage, to bring Mangaq, their Aleut guide, home after they had completed their whaling operations.

Eddie reflected to himself that every moral code, no matter how rational or complete, could never cover every eventuality. Sometimes competing morals come into conflict with each other. This was just such an occasion. As a slave he had not minded lying in the least, because it was one of the few ways that slaves could protect themselves. But now that his conscience had been awakened by Yoshi's Buddhist morality, Eddie had qualms about deceiving the other crewmembers.

"Right speech," he remembered was an admonition of the Buddha. He did not want to do anything to threaten his loved one's plan—he was sure this lie was right speech—but he had a pang of awareness that things were not as simple as he used to think. Lying and stealing were the heritage of slavery, and as a proud free man Eddie wanted to get beyond those limitations. He wanted to live an honest life. For that hope, he credited Yoshi, his Buddhist teacher and beloved friend.

Eddie Freeman sobbed as he thought about the loss of Yoshi, Aikane in Hawai'i, and his beloved friend Joey back in South Carolina. During every era of his being, life to Eddie seemed marked by the loss of those he most loved. The pain of his memories, growing up as a slave in South Carolina, engulfed him as he fell asleep.

2

South Carolina Sea Islands

The sun was bright and warm, but a cool breeze was blowing from the Atlantic shore just across the lagoon from the Helms plantation's barns and carpentry shop. The rice paddies stretched out the other direction. In the shade of the overhang of the carpentry shop, ten-year-old Eddie was whistling to himself, thinking he didn't have a care in the world that beautiful 1852 morning. The staves of the barrels he was building were straight and held tight against the metal hoops. The barrels that Eddie made were going to be packed with rice from the plantation, for shipment to Savannah. The staves of the barrel had to be shaped just right or the grain would trickle out all along its circuitous route to the dining tables of the North. Eddie had never been to Savannah, and he had no idea where "The North" was, as they called it. All he knew was what one slave had told him, in sworn secrecy, that the North was in the direction to his left when he stood facing the seashore. And that was the way to head if you could get away.

Every slave back then knew about The North, but all they knew about it was that black people were free there. That's all Eddie had ever heard about The North. None of the other slaves had ever been there and nobody knew anything about it. The white folks knew, of course, but with all the controversy around the issue of slavery these days they stopped talking in front of the black folks. They never told the slaves anything that might give them any ideas of escape.

This fine morning Eddie was certainly not thinking about escaping. If anything he felt fortunate that he was assigned to work in the plantation's carpentry shop, instead of being a fieldhand in

the rice fields. From the time Eddie was a small boy in the 1840s, his assigned tasks were to build the barrels and sometimes to repair furniture or fixtures in the fine house the Helmses lived in up on the rise above the slaves' quarters. Master Helms always seemed to have favored Eddie.

Eddie liked Master Helms, though of course the plantation owner was an entirely different kind of person. He was master; Eddie was slave. When Eddie was very young he was impressed with the master's handsome face and good physique. Young Helms had been quite a good-looking man with high cheekbones, sharp features, and beautiful green eyes. Eddie used to like to just look at his eyes because they were the exact same color as Eddie's own eyes. But sometimes he got in trouble for doing just that. Helms would come lurching at him, "Keep your eyes down, boy." As a child, he didn't understand why Master Helms was so insistent that Eddie should look down when speaking to him. Only later did the true reason become apparent to him.

The bell outside the winnowing sheds where the rice was cleaned and prepared for packing suddenly began to ring. Eddie almost cut himself on the sharp blade of the plane he was shaping the wooden staves with. The peal of the bell itself was not unfamiliar. It was rung throughout the day to call the slaves to work, to eat, and to go back to work. But it didn't usually ring frantically. Eddie wondered if there was a fire and started to run to see if he could help.

But coming around the back of the shed, he saw this was not a call for help, but a command for attendance. Master Helms stood with his arms crossed and a stern glare on his face while one of his overseers roughly held a black man down at the Master's feet. Eddie recognized the trembling slave as one of the recent additions to the plantation workforce.

"This man was caught trying to escape," Helms pronounced. "He was breaking the law of the land and sinning against God, you hear. All of you are going to watch his punishment. Let this be a lesson to you."

Eddie felt his stomach turn. He didn't want to see this. He knew it wasn't his fault. It had nothing to do with him. He'd just been thanking God for his good luck in being one of Master Helms' favorites. But now he felt revulsion toward his master. Eddie realized this was a big change for him; he was no longer just an innocent child. Eddie was becoming more aware of the realities of life.

After that day, Eddie did not like looking at the Master anymore. Helms had lost his handsomeness in Eddie's eyes. It was as though being a master had ruined his life too—that and that marriage of his to the socialite lady. Helms' now puffy face and bleary eyes, the slaves all agreed, made it apparent he was drinking too much. They never saw Master Helms happy. He was either sad or mad. Now he was mad.

The overseer stripped the poor soul naked, who pleaded with the master that he was only trying to get back to his woman whom he missed so much since he had been sold away from the plantation of his birth. Despite the pleas, the master remained unmoved. Helms stood, holding the overseer's rifle aimed at the terrified man's chest. The overseer tied the man's wrists together and then threw the rope over the limb of a sturdy tree. He then hoisted the man up so he was hanging from his twisted arms. The escapee screamed from the pain. Shouting profanities, the overseer lashed with a bullwhip. The slave screamed even louder as the blood dripped down his legs to the ground. After that Master Helms left him hanging there.

"You can cut him down in a couple of hours," Helms ordered. "But if I hear any grumbling from any of you," he threatened, "he can just hang there till he rots. I'll have no violation of the rules of man and God on my land. If any of you try to escape, God will damn you for all eternity."

As the other workers slunk away, Eddie went back to his barrel-making. He didn't want to cause that poor man any more pain by upsetting Master Helms. But he couldn't stop thinking

about what he had witnessed. He wished he could go back and cut that rope himself.

Seeing that kind of punishment was enough to kill any thought Eddie might have of escaping. Only once had he ever left the plantation at all. Master Helm's carriage had broken down on the way back from church one Sunday, and he had sent his driver to get Eddie to repair the broken wheel. Eddie was terrified the whole way there, scared that some slave patrol might seize him as a runaway. He couldn't wait to get home, back to the plantation where he was born and where he belonged.

As far as he was concerned, Eddie felt lucky to have two things that most slaves lacked. First, he had carpentry skills, which kept him out of the rice paddies. Fieldhands almost always developed severe back pains from bending over so much; they aged fast and died young. The other thing Eddie felt lucky to have was the sea. The Helms plantation boundary went all the way out past the lagoon, to the sandbars and the beach. As long as he stayed on Helms property, Eddie had the run of the place. After he had finished the day's work, he would sit on the beach, fishing and watching the ocean waves come in.

Later that afternoon word went around that the punished slave had been released and that he had survived the ordeal; maybe he'd be back at work in a couple of days. By that time of the afternoon, Eddie had used up all the wood he'd hewn for staves. He knew Master Helms had gone up to the house and wasn't likely to come back down to where the slaves all dispiritedly finished their day's work. Eddie put his tools away and went out to the ocean beach to escape the pall of rage that hung over the plantation.

Sitting on the cool white sand, Eddie remembered stories he'd heard about the land across the ocean, the land his people had been brought here from. He often strained his eyes to see if he could make out that land over there, but he never could see anything but water.

Eddie's own grandfather had been born across this ocean—Old Man Tombo, he was called. When Eddie was a little boy Tombo

told him that all the black people had originally come from over on the other side of that big water, a place that the white men called Africa. Tombo did not know that name until he heard the white men calling all black-skinned people Africans.

To Tombo, the only thing he considered himself to be was a member of his own kingdom. He had told Eddie the name of his kingdom, but it was not called Africa. It was a name that started with the same "A" sound, but ended with the "ti" sound, not "ca." Eddie was frustrated that he had forgotten the middle sound that his grandfather told him always to remember.

Tombo told Eddie he had lived a happy life in his childhood until a war started between his people and a neighboring kingdom. The rival kingdom's army had terrible-sounding firearms that they got in trade with the English, and they used the guns to attack Tombo's kingdom in order to capture as many people as possible. Tombo was one of these captives who were torn from their family and village. Though only a young boy, Tombo was sold to an English slave-trader and brought to South Carolina. On the journey he didn't know where he was going, because he was kept in the dark bottom of the ship for the whole time. He was terribly sick and afraid. Separated from all his family and friends when he was captured by the slave raiders, Tombo had heard someone say that the white people were cannibals who captured people to eat them. He thought he was going to be killed for sure.

Eddie remembered Tombo had told him that when he first saw white people he was horrified. He thought the white folks didn't have any skin. Some of the captives on the ship were so mournful for their homeland that they jumped into the ocean to try to swim back there. A lot of them died that way. The only thing that kept Tombo alive, he told Eddie, was that he met a woman from his own village. After they arrived in South Carolina they were both bought by Master Helms' grandfather. They survived together, as husband and wife, according to the customs of their people. She was the only person he knew who spoke his native language, and when she died only a few years later he could not speak his tongue to

anyone. Tombo had never left the Helms plantation in all the years since he was brought there in chains.

Gazing out at the roaring surf, the sea seemed to Eddie somehow a connection for him to his ancestors' homeland. He wondered if he'd dare board a ship and sail out onto those waters. Eddie cursed himself that he could not remember the name of the kingdom his grandfather had told him they came from—maybe it was something like "A-lanti." His ancestors were distinguished, graceful people, Tombo told him, who wore beautiful multicolored clothing with gold jewelry. They had their own independent kingdom, with a good and wise king, and they were free there.

Tombo told Eddie all about their family history. Tombo and his wife gave birth to a girl; who later became Eddie's mother. She was an exceptionally pretty little girl. When she was eleven years old, the master presented her as a birthday gift to his son. That was young Master Helms on his sixteenth birthday, Tombo explained. Of course the master did not even think to ask the girl's parents for their permission to make their daughter as his son's "personal servant." Slaves had no rights that their master was bound to respect, even the right of a parent with their child. For the girl to be a personal servant meant that she was to take care of young Helms' every need. And one of those needs that he expected of her was sex.

Though Master Helms had never once mentioned the matter to Eddie, the other slaves told him that the young master had called her into his bedroom every night to sleep with him. She had adjusted to the situation and seemed to like being the special choice of the master. By the time she was fourteen years old she had gotten pregnant. Eddie's light skin color and green eyes left no doubt in anyone's mind who the father was. Of course the white folks never talked about this, but they knew.

The childbirth put too much of a strain on the young girl's body, and she died right after Eddie was born, in the year 1842. Eddie never knew his mother, and his father never once acknowledged his paternity. To Eddie that man had always been Master Helms,

never “Father.” Eddie was raised by his grandparents, but his grandmother died when he was five years old. He could only barely remember her. Then Tombo died when Eddie was nine. Tombo was exceptionally old for a slave; most slaves didn’t live long on a rice plantation. After Tombo’s death Eddie had no more family.

Eddie figured that Master Helms took pity on him, and that is why he had chosen Eddie to apprentice to the plantation carpenter. Light-skinned slaves were chosen to do the skilled craftwork or to become the house servants. But even though Master Helms had never whipped Eddie, or done anything cruel to him, neither had he ever expressed affection. The master kept his distance, as if he did not want to confront the truth: Eddie was his son.

Eddie never hinted this to anyone. He wasn’t exactly proud of the blood, secret blood, between them. But he always admired his distinctive green eyes.

When Eddie was five years old, Master Helms married a young woman from one of the leading families of South Carolina. She had been educated at Charleston’s finest finishing school for young ladies. Having a wife from such a family represented a big step up the social ladder for Helms. As one of her conditions for agreeing to marry him, she insisted that Helms sell all his female slaves.

When Helms’ prospective wife first visited the plantation she had seen Eddie and some other light-skinned slave children on the plantation, and had apparently put two and two together. She did not want any competition from a slave mistress after she became the mistress of the house. She knew that once she got married she would have very little power over her husband—South Carolina’s marriage laws gave all of the decision-making rights to the husband—so setting conditions before agreeing to the marriage was her best chance to exert her influence. So, as a condition of marriage she told her suitor that he must have only male slaves in the future. She did not mind training young boys to help her out in the kitchen, just as long as all the female slaves were gone.

Agreeing to such a request represented a financial loss for Master Helms, because breeding and selling young slaves was an integral part of the profitability of slavery. However, the Helms plantation had good fertile soil, and for generations the Helms family made a nice profit off the rice harvest. Helms bought slaves rather than sold them. Having had several recent deaths of female field workers due to overwork, Helms believed that only males could survive the grueling rice cultivation for any significant length of time.

So, wanting badly to marry into the upper crust of Carolina society, Helms assented to her conditions. Perhaps in his own mind, he had his own reason for agreeing. Perhaps he felt guilty for causing the death of Eddie's mother; it was after all his sexual desire that killed her. Perhaps he did not want any young slave women around as temptation.

This was a time of great sadness on the plantation. Families were split up for the females to be sold. The men who had partners were distraught, but there was nothing they could do since it was against South Carolina law for slaves to legally marry. Black people had no rights that white people were bound to respect. The entire legal and social situation in South Carolina gave complete power for masters to do whatever they wished with their slaves, even on a whim.

Eddie only barely remembered the women having been there at all, but their disappearance had a major impact on his future.

3

BERING SEA

The crew thought Yoshi's drowning a bad omen. They were expecting trouble, and they came close to getting it. But Eddie

certainly knew it wasn't Yoshi's fault; he hadn't fallen overboard and drowned at all. As *The Cape of Good Hope* sailed into the cold Bering Sea, they almost hit an iceberg floating low in the water. It could have easily damaged the hull. Luckily, the Aleut guide Captain Mowbray had hired in Unimak was alert to such dangers and had called for the helmsman to steer clear. Indeed, in just the first few days, he saved the ship from hitting several sharp rocky outcroppings.

Unimak Island was the easternmost island in the Aleutian Chain that projected out toward Siberia from the lower tip of Alaska. The people who lived there—and, incredibly, on many of the islands in that icy sea dotted with floating icebergs—were known as Aleuts. Their people had originally come from Siberia, but had inhabited these seemingly barren islands for thousands of years.

Eddie took a liking to this Aleut guide, if only because he reminded him of his beloved Yoshi. He did indeed look almost Japanese, as Yoshi had told him about the Aleuts. Eddie could see how Yoshi would fit right in to this society. Eddie could not, of course, mention Yoshi, but he wanted to learn more about the Aleuts, and so he befriended the Aleut man, and started learning about this new and mysterious culture.

The guide was a big man, solid with broad chest; he had a round face with a wide grin that showed pearly white teeth, if a little misshapen. Eddie thought he understood him to explain that his name Mangaq meant "Little Porpoise." That seemed a good name for a sea guide.

Eddie sat with Mangaq at nearly every meal, and enjoyed the tasty smoked fish the Aleut shared with him.

In broken, but easily understood English, the guide told Eddie the sad story of his people's recent years. Aleut population, Mangaq explained, had been severely devastated by the European diseases that came with the foreigners' ships, and by terrible mistreatment by Russian fur traders.

The Russians had been dominant in the Aleutians for nearly a century, he told Eddie. "They forced us to hunt seals, walruses, and otters, and turn over the skins to them," Mangaq said. "If we did not, they ransacked our villages and raped our women. They had firearms and even cannons to bombard our villages. We had to spend so much time hunting for the Russian-American Company, and got paid so little for the furs, we could not support our families."

Unfortunately—or, maybe, fortunately for the local people—the fur animals had been so over-hunted there was not much game to be found. Over the last two decades, the Russians had withdrawn. A few government officials stayed to represent the Czar's territorial claims to southern Alaska, and some Russian Orthodox missionaries remained. But the cruel Czarist government traders had little further use for the Aleuts once the wild game was depleted.

"When the Yankee whalers, like this ship, started coming twenty winters ago," Mangaq put down the piece of fish he was chewing on and made a broad gesture with his right arm, as if in gratitude, "we began being hired as guides. We made more money than with the Russians. Some of us guides have become wealthy."

Eddie listened to Mangaq's stories of life among these people with great interest. He was glad to hear that their communities were recovering from the decades of exploitation by the Russians. And that the visit of this ship was considered welcome.

Mangaq also told him about whales. Eddie had no idea there were so many different kinds: bowheads, right whales, sperm whales, humpbacks, and that was just the start. The guide said the whales liked to stay in the cool Arctic waters until December, when they would begin their migration southward to Hawaii. In the warm waters of the tropics the whales would give birth, then in the spring would return to the Bering Sea with their young offspring.

Mangaq shocked Eddie by explaining that if the crew collected enough whale oil in the Arctic through the summer and fall, *The Cape of Good Hope* would probably return directly to Boston, without

having to follow the whales south. That meant they would not be stopping off in Hawai'i. The Captain did not tell the crew of travel plans ahead of time lest they become depressed if they learned unfavorable news. Eddie had no idea they would be staying in the Bering Sea so long. He despaired at the thought he might never get back to Hawai'i again. In the meantime he would be stuck on the ship without a partner, in this cold Arctic climate.

As the ship entered the Bering Strait in May 1861, still heading north, the days of the crew were filled with instructions by Captain Mowbray and the First Mate on the procedures to follow at every stage of the whale hunt. Drill after drill was done, to the point that the crewmembers complained about the repetition. They had received these instructions ever since the ship reached the Pacific Ocean. Just as Eddie was feeling similarly tired of the drills, just before dusk one evening the lookout shouted, "Whale ho," and pointed toward the west.

In the distance Eddie could see a gray spot on the horizon that looked like a small island. But then the island moved! Would it be possible that a whale could be that big? The crew came to life as the Captain ordered sails adjusted. The ship turned course to give chase to the whale.

As they pursued the distant whale, tensions mounted among the crew. Everyone was hoping for a successful hunt, yet the more experienced crewmembers knew just how dangerous a whale hunt could be. Eddie could see the ship gaining on the whale. It would go underwater for a time, then come up again for air, spewing a giant spray of water into the sky. As *The Cape of Good Hope* came closer each successive spray appeared higher. Eddie could see the sweat of anticipation in the furrows of the Captain's brow.

Then the whale went underwater again. As the ship moved along, Eddie looked to see where the whale would surface. But this time the whale did not reappear. The Captain searched the horizon, but the animal had disappeared beneath the waves. Becoming alarmed, the Captain and the First Mate climbed the rigging to

get a better view. But still there was no sight of the whale. It had simply gone under and not come back up.

The First Mate speculated that this whale might have been pursued by ships before and had learned to take a long horizontal underwater dive that would take it out of range of the ship. In the fleeting sunlight of the end of the day, no one could see where the whale reappeared farther away. It had gotten spooked, and fled before they could even get close.

As darkness fell, and there was no hope of finding the whale, Captain Mowbray loudly cursed his bad luck on this trip. He stormed angrily into his cabin, with the door slamming sharply behind him. The crewmembers, especially the first timers, looked at each other, wondering if they were ever going to locate any whales on this trip. An older Portuguese sailor explained that if they returned to Hawai'i empty handed, they would not have enough funds to purchase food and supplies for the rest of the journey. They'd never get home.

Eddie, of course, did not think that idea to be so bad—so long as they did return to Hawai'i and not just abandon the ship here in the Arctic. Could that happen, he wondered, suddenly afraid of an even worse possible future. He reminded himself of Yoshi's chant for harmony with one's fate in life.

As the men stood around worrying each other with bad luck scenarios, the First Mate commented to Eddie that when he first started whaling as a teenager, there were so many whales in these waters that they were easy pickings. The huge animals were so large that they did not have any natural enemies, and they did not seem to fear the ships that sailed into their midst. But that had changed, as over-hunting of the whales had led these intelligent animals to be wary of the ships. It was common to sight a whale, only to lose it as soon as the whale realized it was being chased.

Was this how it was going to be every time now?

4

Sea Islands

There was a period of mourning after the women were banished from the Helms plantation. It was a terrible thing the new Mrs. Helms had done, but within a few months most of the male slaves made the obvious adjustment. With the absence of females, their choice was either to have sex with each other or not at all.

Eddie was a particular object of the men's desires, a beautiful boy with long eyelashes and a sweet smile. It was not long before he was initiated into the pleasures of lovemaking. From the beginning he liked it. Once, when Eddie was six years old, his grandfather came upon him and another boy licking each other's penises out in the dunes just off the path to the seashore. Old Tombo only smiled, and left them to continue their enjoyment. Later, he explained to Eddie that the men and boys in Africa often did such things together to celebrate their manliness. Besides, he said, as slaves they had little chance to enjoy the other delights of life. Sex was one of the most important gifts from the spirits. He told Eddie he should always appreciate love, whether it came from a woman or a man.

"Ain't no doubt in no one's mind, that love's the finest thing around," he used to say when he was remembering his dear departed wife, and he said it again to Eddie that day. "Sometimes I just get so sad when I think about your grandmammie. Don't never turn down a chance for love. If you do, you'll regret it to the end of your life. Those memories of good loving are the best comfort in your old age, yes siree, I can tell you that for sure. Don't believe the white men when they say this is a sin. Loving is the joy of life."

By the time he reached his eighteenth year, in 1860, Eddie was quite popular with the other slaves. He had a good physique and a comely face. He was known for his gentle touch, and his ability to

suck the whole length of a man's cock no matter how big. Not only did he get his own pleasure, but Eddie felt that by giving pleasure to the field hands he was able to do something that relieved their burdensome labor. He felt useful that he was doing something good by helping others to enjoy pleasure.

On the other hand, Master Helms had very different ideas about goodness. He seemed to think that obedience was more important than pleasure. Helms told them they should follow the Lord's rules and if they became Christian they would go to heaven when they died. He didn't exactly explain what those rules from the Lord were, but they didn't seem to allow for much pleasure of any kind. Helms occasionally preached to the slaves about not giving in to desires of the body. None of the slaves ever asked to be baptized Christians, and eventually Helms gave up preaching to them.

Eddie didn't see how this Christian Lord helped his people at all, and he didn't care to start following more rules. The slaves already had enough rules to follow from their master. Tombo had said the white men wanted to convert the Africans to the Christian god so they would go to the Christian heaven and they would have to serve the white folks there also, even after they died. After that, Eddie wanted nothing to do with Christian religion. Still, unknown to him at the time, religion was going to have a big impact on Eddie's life.

One day as he was finishing work in the carpenter's shop, his best friend Joey came into the little shed. He had a sly grin on his face. Looking around and seeing that no one else was there, Joey pulled open his trousers and displayed his full erection. Eddie felt a rush of excitement and joy. He really liked making love with Joey, even more than with the others. Eddie and Joey were both good swimmers, and after finishing the day's chores they sometimes swam out to a little sandbar where they could lie together on the seaward side and not a soul could catch sight of them. For several years Eddie had considered this sandbar beyond the waves to be their special private place for lovemaking. Eddie loved Joey's

carefree attitude, and the striking musculature of Joey's body. He couldn't resist Joey's throbbing invitation.

Kneeling, Eddie then took Joey's cock into his mouth and, looking up at his friend's beautiful body, let Joey slide deeper into his throat. Lost in pleasure, he closed his eyes and remembered all the happiness the two of them had shared together in their short lives.

Eddie's pleasurable recollections were interrupted by a sound at the door. Opening his eyes, he saw with a shock that standing there in the doorway was none other than Master Helms himself. Eddie quickly stood up, wiping his lips, as Joey hastily stuffed his member back into his pants. Both of them stood terrified with their eyes downcast in submission.

Though Eddie never raised his eyes he could feel Master Helms' glares as if they were piercing icicles. After staring at them with obvious disapproval, the master turned around and left without saying a word. His silence was even more unnerving than a scolding. Eddie ran to his quarters, and remained there huddled in bed the whole night. He was afraid to think what kind of punishment Master Helms might devise.

The next morning Eddie was awakened by the overseer, who burst into his cabin and slapped iron cuffs around his wrists before Eddie was fully awake. The overseer dragged Eddie to the wagon, where Joey was already waiting, wrapped in chains.

"Please, sir," both of them begged, "don't do nothing to hurt us." They whimpered as they had learned to respond to white men's anger.

The overseer whipped Eddie hard across the back and yelled at him to get in the wagon. Once he was seated, the man ran a long, heavy chain through the cuffs on his wrists and wrapped it tight around his legs several times, then secured the chain to the cuffs with a huge lock.

Without any explanation, the overseer started driving the wagon down the dirt road. Through their tears Eddie and Joey could see the other slaves looking worried and disturbed. They

would have no idea what was happening or why. As the wagon lumbered out of sight of the slave quarters, Eddie wondered in terror if this was to be the last time he would see his home and his friends.

Eddie considered jumping out of the wagon. He and Joey were wrapped in separate chains, but not bound to the wagon, though each length of chain extended over the driver's bench and hung loosely within the overseer's reach. He might get out of the wagon, but would he be able to run with the chain around his legs? No, he couldn't escape. All he could do was sit there and watch his world disappear behind them.

When the wagon reached the plantation boundary, waiting there on his horse was Master Helms. As the overseer drew up the reins of the mule, stopping the wagon, the master addressed the two chained slaves: "What you have done is an abomination to the Lord. I thought about whipping you, and leaving it at that. But your sin is so deep that it cannot even be beaten out of you. This is an offense against God, a crime not fit to be named among Christians."

Eddie didn't understand all this Christian talk though a preacher used to come occasionally on Sunday mornings and tell outlandish and scary stories to the plantation slaves, all designed to get the slaves to obey their master, but few of them ever really listened. It wasn't their religion.

Master Helms continued: "I have decided that, to prevent you from infecting the other slaves with your sinful practices, you must leave the plantation. You both will be taken to the market and sold off."

Eddie's first thought was to laugh and tell Master Helms that all the other slaves were doing the same thing. But then he realized that would only endanger them as well.

Sold! Eddie could not conceive of such a thing. The Helms plantation was his home, and the other slaves on the plantation were the only family he had. The joys he had in life were from

them, and from walking along the seashore. To never again see that seashore, Eddie thought, would be the end of him.

He put his hands together: "Please, sir, please don't sell me. I never done anything bad by you. I always done my work. I promise I won't do that thing ever again." Eddie would have said anything to keep Helms from selling him. The auction block, and the unknown fate it represented, was the slaves' greatest fear.

"Nonsense!" the master silenced him. "Once the sin of Sodom is enacted, it cannot be uprooted. That is why the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." Helms paused a moment, with a long and sanctimonious sigh. Then his tone of voice changed and he admitted, "This must be my fault. I am being punished because I did not sternly pursue the effort to make you slaves into good Christians. Missus Helms warned me about this, and she was right."

"We'll become Christians," Joey pleaded. "We'll follow whatever rules the Lord says. You just tell us."

Eddie nodded his agreement.

Helms was unmoved. "You two are beyond hope. I just pray I can get some Christian morals into the others, once you're gone."

What happened next was a complete surprise to Eddie as well as the others. Welling up from deep inside him, from a part of his soul that Eddie was not previously aware of, words of rebuke and venom burst out.

"Was it Christian morals what you did to my mother?" He looked the master straight in the eye. "Was what I did worse than that? My mother died because of you! Now you're going to sell your own son on the auction block? Is that your Christianity? You're right. You are being punished, but not cause of us, but cause of you..."

Joey's eyes almost popped. He surely had never heard a slave talk back like that. The overseer looked shocked as well and clutched his bullwhip. Master Helms froze. Eddie had never seen such an expression on a white man's face. It was a deep shame, a realization that there was nothing he could say which would get

him out of his moral dilemma. Eddie could see that Jesse Helms would live with his guilt forever.

Helms held up his hand, as if to fend off the blow from Eddie's truth-telling and block the sight of the boy's eyes. A long period of silence went by. Helms' hand quivered, then fell defeatedly. "I cannot escape my own sin," Helms admitted. "I have borne my cross, in a way that you can never realize. Your very presence on the plantation, every day, is a reminder to me. Every time I look into your eyes I see that. It is for that reason that you must leave."

Master Helms looked into Eddie's eyes, "All I can say is that some day I hope you can forgive me. I will pray for you, that your new position will turn out to be better for you. That's all I can do. You must leave."

With that, Helms turned and rode away. Eddie started to call out, but then did not. He realized that the incident with Joey was only an excuse. For all his fear and his anger, he felt sorry for this man who somehow was his father. But he would not forgive him. Ever.

Without another word, the overseer cracked the whip on the mule's rump, and the wagon lurched forward. They headed down the bumpy dirt road toward Savannah—and the slave auction house.

On the journey Eddie thought about his past. All he knew was life as a slave. It was the slave system which had deprived him of a father. It was the slave system which had killed his mother, his grandparents, and who knows how many other ancestors. Slavery had destroyed his entire family, and had left him with only one thing: a sense of attachment to place. And now, as the wagon made its way to the auction block, it was destroying that as well.

By the time the wagon arrived at the Savannah River, Eddie and Joey had decided—quietly whispering between themselves—that they would not remain slaves any longer. They decided to try to get to The North—whatever that place might be. They were determined to live as free men, or to die in trying to gain their liberty.

They'd managed to loosen the chains around their legs. Though they had to be careful not to make much noise or pull on the chain lest the overseer realize what they were trying to do. Joey got some slack in the chain that went through the wrist cuffs, so he could straighten up and stretch his arms a little. Eddie was preparing himself for making some kind of break, but when and how they were going to accomplish this was still a mystery. He steeled himself for whatever was going to happen.

Eddie realized now that he had previously been complacent, thinking that as long as he did his work, and did not try to escape, he would be protected. Well, now he saw that he was no longer protected by anyone and would be put up for sale to the highest bidder. He was a strapping young man with strong arms, solid shoulders and a broad back, he knew. He'd likely end up a fieldhand. That man, Master Helms—there was a taste of bile in his mouth when he even thought the name of that man who was his "father"—wasn't going to be there to favor him or keep him hidden away in the carpentry shed. He, in turn, felt no responsibility anymore to be a good nigger for the white man's benefit. He and Joey would do whatever they had to do to get freedom.

When they reached the Savannah River, Eddie saw that a flat-bottomed ferry waited to carry them across the river. The overseer carefully guided the mule and wagon onto the small, rocking platform. There was one other buckboard wagon already aboard carrying several white men; a few more on foot crowded onto the ferry behind them.

Eddie and Joey had never seen such a big river and they were terrified. But they were more terrified about the fate that awaited them after the slave market in the city. As soon as the ferry had gotten out into deep water, Joey whispered, "Look, I've loosened these chains off my feet, and now I can get my hands out. Now's our chance. We can jump into the river and escape."

"Are you crazy?" Eddie asked. "I can't get these things off. How can I swim with these chains? Besides every white man on this boat is packing a pistol; they'll shoot us for sure."

"We're both good swimmers. I'll pull you. We can make it. Once they get us into the auction house, we'll never escape. Are you coming or not?"

With no more discussion, Joey threw himself out of the wagon and then dove into the water. He paddled like a dog for all he was worth, and soon made good headway. Eddie almost followed him into the river, but he hesitated. Before he knew what was happening the overseer grabbed the chain wrapped round him, jerked it hard and pulled him off balance and down onto the floorboards, and then fastened the end to the buckboard. Now he was trapped. Meanwhile, practically every white man on the ferry started firing their pistols at Joey.

Straining to sit up and see over the side of the wagon, Eddie spied Joey paddling furiously. He was almost to a patch of water grasses near the bank. Then a bullet splashed into the water just behind him and Joey disappeared into the muddy river. Both Eddie and the white men waited for him to reappear. The whites had their pistols cocked and ready. The seconds ticked by like hours, and there was still nothing to be seen of Joey. The men began firing randomly into the water around the spot where he had been. Joey's body never appeared again.

Eddie slumped to the floorboards of the wagon and cried. There was no way that Joey could have survived that barrage of bullets. With Joey's death, Eddie's last connection to his home, to his previous life, was gone for good.

5

Bering Strait

The time passed slowly with no sightings, but three weeks later in the early morning as the crew was just waking up a

call came out from the lookout, "Whale ho!" Eddie and the others clambered on deck and looked out and saw to their surprise not one whale but two. One of the whales was smaller, but the other was a huge gray beast that defied in size anything Eddie had previously imagined. He had been told how big whales were, but his mind could hardly conceive of an animal this big. They were beautiful and graceful as they floated peacefully on the water.

Perhaps the two whales had mistaken the still ship for a natural floating object, the First Mate opined, again expressing his idea that the whale population had learned to fear the human ships.

Seeing a good chance, with two whales so close by, Captain Mowbray immediately ordered three whaleboats into the water. Eddie was on the first, with the Captain himself at the bow. All of the crewmen paddled furiously, trying to get close enough to one of the whales before it panicked and dived. As they paddled out, Eddie could see the larger whale already diving, but then it came back up near the same place. Eddie figured it was trying to encourage the smaller whale to dive as well.

"Tis a cow with her calf," the Captain called out. "Looks like the calf is wounded. We might have a chance to get them both."

Eddie then realized that the concerned mother was hesitating to leave her offspring, even though this placed both of them in danger. As they approached closer, the biggest one dived again. But the other one did not. Something was wrong with it. It didn't seem to be able to dive. Realizing this, the Captain shouted back to the boatsteerer to head for the young whale. As they approached the large gray mass, the Captain stood up, braced himself at the prow and raised the harpoon above his head. He drew it back and stabbed with a powerful thrust; the barbed steel spear pierced the whale solidly in its side above the flipper.

The panicked whale immediately swam rapidly to get away, while the cable attached to the harpoon quickly unwound out of the boat. Circle after circle of the carefully coiled rope flew out, until it reached the end. A large hook on the rope was attached to the boat frame. Now the boat began to be pulled along.

"Hold your oars, and onto your seats," bellowed Captain Mowbray, "we're going on a Nantucket sleigh ride!"

As the whale raced through the water, pulling the boat behind it, Eddie and the others felt totally helpless. They were all hanging on for dear life. Eddie had never experienced such rapid movement, and his heart raced as he wondered how they were going to keep from capsizing. All they could see on either side of them was a sheet of water rising up above their heads. A lot of it splashed into the boat. They bailed water with buckets and hats. The taunt rope pulled the little boat farther and farther from the ship, as the wounded whale raced away in pain.

Eventually the boat began moving less rapidly. As soon as they were able, the Captain ordered the crew to hold their oars in the water, to create more drag. As they had been drilled many times before, the purpose was to allow the whale to exhaust itself. After a while it became clear that the whale was tiring. Now the Captain ordered the crew to row backwards, to create even more resistance. After doing this for a while, they started pulling the rope back into the boat, to get closer to the whale. By this time the wounded whale was in shock. They pulled themselves closer, so close that the Captain took another harpoon and hurled it into the body of the whale. The pained animal thrashed its tail in agony, sending a wave that almost flipped over the boat. The crewmembers hung on desperately.

Eddie admired the courage and skill of Captain Mowbray; he clearly demonstrated his experience in the hunt. Yet, Eddie also felt sorry for the poor whale, distraught in pain from the two harpoons thrust sharply into its flesh. For over an hour the whale thrashed about. At last the suffering creature had expended its energy and was unable to resist.

The Captain now ordered the crew to pull in the rope and haul the boat right up to the whale. From the bow, the Captain held a long lance, which he stabbed deep into the whale. He stabbed again and again, causing blood to spurt from the body. He even

stabbed directly into the eye of the whale, causing another roar of pain.

Then Mowbray ordered the crew to row back to the ship. As the rope pulled on the harpoons, the whale thrashed around desperately, but the crew did not let up. The Captain seemed oblivious to the suffering he had inflicted on the animal. This was his job, and any moral qualms he might have had about causing such pain to another living being had long been smothered.

Eddie was afraid that at any moment the whale might turn on them and they could all die, but he could not help but feel great sadness as the whale writhed in pain.

At last, after a final terrible shudder, the whale was quiet. The giant body rolled over, and the mouth gaped opened as the life went out of it. Eddie was glad that now the animal was at last out of its misery. He looked at the faces of the other crewmembers, especially the Captain, to see if any shared his abhorrence at the whale's grisly death. But he could detect nothing that indicated feelings of sympathy for the huge creature; he others just looked relieved that they had caught their prey.

Now came the hard part. The crew rowed and rowed, and slowly pulled the whale back toward the ship. It took them over two hours. Their muscles ached from the hard rowing. By the time they returned, the other whaleboat under the command of the First Mate had returned empty handed. The other whale, evidently the mother, had gotten away and was nowhere to be seen.

As they approached the ship, Eddie saw to his additional horror that several sharks were circling the calf's carcass, looking for a meal. The evil-looking fins sliced through the water, bringing back scary memories Eddie had of two previous times when he had an encounter with a shark. Visions of the sharks' monstrous open mouths, with their multiple rows of glistening white razor-sharp teeth, kept playing through his mind.

Eddie appealed to the Captain to shoot the circling sharks, but so many were attracted by the blood of the whale that there was no point. Besides, the Captain pointed out, there was too much work

to be done to have any time for shark hunting. Eddie shuddered at the thought of trying to strip the whale with sharks all around, but sharks or no sharks the work had to be done.

They drew the whale up on the other side of the ship. With a windlass some crew tied a rope around the whale's tail and drew it up tightly to the hull. Next they rigged a staging of planks over the carcass. With a rope tied to his waist, one of the crewmembers from Brazil climbed barefoot onto the whale's back and began cutting a hole in the creature's head. He then put in a bucket and carefully pulled it out full of what Mangaq the Aleut told Eddie was pure case oil. This was the most valuable whale oil, also called spermaceti, a wax-like substance so pure it could be sold in its natural state without refinement. It burned with a fine hot, bright and smokeless flame.

This went on for a while, until the Brazilian had to actually climb down inside the hole and into the empty skull to get the remaining oil. Captain Mowbray watched this part of the process carefully to make sure none of the valuable oil was spilled.

Meanwhile, another crewman on the whale's back, cut a lengthwise slash behind the eye. Next he cut a hole through the blubber, and inserted an iron hook. The whale's skin was slick and slippery, and the man almost fell off a couple of times. Eddie was afraid he would slip into the water and be eaten by sharks, but he managed to stay atop the slick carcass until the hook was secure. Other crewmen standing at the railing used long sharp iron cutting spades to carve slices of the skin in a rectangular pattern, while others tugged on the windlass to pull the skin and layer of blubber off the skeleton.

As the hook and blanket of blubber was hoisted higher, the carcass turned. By this process the meat of the whale was removed, like peeling a huge piece of fruit. After a long strip of blubber was cut away, it was pulled onto deck and cut into smaller strips about six feet long. Eddie was surprised to learn these were called horses. These horse pieces were then cut with mincing knives into thin slices, and thrown into boiling pots that had been set up in the

middle of the deck. Hundreds of seagulls fluttered around the crew as they worked, boldly swooping down to the deck whenever they saw the chance to grab a stray piece of flesh. No amount of swatting by the crew could keep them away.

After all the blubber had been cut up and put into the boiling pots, crewmembers then returned to the stripped carcass and cut away the jaw. The teeth were saved for later carving of whale tooth scrimshaw. The remainder of the carcass, by this time savagely consumed by the bevy of sharks surrounding it, was then detached from the hull. No one besides Eddie, not even Mangaq, paid much attention as it sank slowly into the depths. Eddie was overcome with feelings of the barbarity of the whale hunt and the stripping of the carcass. He had no idea it was going to be so repulsive and revolting.

With the fluttering seagulls above, and the lurking sharks below, the ship seemed surrounded by scavengers. The deck itself was even worse. From the tryports in middeck, black smoke suffocated everyone, as the boiling oil splattered on the hands of those who got too close. The smell was overpowering, leading some of the crew to vomit on deck. That, mixed with the whale blood, raw blubber and oil, created a slick film over the whole surface.

When the boiling was completed, the resulting whale oil had to be poured into barrels for cooling. By this time the slick oil covered everything and everybody. The crew worked and stumbled on the sloppy deck, far into the night, taking breaks only to eat oily grub. After over eighteen hours of backbreaking labor they fell into their bunks exhausted, still covered from head to toe with the greasy oil.

Eddie fell asleep tasting the nauseating oily flavor on his lips. That night he dreamed he was being crushed under piles of blubber that continued to fall on him. He awoke with a suffocating sense of fear and agony from the slaughter of the whales and the filthy work of boiling down the oil. This work was even worse than what the field hands were subjected to on a Southern plantation. Eddie was disgusted. Had he risked his life to escape from slavery, only to end up doing this gruesome and hellish work?

6

Savannah

On arriving in Savannah, still in chains, Eddie felt totally lost. His sorrow at losing his home, and his best friend, was compounded by his fear of the city. He had never seen so many buildings, or so many people. The overseer stopped the horse in front of a large building with bars over all the windows. He led Eddie inside the auction house, received a voucher payment from the official in charge, and turned around to leave. Without a word of goodbye, Eddie's last tie to anyone he had ever seen in his life was broken.

The slave auction house was a stinking jail, with different cells for men, for women, and for mothers with their children. From his cell Eddie could see the auction block. He saw husbands and wives separated for sale to different owners. He saw a mother begging a white man to buy her children along with her, pleading to keep her family together. But the white man refused, and her children were torn away from her by another buyer while she and the two little children screamed in sorrow. Eddie's own despair was so intense, he felt numb to the cries of anguish all around him.

Several white men tried to inspect him through the bars of the cell, poking him with their canes and demanding to see his teeth. Eddie cooperated as little as possible, but the lash of the black guard inside the cell came down on his back if he did not comply quickly.

After several hours of being prodded and inspected, with increasing demoralization, Eddie noticed a man with a bushy red beard who was wearing a blue uniform. He was a captain of a boat. Eddie knew this for certain, since he had seen boats go by the plantation lagoon many times. Eddie instinctively thought that

working on a boat would be better for him than being a fieldhand. At least it would keep him close to the sea.

Eddie jumped up. "Excuse me, sir," he said in the most refined voice he could manage, "are you captain of a boat?"

"A ship," said the blue uniformed man, with a thick Irish accent. "Have you ever served on one?"

"Oh, yes sir!" Eddie replied with gusto, even though the only time he had ever been on a ship was when he helped unload cargo from a boat that ran aground at the shore of the Helms plantation. "And I'm a good swimmer too," he added for effect.

"You know anything about ship repair?"

"Carpentry is my specialty, sir. If you've got anything you want that's made out of wood and nails, I can do it, sir."

The Captain started explaining what the job of ship's carpenter would entail. Eddie didn't care.

Though his Irish accent was sometimes hard for Eddie to understand, this red-bearded man had a look in his eyes that seemed to be not cruel. He was there to buy another human being, to be sure, but Eddie perceived a basic decency about his manner. The man looked at Eddie right in the eye as he conversed in an almost friendly manner. He did not demand that Eddie look downward. Instead, the man talked as if he were speaking with a business partner. He told Eddie that he needed experienced carpenters to hire out to other ships for extra cash.

"Right now I'm between appointments myself. I'm managing the dry dock here at the Savannah shipyard till I get a good commission. Maybe you can join my crew if you're as good as you say."

Anything to get out of this stinking hole, Eddie thought, to save himself from becoming a fieldhand. "Yes, sir, I sure am. I sure am!"

Seeing Eddie's interest, and apparently believing his protestations of expertise, the Captain responded favorably. After talking with the auctioneer, the Irishman paid his money and Eddie was brought out of the cell.

"Captain Jonathan J. O'Neill," the man introduced himself as they headed toward a hackney carriage to go back to the harbor. No white man had ever introduced himself to Eddie before or let him sit next to him in a carriage.

In the following days Eddie did everything he could to ingratiate himself to his new Irish owner. He was relieved not to have been sold to a cruel owner and happy to be close to the sea. At the shipyard he impressed the Captain with his carpentry skills. What he did not know about ship repair he learned from the other slave workers there. The Captain, confident of his new property's contentment, removed the iron cuffs from Eddie's arms after a few days. Eddie was gratified to be there, and relieved at this unexpected turn of events.

At the same time, Eddie was still in sorrow for the death of his best friend Joey. He resolved his sorrow by reflecting that Joey would not want him to wallow in misery. Joey always liked to be happy, and he always tried to cheer Eddie up if he was not feeling good. Mainly, Eddie did not forget his vow with Joey that they would one day live as free men. Joey had acted too fast, and had failed. If Joey had not made it, Eddie thought, he would need to do it for both of them. He would take his time, waiting patiently until the right opportunity arose. He felt that the position he now had might offer him the chance to escape to The North.

While working at the shipyard, the other slaves told Eddie about the a group of people in the North who called themselves abolitionists, because they wanted to abolish slavery. Eddie was amazed to learn that there were white folks who lived up in The North who were trying to destroy slavery. Eddie could not imagine a white person being against the institution of slavery, but these slaves at the shipyard knew a lot. One of them had even secretly spoken with a free black man one time. That free man was a crewmember on a Northern ship which had docked in the Savannah shipyard. They both took a big chance by talking; if the slave had been discovered he would have been whipped and sold.

And the free black would have been killed. No master wanted one of his slaves to know about The North and freedom.

The free man explained about the abolitionists, he told Eddie, and about a man named Abraham Lincoln who was trying to become leader of the whole country. This man was against slavery. The shipyard workers said white folks in South Carolina were terribly agitated about this man, and they said that if Abraham Lincoln became President they would pull South Carolina out of the Union.

Upon hearing this Eddie thought, of course they would do everything they could to keep black folks as their slaves. The slaves did everything for the whites, even serving as their sexual toys as Eddie's mother had done for Master Helms. The thought of this, and of Master Helms' exiling Eddie from his home and from his friends, caused Eddie to redouble his determination to escape slavery and to go to The North.

After a few weeks Eddie confided his idea to Tom, another slave in the shipyard who had been particularly kind to Eddie. Tom reminded him of what his grandfather Tombo must have been like when he was younger. Eddie told Tom about what had happened to him, and Tom said these kinds of stories were common among slaves who ended up in the shipyard. Every Captain had bought their slaves at the Savannah slave market.

Tom had been a blacksmith on a cotton plantation, but when his master died the three sons could not agree on how to run the plantation so they decided to sell the land and the slaves. As with Eddie, Tom's metalworking skills had saved him from being sold as a fieldhand. Skilled blacksmiths were in high demand in the shipyard. But Tom's skills were not enough to convince Captain O'Neill to buy Tom's wife and little seven year old son. As Tom looked on in terror from his jail cell at the slave market, they each were bought by different men. Tom had no idea where they ended up, or in what situation. He only could hope that his wife would find another man to settle down with, and that when his son grew

up he would be spared the early death that was so common among overworked fieldhands.

Though Tom was grateful that Captain O'Neill was not cruel, he still reacted bitterly to the whole idea that one man can have the power to buy and sell other human beings like pieces of furniture. As they talked in hushed tones so no one else could hear, Tom told Eddie that what needed to be done was not just to help a few slaves to escape, but to end slavery as an institution.

Eddie had never thought about this even as a possibility before. Slavery had always existed, and Tom's idea that it might be attacked and destroyed was a new way of thinking for Eddie. Tom said this is what the abolitionists wanted, and in England they had already been successful in convincing the British government to abolish slavery in the British Empire. Tom hoped that if Mr. Lincoln could become the leader of the country, this might actually happen in America as well. But, Tom knew, it would require a big struggle to get the white folks of South Carolina and Georgia to give up their slaves.

Tom talked with Eddie a long time about these issues, and he got Eddie to promise that if Tom was going to put his life on the line to help Eddie escape, that once he was free Eddie would do everything in his power to try to attack the slave power. Eddie was greatly influenced by Tom's revolutionary ideas, and he started thinking not just about his own freedom, but also for the freedom of every other African who had been enslaved. Eddie made an oath with Tom that once he was free he would do whatever he could to bring about the end of slavery.

Tom agreed to help him. Eddie knew that this meant, if Tom got caught helping another slave escape, he would be killed for sure. Eddie was grateful that Tom made this offer. Together they planned a means of escape.

Eddie knew that Tom was risking his life to get involved in an escape plot, but Tom was determined that they should try it. They got an idea from Captain O'Neill's red beard. A week after Eddie arrived, as a joke, an officer on a ship in the Savannah dry dock had

worn a fake red beard to innocently mimic the Irishman in charge. The shipyard crew all enjoyed the stunt, but afterwards the red beard was forgotten in a drawer.

One day Eddie snuck into that officer's room in the dry-docked ship and pinched the fake beard. Next he saw a horse with a tail that was the same reddish color, and he waited for an opportunity when no one was looking to cut the long hair off the horse's tail. In his own quarters he carefully sewed the horsehair to the inside back and sides of a big floppy hat.

When he put on the hat and wore the fake beard, the flowing red hair completely covered Eddie's black curly hair, as well as his ears and neck. Even if someone did see Eddie's face above the beard, his light skin color could pass as a swarthy white man. With all that red hair to distract from his skin, plus with his distinctive green eyes, Tom agreed that Eddie might be able to pass.

Captain O'Neill would sometimes hire out Eddie, Tom and the others to do carpentry work on ships docked in the Savannah harbor. Eddie usually wore a straw hat to keep the sun out of his eyes while he worked on deck. One time he was replacing some floorboards in a stateroom at the forward bow. It must have been the quarters of a rich gentleman; Eddie had never seen so many fine clothes. He and the other slaves were lucky to get two issues of clothing each year. They had all become excellent seamstresses as they patched and repatched their worn garments. Eddie thought this rich gentleman would never miss one set of clothes, so he neatly folded a shirt, pants, jacket, and gloves into his tool bag. Eddie sweated as he left the ship, hoping that no one would notice the extra bulk stuffed into his gear. Evidently the gentleman never missed his clothes, since no scandal occurred. Eddie was relieved when that ship left Savannah without incident.

The next time he was hired out, Eddie did such good quality work that Captain O'Neill offered to give him a gift. When he asked Eddie what he wanted, Eddie requested fine new shoes. The Irish shipyard manager laughed, wondering what a slave wanted with such attire. But to keep his promise, the Captain indulged him

and bought him a pair. They were actually second-rate shoes, and comfortable, but Eddie was satisfied that they looked like shoes a white man might wear.

Captain O'Neill wanted to keep Eddie happy, since the newly purchased slave had turned into a profitable investment for him. Eddie's diligent labor and fine quality workmanship soon made him noted as one of the best carpenters in the shipyard. The Captain had already recouped the full amount of money he had paid for Eddie, just from hiring him out to do carpentry work on other ships. O'Neill was pleased, and Eddie was careful not to give any sign of his displeasure in being owned by the Captain.

Eddie had been so frightened when he was taken from the plantation, but now he found that he was in a much better situation. He even forgave Master Helms, knowing this conflicted man who was his father had wanted Eddie to end up all right. Eddie learned from the incident not to fear change, that maybe the new situation would be an improvement. This realization emboldened him greatly, and gave him a different perspective than most of the other slaves.

For now, Eddie felt lucky to have a good master in the Captain. He bore the red-bearded man no ill will, and was grateful to have been saved from a much worse fate on the auction block. Captain O'Neill never mistreated him, and while the flogging of slaves in the shipyard was common, the Captain had not once crossed Eddie's back with a whip.

Still Eddie was fully conscious that he remained another man's property. No matter how content he might be in his work, he could be sold without a moment's notice. He had also learned that lesson from the experience of being sold by Master Helms. From now on, Eddie decided to put no trust in any white man.

As he did his daily work he often thought about his vow to Joey that he would become a free man. He remembered Tombo's stories about living free in Africa. He remembered the story he had heard about the free black people living in The North, where the whites were abolitionists. He remembered Joey's death in trying

to escape. These memories made Eddie's determination all the stronger. With every passing day he became more impatient to get his chance for escape to freedom.

A week later Eddie, Tom, and several other slaves were hired out to a new ship that had docked in the harbor. Eddie noticed that the crew of this ship talked funny, with strange accents. When the slaves left at the end of the day's work, security was especially tight. The Captain carefully counted the slaves as they came off the boat, making sure all were accounted for. The next day, once again aboard the new ship, Eddie asked one of the crewmembers where this ship came from.

"Boston," the sailor replied with a nasal twang.

"Is that in The North?"

"About as far north as a man can get in this country. That's where we're headed after the repairs are done."

Eddie did not want to ask more, for fear of arousing suspicion, but he realized this could be his opportunity. That day he worked in the ship's hold. He noticed a long, narrow cubbyhole in the corner formed by the intersection of beams of the hull. It was about eight feet long and just high enough for him to crawl into.

He slid a small water barrel into the opening. With a little hacking away at the top beam the barrel just fit inside. Then he made a cover of wood planks and nailed it carefully to the barrel so that when the barrel was pulled inside the wood cover looked like a wall. Eddie constructed the fit so tightly that no one would notice the joints. When he crawled inside feet first, and pulled the barrel in after him, he had just enough room to lie down. It was dark and tight, but this would be his best chance. He removed a foot of floorboard, to use the space below as a toilet. He and Tom secretly took some extra food from the rations allotted to the workers, and did not eat lunch, but stored the food in the compartment for Eddie to have something to eat on the trip. Eddie placed a small full barrel inside the opening for water during his days in hiding.

Eddie finished his work that day in record time, and not a moment too soon. He learned that the ship would pull anchor the

next evening after they had finished the day's work. Depending on the winds, he heard, it would take the ship five or six days to reach Boston. That night he and Tom planned the escape in detail. Eddie took out most of his tools from his toolbag, and in their place carefully folded and packed the gentleman's clothes, the floppy hat with horsehair attached, and the fake red beard. He also included a small slab of cured ham to eat on the journey.

He and Tom rehearsed their plan. After they were confident of every step, they relaxed. "You know, if this works," Tom said pensively, "I'll never hear from you again."

"No, Tom," Eddie blurted out, "I'll do something to help you get free. I don't know yet what it is, but once I get to The North I'll do something. Nobody has ever risked his life for me before."

"Now don't you worry yourself none about me. Just seeing if the ship leaves without them discovering you on board will be reward enough for me. If it works, and the Captain don't figure it out, I may try it myself later. I'll get the other slaves to say they saw you the day after, on our day off. You won't be missed till Monday. Captain O'Neill will never know for sure what happened to you."

"We may not have time tomorrow, so let me say I'll never forget you putting yourself out for me like this."

Tom replied, "Well, just don't forget your promise that you will do whatever you can to help end slavery. Someday, if the abolitionists get Mr. Lincoln as leader of the country, we may all be free. Wouldn't that be a fine day? Yes sir, a fine day indeed!"

7

BERING STRAIT

The crew spent the next day loading the barrels of whale oil into the hold and scrubbing down the deck. On the day after

that, the Captain headed the ship south, toward the spot where the mother whale was last spotted. The Captain knew that a mother whale mourning the loss of her offspring would not travel far, and might even come back to try to find the remains.

Sure enough, after searching for another day the lookout spotted the whale's spray on the horizon. The Captain ordered the ship at full mast, striving to get as close as possible to the whale before it panicked and fled. Eddie thought the eyes of the whale must not be very good, if it could not see the ship from a distance. When they got as close as they could, the Captain ordered two whaleboats into the water. Eddie tried to get out of that duty, but Captain Mowbray insisted he must take an oar. After the gruesome work of killing the gentle animal and then cutting up the carcass, Eddie had no desire to ever again participate in this kind of work. But the Captain ordered him, and Eddie relented. He cursed himself silently for agreeing to get into the boat.

They approached the whale quietly, making as few splashes in the water as possible. Before they got within range, however, the whale dived. They stopped, waiting to see where the creature would resurface. They waited and waited. The longer they waited, the more the Captain looked out on the horizon, wondering if the whale had fled far away. But the Captain's stares were met only with emptiness. Just as the crew was giving up on seeing this whale again, a sudden swell seemed to stir the boat in a way that was crosswinds from the ocean current. Then a huge tail appeared out of the depths and sharply slapped the surface of the water, right next to the boat. Before anyone could react, the little vessel was flipped completely upside down.

Eddie and the others were tossed out into the cold Arctic water. The chill was a severe shock. Eddie could not believe how still everything seemed under water. When he recovered his senses he swam to the surface and saw the others struggling to climb aboard the overturned craft. Eddie managed to get completely out of the water and onto the hull. The Captain tried to count the drenched crew to make sure no one was missing.

Suddenly a sharp jolt sent the boat right out of the water, splintering the battered craft into several sections. Eddie's breath was sucked out of him, as he looked down to see the slick gray skin of the whale just below them. The whale had overturned the boat with a deliberate flip of its tail, and now it was ramming them with its head.

With a speed that Eddie could not believe, he and the Captain were shoved upward toward the sky. In desperation they hung onto some splintered planks that were directly atop the whale's head, as it leapt out of the water for almost half its length. They flew up into the air and were flung for many yards, while the whale came crashing down on its back, landing heavily on top of some of the other crew.

Again Eddie was flung deep into the water, and again he experienced the cold calmness of the sea beneath the surface. The stillness reeked of death. As he bobbed to the surface he latched onto a piece of floating wood. In the distance he saw the Captain grimacing in great agony while holding onto some planks. Eddie's friend, Steven, swam over and grabbed onto the piece of wood with him. Together they floated, not knowing what would happen next. It was obvious the whale had attacked them deliberately, in revenge for their previous day's slaughter. Eddie wondered if it would return to finish them off one by one? The hunters had become the hunted.

But as more time passed. Eddie started to worry that, even if the whale had left, they would soon freeze in the icy water. As they floated on the splintered planks, Eddie and Steven looked at each other with wordless fear. They were shivering uncontrollably. Eddie could not feel his feet at all.

As Eddie despaired that there was no hope, the other whaleboat appeared in the distance. Between swells of the waves, he could see the First Mate pull the Captain aboard. Then the boat headed toward them. As it got to them, Eddie saw it was dangerously overloaded, and not far from capsizing in the surging waves. But the others managed to haul both Eddie and Steven over the

gunwale and into the safety of the longboat. They looked around for other crewmen in the surf, but seeing none began the laborious row back to *The Cape of Good Hope*. Eddie, Steven and the Captain lay shivering in the hull, in shock from the ordeal that had nearly killed them. They said nothing as a wave crested over the edge of the longboat, almost capsizing it. At last the crew managed to get to the edge of the ship, and without a word they scrambled up the rope ladder.

Though Eddie was grateful to have gotten out of that ordeal alive, he and the others realized how close they all came to drowning. This was a disaster from which the expedition could not recover.

The next day nothing happened. Everyone was too much in shock to do anything, and in mourning for the four drowned fellow crewmembers. Captain Mowbray retreated into his cabin, and as usual in a trying situation, drank himself into a stupor. Eddie could feel only sadness. He and Steven stayed together in the bunk, crying in each other's arms. Each felt the loss, not only of the recently killed crewmen, but also of those who died earlier. For Steven his sorrow was for the friend he'd made on the first leg out of the journey, a time that now seemed almost idyllic; both of them remembered the funny ceremony held by the old salts as they crossed the Equator, then sobbed all the harder. For Eddie there was Joey's loss—he could still see the bullets striking into the muddy water of the Savannah River. And he remembered the loss of what might have been in Hawaii—a possibility for his life that he'd never be able to know.

The trauma of what they had been through, both in losing their closest friends and immediately in this close call with death, drew the two boys closer together. Yet even as he lay next to Steven, Eddie felt alone. He liked the other crewmembers for the most part, but even with Steven he wondered how long it would be before this friend also might die. Eddie had not one relative alive in the world, and even his friends were disappearing. Life seemed so fragile. How long might he himself live in this dangerous work?

The security and sense of permanence he had felt growing up on the plantation had been forever shattered.

Over the following two weeks the ship stayed anchored at the same spot in the Bering Strait. The Captain remained in his cabin most of the time, conversing only briefly with the First Mate and with Mangaq, the Aleut guide. The crew began to wonder what was happening.

The First Mate told them they still did not have enough whale oil to justify returning southward. He said the Captain hoped some other whales might happen by if they stayed in this spot. Mangaq admitted he had not been in this area for several years, but assured Captain Mowbray that in past years whales had migrated past this point with some regularity.

But now it was different. Mangaq confided to Eddie that every year he saw fewer and fewer whales. Their choice seemed to be to stay here and hope, or to travel farther north into the Bering Strait. At this point, however, it looked like the Captain was afraid to do any more adventuring than necessary, since the number of deaths had reduced the crew to a dangerously low size. And so, they waited.

More weeks passed with no sight of a whale. It was now August 1861, and every day seemed more boring than the day before. Mowbray assigned two lookouts at all times, rotated every two hours, in hopes of a sighting. But there was no luck. Eddie had already decided if there was a sighting that he was not going to go out on the whaleboat again. He doubted the Captain would call on him or Steven to do such service, after what they had been through. The Captain himself had no such luxury of refusal. He knew that his reputation and authority among the crew depended on him taking the lead in the whaleboat. Besides, his position as the most experienced and skilled harpooner required him to assume this dangerous task.

The Captain was in a bind. If he did not return to Boston with a full load of oil, the ship-owners were not likely to contract him in the future, and his livelihood would be threatened. Captain

Mowbray, Eddie concluded, was just as much a prisoner of the situation as any of the crew.

As day after day passed, with no sightings, the men spent their time patching worn sails, mending clothes, and carving scrimshaw that they hoped they might be able to sell upon their return. With such a low cargo of whale oil, they all knew their share of the profits would be pitifully small. Some remarked ruefully that the ship-owners and financiers would be sure to take most of the profits before turning any payment over for the crew. In recent years, as the overhunted whales had become scarcer, the men carped, it was becoming common for the crew to be paid nothing at all if they came back without a sufficiently large cargo. Most of the crew felt sorry for themselves, and wanted to find more whales to gain more pay.

Eddie, in contrast, did not want them to be successful in killing other whales. He couldn't feel any hatred for the whale that had attacked them. As far as he was concerned, the crew deserved to be attacked by the whale for killing its offspring. These gentle giants were bothering no one before the humans began the attack. Eddie felt disgust to his very soul for the human species. Everything he had seen in his life showed that humans, when given the chance, were quick to pursue their own selfish gain by exploiting either other species or other humans.

The violent enslavement of his grandparents, the sexual exploitation of his mother, the bloody beatings by the overseer, the sale of Eddie himself at the whim of his own father, the enthusiastic shooting by the white men at Joey in the river, the persecution of the Aleuts by the Russians, and now the exploitation of the sailors themselves by the ship-owners—all served to reinforce in Eddie's mind the horrid state of the world.

The only positive thing he could think about which countered this horror was friendship, and the intimate joys which he had experienced on a longterm basis with Joey and with Yoshi. The joy came not just from the wonderful sexual experiences he had with them, though that was part of it, but, more important, from the

intimate connection he'd felt in his heart with each of these friends. Now Joey was dead, and Eddie was certain he would never see Yoshi again. The memories were bittersweet. They swept through Eddie's heart and powered the tears he wept.

Eddie cried more deeply as he thought about the hopelessness he felt in this frigid gruesome place. He wanted to leave, to escape, to flee. He had thought *The Cape of Good Hope* would be his permanent home as a free man; instead, it had turned into his prison. He felt as much in bondage as he had been in South Carolina as a slave.

8

ESCAPE

As he boarded the ship soon bound for Boston and "The North," Eddie carried his big straw hat, as usual. But he also wore his new shoes. With his disguise carefully folded into the tool bag, there was no room for the shoes, so he had to wear them. He hoped the straw hat he clutched to his side would hide the extra bulk of the bag.

Captain O'Neill was standing at the gangplank to oversee the arrival of the slaves he'd hired out to do repairs on this ship, so it could get back on schedule and leave for Boston—and "The North"—just as promptly as possible. He happened to notice the shiny patent leather dress shoes he bought Eddie: "You sure are dressed snazzy, boy. Some fine shoes you got there!"

"Thanks to you, sir," Eddie tried not to show his nervousness as he chuckled: "I've been bragging to these Yankee sailors that a slave here in Savannah can have better shoes than them. So, see, sir, I brought my exhibit." Eddie did a little shuffle dance with the new shoes, to look harmless. His owner laughed and let him pass onto the ship unchallenged.

Once onboard Eddie dropped his smile and went straight to his job in the cargo hold. He took the precious set of gentleman's clothes, the hat and the fake beard out of his bag and quickly stuffed them inside his secret compartment. In his rush to get the work done, he let the hammer slip. It tore some skin off his index finger, which bled until he had to suck the blood dry.

By late morning, the work was done—both on the secret hideaway and on the cargo hold. The ship's Captain and First Mate came down with Captain O'Neill to inspect the repairs. Tom and Eddie stood by with their heads bowed. Eddie sweated as the men surveyed the room. Fortunately no one noticed the new panel that covered the end of the secret compartment. Eddie had pushed some luggage in front of it.

Eddie realized Captain O'Neill was inadvertently complicit in this plan. He certainly wanted to be paid for the job and have this ship on its way. He didn't want any inspection to be too strict lest the job have to be done over. He kept talking the whole time, cracking jokes and distracting the ship's officers.

Once the inspection was passed, the crew got busy preparing to sail. Eddie and Tom took their chance. While Tom stayed in the hold, Eddie quickly climbed up on deck with his now nearly empty tool bag. He was the second slave to exit the ship.

Captain O'Neill was back standing at the top of the gangplank, carefully accounting for his slaves. Just after Eddie set foot on the dock, he was terrified to hear O'Neill call down to him. Had he been noticed doing something suspicious?

"Yessir?" he mumbled.

"I'll bet them Yankee boys was plenty surprised to see such fine shoes?" O'Neill joked.

"Oh, yes sir," Eddie mumbled again, this time in relief. He walked on quickly.

Once away from the ship, Eddie stashed the tool bag where Tom could find it later. Then, when he was sure no one was looking, he sat down on the edge of the dock and slid silently into the water.

Still wearing his clothes and shoes, he took a big gulp and swam underwater to the side of the ship away from the gangplank.

From the lower porthole just a few feet above water level, Tom reached out to grab Eddie's hands. Hidden from view, no one could see Tom pull him up through the porthole. Once inside Eddie crawled into the compartment. As he did so, his finger scraped against the wood and started bleeding again. Eddie quickly stuck his finger into his mouth to stop the bleeding. Tom gave him a silent look of good luck, then pushed the panel and water barrel into place. As Eddie sat inside the dark compartment, he heard Tom slide more luggage in front. Then he heard Captain O'Neill yelling down to Tom: "What's taking you so long down there, boy? Everybody else's already off."

"Sorry, sir," Tom replied, "I had to finish a last bit of work."

"Their Captain's satisfied. I've been paid. Let's go."

Good, Eddie thought, they had completed their plan just in time. He knew, of course, that that last bit of work for Tom was to wipe up the water on the floor near the porthole where Eddie had been pulled inside. But in his rush Tom did not notice the little splotch of blood that remained on the board from Eddie's finger. From his dark chamber Eddie heard Tom's footsteps as he walked up the stairs. He wouldn't be able to see anything from his cubbyhole, but he listened carefully and tried to interpret the sounds echoing through the body of the ship.

No sooner had Tom and the Captain gotten off than the gangplank was raised and the crew let out the sails. The wind filled the sails, making a deep w'ooshing sound that sent thrills through Eddie's whole body. And the ship slowly moved away from the dock. Eddie knew that the slave patrol boat would inspect the ship once more, before it left the mouth of the Savannah River, and he hoped that the door to his secret compartment would not be discovered.

Inside his darkened chamber, Eddie huddled still dripping wet. He thought about how a ship had brought his grandparents across the ocean from Africa into slavery, and now a ship was

taking him out of slavery to an unknown place called The North. He knew he would not have gotten this chance if he had not been bought by Captain O'Neill and hired out as a carpenter. He was glad that his hired labor had already made the Captain a handsome profit over his purchase price, and he was grateful to this man for treating him like a human being and a little sorry he was betraying his confidence.

In his anxious reverie, he even felt grateful to Master Helms for apprenticing him to the plantation carpenter. This skill gave him a much better chance in life than a simple fieldhand would've had. He smiled thinking that making barrels had saved him from becoming a fieldhand, and now the barrel that covered his hiding place saved him from being discovered. He felt mighty grateful for barrels.

In fact, looking forward to his freedom, Eddie forgave Master Helms for selling him. He had no family left there on the plantation anyway, and he now knew from his experience with Tom that he could make new friends elsewhere. Yes, in spite of the tragedy of Joey's death, it had turned out for Eddie that being sold was for the best. What he had initially thought to be a disaster turned out to be his great benefit.

Eddie had no idea what future awaited him in The North. He had no knowledge whatsoever about The North, except that its people had strange accents and there was no slavery there. He was glad he would soon become a free man. He wanted to work, and earn his own wages, just like a white man. He didn't want to have to turn over the profits of his labor to any master, ever again.

Less than an hour after their departure Eddie heard footsteps and voices. He sat motionless, hoping no one would discover his hiding place. A slave patrol officer walked through the hold, as he did with every ship leaving the mouth of the Savannah River, looking at every corner to make sure no slave was hiding inside. He was just about to leave when he noticed the small smear of blood on the wood cover of Eddie's hiding place. The man wiped

his hand across and smelled it, recognizing it as blood. Then he jiggled the wood that Eddie had hammered into place.

From inside the dark space, Eddie was alarmed to hear the officer fiddling with his chamber. He hoped the wood stayed attached. If the piece of wood came loose, Eddie would be discovered. Fortunately, the wood held.

Just as the officer was getting ready to pull the wood barrel out of the way so he could investigate further, the Captain of the ship peered down at him and asked if there was any problem. The official said he saw some blood on the wood siding.

By this time the Captain was getting impatient: "Well, that's not surprising, given that I just had a bunch of workers in there making repairs. Maybe one of them cut himself. Now, as I understand it, sir, your job is to find bodies not blood. So, if you haven't got a black body to go along with that red blood, I'd really appreciate it if you would let us get on with our journey."

The patrol officer gave one last look at the blood stain on the wood, and was thinking about pulling the barrel out, but then he turned around and left.

From inside his small compartment Eddie could not tell what was going on, and he remained tense for a while. He sensed how close he came to being discovered. But once there was a spell of silence Eddie realized that nothing happened. Then after some more tense moments he heard the creaking of the ship as it continued on its journey out of the bay. Eddie again silently expressed gratitude to the barrel that concealed him and saved him. He felt incredible relief.

As the closed space became stuffy and hot, Eddie slipped out of his clothes to be more comfortable. Later, after the ship got into the open sea, a new challenge arose. Now the ship started tossing and turning in the waves. Eddie had never been out on the ocean, and he was not prepared for the violent rocking of the boat. The heavy water barrel held its place, but Eddie was tossed from side to side in his tight chamber. Before too long he began to get a sick feeling in his stomach. He hoped it would pass, but it only got worse. With

every rocking motion Eddie felt sicker. Finally his hands searched out the space where he had removed the floorboard. As he pressed his mouth over the hole his stomach contracted and he vomited.

Eddie started to moan, but despite his discomfort he silenced himself. He could not chance a crewmember hearing him. He could clearly hear them as they went about their duties in the ship's hold and as people walked the deck above. In his dizzy misery, he wondered how sailors could carry on their duties with this never-ending tossing and turning. He remembered, with some hope and optimism, he'd heard sailors at the shipyard saying that seasickness passed after a few days. Eddie could not remember feeling so nauseated before. As sick as he felt, he did not know if he could take much more of this.

Eddie lay exhausted on the hard wood floorboards with only his soggy clothes to serve as a pillow. Before long, with more rocking, he began to throw up again. He wiped his mouth on his wet shirt and collapsed in despair. He felt like vomiting some more but after so much vomit there was nothing left in his stomach to throw up. He wretched in pain, hoping that no one would come into the ship's hold and hear him. Mercifully, after a while, he fell into a deep sleep.

When he woke up Eddie had no idea how much time had passed. He could see nothing and assumed it was nighttime. He pulled the cork out of his water barrel and pressed his mouth to the wood to get a drink. The first several times he did this, water sprayed over his naked body. It felt good, but Eddie knew he must conserve all his water. Besides, he could not chance that the water would leak out into the room and attract attention.

He became expert at pulling the cork and pressing his mouth to the wood at the same time, then replacing the cork with only a tiny bit of leakage. He began to feel sympathy for how difficult each day must be for blind people. He counted his blessings, that he was able-bodied and healthy and that he was on his way to freedom. Thoughts of at last becoming a free man helped him persevere.

Day after day Eddie lay in his tiny coop. He tried to sleep as much as he could but the tossing and turning of the ship kept waking him. He lost track of time. He occasionally felt hunger but when he tried to eat some ham it made him feel sick again. Once more he threw up. The moldy smell of his wet clothes, and especially his shoes, filled the small space. Eddie yearned for fresh air. The stench of the vomit and of his feces was overpowering. He hoped that no one outside would notice the smell.

Finally, after several more sick spells, Eddie's stomach seemed to adjust to the constant movement of the ship. He was even able to eat a little of the ham without getting ill. Then he slept. And he slept some more. Eddie could not remember when he had ever slept so much. He was grateful for the time asleep.

He was becoming quite cold when awake. With difficulty he pulled on his pants and shirt to keep warm. They were finally dry. He covered himself with the gentleman's jacket, being careful to keep it from getting wrinkled. When awake he constantly wanted to say something, just to be able to speak. But of course he had to be content with simply thinking, or listening to the crew when they came into the storeroom. He did not know how much time had passed, or if he was going to be able to make his escape when the ship docked. He thought, slept, and feared for his future.

As Eddie lay motionless in the dark, tight cubbyhole that had, as time passed, seemed to become darker and tighter, he couldn't tell the difference between day and night. His arms and legs ached to stretch out fully. He wished he had more clothing to wear in the increasingly cold climate, but he did not dare to unfold the gentleman's clothes for fear of wrinkling them. Those clothes were the crucial part of his escape. He had not come all this way to be captured just as he was trying to leave the ship. If he had been sent back to the South, he would have been flogged mercilessly and consigned to being a fieldhand for sure.

Just as Eddie was wondering how much longer it would take before the ship reached Boston, it gradually became obvious to him that the vessel was no longer tossing in the waves. He could hear

the sailors talking about what they were going to do when they got home. Then later he heard the side of the boat scrape up against the harbor pier. He had heard that sound many times in the Savannah shipyard.

The crew began unloading passengers' luggage from the hold. He could hear the large trunk directly in front of his compartment being slid away. It was only now that the really hard part of his escape faced him.

Once quiet had returned, Eddie laboriously pulled on the gentleman's shirt over his own. He buttoned it up to the top button. Then the pants went on over his own. He pulled on his shoes, lacing them up in the darkness. And then the gentleman's linen jacket. Nervously, he fumbled to put on the fake beard and the hat.

Inch by inch, Eddie pushed the barrel out into the room creating an opening to the cargo hold. His eyes squinted in the light. He couldn't see anything. He had the fleeting terror that he had gone blind in the darkness, but then after blinking and rubbing his eyes his sight began to return. He scuttled out of the chamber once his eyes started to focus. Then he pushed the water barrel and false panel back into place so the space was again hidden. He hoped that Tom or another slave worker might discover the space if the ship returned to Savannah, and that they could use it as a means of escape as well.

He tried to adjust the hat and fake beard as he had done countless times before in practice. Though he had no mirror to see what he looked like, he hoped his memory served him well in all the details of his masquerade.

Suddenly Eddie heard footsteps coming down the steps into the storeroom. It was a sailor apparently surprised to see a passenger down there. Eddie kept his head down, and his hands behind his back. "May I help you, sir?" the sailor asked. He had a strange accent Eddie didn't recognize, but he hoped it meant the man was not a native English speaker and would not recognize a feigned accent on his part.

Summoning up all his ability to imitate a white gentleman's style of speech, which he and the other slaves had previously done only in jest, he replied: "Well, yes. I was looking for my luggage."

"Oh, don't worry sir, that's been taken out. It's waiting for you at the terminal." Eddie worried then the sailor would think it suspicious that a passenger would come into the hold looking for his own luggage, but the man replied, "Right this way, sir," and led the way up the stairs without the least hesitance.

He had never been addressed as "sir" by a white man, but he had no time to think about the strangeness of that as he realized he had forgotten to pull on the gentleman's gloves. If anyone saw his dark hands that could be the end of his escape. Fortunately the sailor did not seem to notice, so Eddie fumbled to pull the gloves out of the pants pockets. The sailor turned and looked back at him just as he got them on. He felt wobbly as he climbed the stairs up onto the deck, his legs seemed hard to control, he'd been motionless for so long, but in the hubbub of unloading no one noticed.

As the sailor pointed him toward the gangplank and walked away, Eddie pulled the jacket collar high up on his neck and the brim of the hat low upon his forehead. He kept his face down. With his thick red beard, and the long horsehair mane flowing out from under the sides and back of the hat, Eddie proceeded across the deck and down the gangplank. He knew he must have looked like a strange person to the crew, but he did not care as long as he could get down the gangplank. As he stepped off onto the dock the Captain wished him godspeed.

Yes, Eddie thought, that is indeed what he would need. He nodded silently, and then headed straight across the dock. He walked onto the sidewalk, turned a corner, walked one more block, and darted into the first deserted alleyway he could find. He knew he could not keep up his disguise so he pulled the horsehair out of his hat and threw the beard away.

It was only then that he stopped to think about what had just happened. He was successful! His head started to spin in excitement. He had to lean against the wall for support. He had

to keep from shouting in joy. The last time he had walked up that gangplank he had been a slave, and now he had walked off the same gangplank as a free man.

PART II

Finding Freedom



Boston

Eddie's elation at surviving the journey from Savannah and getting off the boat undiscovered in his cobbled-together disguise, was cut short by his shivering. In his anxiety at making his escape, he had not been aware of how cold it was. Now that he was onshore and in the open, the cold wind bit bitterly at him. He'd ducked into an alleyway to discard the beard and fake hair. That got him out of the wind, but he'd never been so cold in his life. And this was only October, he told himself. What have I gotten myself into? Even though he had on two pairs of pants, two shirts and a jacket, he was shivering uncontrollably. He had to get into a warm building.

He walked out onto the street. Off to the left, he saw a tavern. He'd never been in a tavern before, but in Savannah he'd at least learned to recognize the sign. He knew sailors could just walk into a tavern unheeded. He summoned up his courage to go inside. He had to get indoors! His teeth were chattering so hard he couldn't stand it.

Once inside, he headed straight for the big pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room. There were several men standing round it or holding out their hands to feel the warmth. This gave him a chance to get his bearings. Eddie was surprised and relieved that his presence as a black man seemed to attract no attention. He saw there were sailors of all different races and colors. He noticed one black man not much older than himself sitting alone in the corner. Eddie instinctively headed for that table, and introduced himself.

"They call me Blacky," the man replied. Eddie was almost shocked by the audacity of that name, but then the man added, "I'm the blacksmith 'round here."

Eddie laughed, relieved that men were defined by their job and not by their color. He followed Blacky's gesture toward an empty chair and pulled it close to the table.

Blacky certainly was black. He had very dark skin in contrast to Eddie's light, mulatto coloration. He was tall and thin, but with a broad face, twinkling eyes and a welcoming smile.

"You look cold and hungry," Blacky said. There was a tenderness in his voice and demeanor that Eddie found immediately comforting.

He *was* cold and hungry, and he knew he needed a job if he was going to eat.

"Guess, I am," he answered, "that and broke..."

Blacky asked no questions and Eddie wondered if he recognized him as an escaped slave. The man slid the rest of his plate of food over in front of Eddie and smiled. Eddie gulped it down, only then realizing just how hungry he was. With this food in his stomach he was starting to feel like his normal self again.

"Thank you very much. I am in your debt."

Blacky tossed his head, "De nada."

"Pardon? I didn't understand."

"Oh, I said, it's nothing. I guess you don't know Spanish. Haven't been on the high seas, have you? What I meant is not to worry about the food, you don't owe me a thing." He grinned. "I be glad to help."

Eddie asked the blacksmith if he knew anybody who wanted to hire an experienced carpenter.

"Maybe so. You want to stay here in Boston?"

Eddie asked if it was always this cold in Boston. Blacky laughed, "This is only October! Wait till you see how cold it gets here in January!"

Eddie felt a sharp pang of disillusionment. He was very glad to be free, but he could not see himself living in such a cold place. He

began to think that even slavery in Savannah might be better than freezing to death in Boston.

"Are the other parts of the North this cold?" Eddie asked.

"Even colder..."

By now Eddie was sure the man must have figured out what was up with him, but he asked no prying questions. Eddie got bolder, asking: "Is there anywhere where a black man can get wage labor, that's warm?"

Blacky looked deeply at Eddie, smiled knowingly, then glanced across the room to where a white man was sitting alone at a table drinking; he was dressed in a ship captain's uniform. "Let me ask for you, and we'll see."

The black Bostonian looked so comfortable in his skin. Eddie was impressed. Being free was going to be a good thing.

Blacky walked right over to the captain's table and sat down with him. The two talked for a while. While Eddie continued to eat, he listened with interest to a conversation of several men sitting at the table next to him. They were talking about the upcoming election of 1860, in which the new Republican Party nominee Abraham Lincoln was the first man to run for president on the platform that slavery should not be allowed to expand further into any of the newly settled western territories. He remembered Tom telling him about this man. Maybe he would do something to help the slaves.

"Why, that's the most radical idea any man who's ever run for president has ever said. The South will never stand for it." These were the kind of statements Eddie had heard white men in Savannah saying, only worse. By the way they spoke, Abraham Lincoln was the devil's own offspring, or the devil himself.

When a white man in the South says someone is worse than the devil, that is when black folk pay attention. The white man's devil could be the black man's messiah, Eddie thought. So Eddie was shocked when he heard another man, a white man, say that he thought Abraham Lincoln was the only moral candidate in the race. "Everybody who is a thinking person needs to get out there

and work for Lincoln's success. No other man will stand up to the slave power like Honest Abe. The Democratic Party has split up over the slavery issue, and now is the best opportunity to get an anti-slavery man into the White House. The nation needs this, after so many years of being dominated by Southern politicians. Now the Southern whites are split. They are solidly in support of their pro-slavery presidential candidate John Breckinridge. But that damned opportunist Democrat Stephen Douglas thinks he can ride into the White House by posing as the compromise candidate. He's only interested in himself, and how much power he can hold. He stands for nothing. But it is good that, because of his towering ambition to be president, the Democrats are split. Because of that, the Republicans might be able to get Abe Lincoln elected."

"Nonsense," another white man replied, "Douglas is the only one who can keep the country together. Seeing how far apart the North and the South are these days, it is only a committed compromiser who can lead the government. An ideologue like Lincoln, and all his abolitionist cronies, will cause the destruction of the Union. His election would be a disaster! Why, already, the South Carolina senators have said they will take their State out of the Union if the Republicans are victorious."

Eddie's ears pricked up with this mention of his native State. Another man spoke up, saying dismissively, "Oh those firebrands in South Carolina have been making so many threats for so many years, nobody believes them any more. It's all just a lot of hot air."

"Mark my words," the Douglas supporter replied, "If Lincoln is elected, South Carolina will secede from the Union. No doubt about it! Then the other slave states will join them. And then what would we do? That fool Lincoln would probably raise an army of his followers, to attack the South and try to force them back into the Union. We would become involved in a bloody civil war. Is that what you want for yourself and your sons? Are you prepared to die over the damn slavery issue? I contend that it is a dangerous precedent if the federal government tries to interfere with the domestic institutions within a state. Our Southern brothers are

an independent-minded people, and slavery is a basic part of their way of life. We Northerners may not like it, but we have no moral right to overturn their society. Just like the Americans left the British Empire, the Southerners will leave the Union. And they will win their independence, just like our grandfathers won their independence fourscore years ago. You cannot subdue a free people."

"Free people? Free people?" the first speaker replied vehemently. "Over half of the human souls alive in South Carolina and Mississippi today are kept in chains! What about those people? You cannot just sweep their humanity under the rug with your platitudes. You talk about our patriot grandfathers. Well, it was the platitude of 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness' that led our ancestors in the American Revolution to abolish slavery here in Massachusetts. It is high past time for that barbaric institution to be extinguished in the South. I long for the day when free labor, free soil, and free men will be as sacrosanct in South Carolina as it is in Massachusetts."

"Hear, hear!" another man spoke up. "Maybe the secessionist firebrands in South Carolina will try, but I don't think the rest of the South will leave the Union. There are too many good Union men there, who love their country as it is. I hope to God that war does not break out. But if it does, I'd rather have a man of principle like Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief rather than a lily-livered two-faced opportunist like Stephen Douglas. It's going to be one of those men. You will have to make your choice between those two when you go into the voting booth next month. Either we stand on principle, or we compromise with the devil."

After hearing nothing but pro-slavery rhetoric for his whole life, Eddie was fascinated and amazed to hear such strong anti-slavery sentiments coming out of the mouths of white men. Though he consistently kept his eyes downward, in the way that he had become used to as a slave, Eddie wanted to stand up and cheer when he heard such words as the Lincoln supporters voiced. Such opinions would never be allowed in the South. A white person

speaking such ideas would have been in as much danger of being killed as black people being caught traveling on the road without a written pass from their master.

Though Eddie was interested in hearing more of the political debate about the upcoming November 1860 presidential election, when Blacky returned Eddie was more interested in finding out about a job. He did not want to depend on finding sympathetic strangers like Blacky to provide him with free meals. He wanted to support himself as a free man.

When Blacky sat down he told Eddie that this Captain's whaling ship was leaving tomorrow and was in need of a carpenter. Eddie swallowed hard at the thought of going back to sea, but he hoped he'd gotten his sea legs by now and wouldn't go through the seasickness again. It would be worth taking the risk to get away from this cold. "The North" had disadvantages he'd never imagined.

"Where's the ship going?" Eddie asked.

"The Pacific."

"Where's that?"

"A big ocean—on the other side of the world."

Eddie thought about getting as far away from Savannah as possible. And now that The North had not turned out to be what he had dreamed about, he was ready to leave its frigidness behind. Maybe this Pacific Ocean was close to Africa.

"Is it warm?"

"Most of it."

"Maybe I'm interested. I only have one question: What's a whaling ship?"

"It hunts whales."

"Then what's a whale?"

Blacky laughed heartily but affectionately. He could obviously see this bedraggled looking young black man was really green, but he'd answered each question seriously. Perhaps, while not wanting to know of Eddie's fugitive status (since slave hunters prowled even as far north as Boston), he had once been in a similar situation

himself. As with other questions, he answered this one concisely: "A big fish."

"Oh. That's OK. Fine." Eddie thought about the many times he had been fishing in the lagoon on the Helms' plantation. One time he caught a fish that was almost as big as he was. Whales are probably like that, he thought. Whaling sounded like no problem. He said confidently, "I've done a lot of fishing. I'm interested."

Eddie walked over to the Captain, who offered him a seat. Eddie had never had a white man offer to let him sit at the same table. The Captain even ordered him an ale. He tried to appear confident as he nervously sat with his knees held close together under the table. "Nice clothes," said the Captain, noticing the gentleman's jacket Eddie was wearing.

"Oh," Eddie replied in embarrassment, "I bought them with my last paycheck."

As Eddie cautiously sipped the ale and tasted its unfamiliar bitterness, the Captain asked, "You ever been on a whaler before?"

Eddie thought about his talent at the art of lying well, but he decided he better not try to claim whaling experience, since he knew nothing about it. "No sir, but I've sailed up and down the coast between here and Carolina." He figured there were only two little words "and down" that were not literally true. "And I'm a fine carpenter, sir. I can do everything your ship requires in the way of woodworking and repair."

The Captain thought about it, then said, "You'll get food and clothing on the voyage, but no pay till we return to Boston. Then you get a cut of the profits, at the same rate as the rest of the crew. Is that acceptable?"

"Oh, yes sir," Eddie replied enthusiastically. He had never been paid for his work before, where he did not have to turn over his earnings to his master. Now he knew he was indeed a free man. He didn't know anything about rates of pay, or that skilled carpenters on ships were paid twice as much as the regular crewmen. He was just happy to have a way out of this cold place, and he felt that this job would offer him an opportunity to find someplace else he liked

better. He decided to throw his future into fishing in the Pacific Ocean...wherever that was.

"Well then, you're hired," said the Captain with a grin. "What's your name, young man?"

"You can call me Eddie."

"Well, my name's Thomas Mowbray. And you can call me 'Captain.'" He seemed to think his play on words funny. Eddie wouldn't have realized this overworked and underpaid ship captain was just happy to locate an experienced carpenter, and at a bargain rate of pay.

The man reached into his blue uniform jacket and pulled out a sheaf of papers. "Just sign these, saying you agree to the terms offered in your contract, and that you'll agree to follow the Captain's rules."

Eddie was excited that signing these papers was another mark of his status as a free man. But he was nervous because he had never been asked to sign anything before. He didn't know what to do. "But sir," he meekly offered, "I don't know how to write."

"Don't you even know how to sign your name?"

"No sir. Sorry sir." Eddie did not tell the Captain that it was against the law in South Carolina for a slave to be taught to read and write.

"Well then, son, you just make a cross mark with the pen, in the form of an X, and I'll sign your name for you."

With that the Captain handed Eddie the pen. Eddie had never once held a pen in his hand. Only white men did that. With both fear and pride, Eddie let the Captain guide his hand to make a big X mark. After that, as Eddie beamed, the Captain said, "Now Eddie, tell me your last name so I can print it here for you."

Eddie was once again dumbfounded. Slaves did not have last names. He was just Eddie. Master Helms gave each slave on the plantation a different name so there would be no confusion. Seeing his hesitation Captain Mowbray explained, "You know, your family name. What's your father's name?"

Eddie started to say "Helms." After all, Master Helms *was* his father. But he had never liked that name, and did not want to perpetuate this part of his slave background into his future. Besides, he did not want to take any chances that a slave hunter might be able to trace him. He wanted to make a clean start, as a free man. That was it, he thought to himself: free man.

"Free Man," he finally sputtered, "my last name is Freeman. Eddie Freeman."

Eddie was not certain if the Captain entirely believed him, but he asked no questions and showed no hesitation in inscribing this name on the papers.

It was now official, Eddie thought, feeling a thrill of pride, both the hiring and the name. He liked the sound of it.

As the Captain folded up the papers and put them back in his coat pocket, he smiled and said, "Be at Pier 34 before eleven tonight. We heave off early in the morning. The ship's *The Cape of Good Hope*. You should like that name."

"I do like it, sir. I always want to have good hope."

"No, I mean because it's the name of a cape in Africa, where your ancestors came from."

Africa! Thoughts of Grandfather Tombo telling stories of Africa raced through his mind. His eyes widened, "Are we going to Africa, sir? Is the Pacific Ocean near Africa?"

"No, I'm afraid not. There aren't any whales near Africa, least that I'm aware of."

Eddie felt disappointed. He had hoped the Pacific was near Africa, or that they could have gone by Africa on the way. He would have at least liked to have seen Africa once, just to say he had been there. He then asked, "Where we're going, sir, is it warmer than here? I'm awfully cold, sir."

"Oh, yes, we're heading directly south. You'll be in warm weather in no time!"

The Captain did not technically tell a lie when he said these words. But he did not tell Eddie that the voyage of this whaler would be taking them to cold climates near the tip of South America

and again into the frigid Arctic waters off the coast of Alaska. So, with Eddie's lie and the Captain's lie equally misrepresenting the situation, they both felt reassured.

Eddie felt cheered to know that he would soon be warm again, and he was optimistic about the name of the whaling ship. He repeated to himself silently: Eddie Freeman on *The Cape of Good Hope*.

He certainly did feel good hope, going on his first job as a free man. He addressed the Captain again. "Could I ask you for a favor, sir?"

"Sure, Eddie, what is it?"

"Could you please write my name again on a piece of paper and give it to me?"

The Captain could see how important this was to Eddie. He ceremoniously brought out a big blank piece of paper from his jacket and printed the name EDDIE FREEMAN in big block letters. Then he signed the name, in a fancy signature, below that. Eddie beamed when the Captain presented the paper to him and, picking up his mug of ale, offered a toast: "Let's drink to a safe journey and profitable whaling."

This hiring out as a free laborer was so easy, Eddie thought happily. He was now his own master, something that he and Joey vowed that they would someday accomplish. He thought about Joey and knew that Joey would be proud at what he had accomplished. Eddie wished so much that Joey was alive to see this moment, and to be a free man himself.

In his joy Eddie did not notice that the Captain paid a five dollar tip to Blacky the blacksmith for finding him a carpenter. Good carpenters were hard to locate for whaling ships, since sailors with experience realized that whalers were the worst type of ship on which to work. Eddie thanked Blacky—who had reaped a handsome royalty for his investment of part of his twenty-cent meal. Eddie thought, in his innocence, that the black man was merely being kind. He had not yet seen that, under the free labor system, everybody was always trying to make a buck.

After finishing his ale, Eddie bundled himself up to go out into the cold night air. He wanted to find Pier 34 and get on *The Cape of Good Hope* as soon as possible. He feared that slave hunters might be looking for fugitives. He walked along the dock until he saw a sailor. "Excuse me, sir, can you tell me where Pier 34 is? I'm looking for *The Cape of Good Hope*."

The man looked at him strangely. "It's right in front of you. Can't you read the sign?" Then he muttered, "Stupid nigger."

Eddie said nothing. He felt a thrill as he headed up the gangplank to begin his new life as a free man and a sailor.

10

The Cape of Good Hope

When Eddie woke up the next morning, *The Cape of Good Hope* was already leaving Boston harbor. He was surprised to find a young boy lying next to him on the bunk. He was even more surprised to see the boy's face.

This boy had tan skin and strange slanted eyes, like Eddie had never seen before. Indeed, he had never seen a human being that looked like this thin, petite boy.

As he awoke and saw Eddie staring at him, the boy introduced himself as Yoshi.

"What kind of name is that?" Eddie asked.

Yoshi explained, in an almost unintelligible accent, that he was from an island in the Pacific Ocean named Nihon. The English mispronounced this name, and called it "Japan."

Yoshi was so small that at first Eddie had guessed him to be just a child. But as they struggled at their introductions, he learned he was only one year younger than Eddie, a grown-up seventeen.

They talked a little while, then Yoshi excused himself and asked for a little time alone. Eddie looked around his new quarters. It was crowded here, but apparently the bunk was his. He found a small cabinet that must be his stowage space and carefully folded the fine suit he'd been wearing for his disguise and put it away in the cabinet.

Then, as he climbed out of the crew quarters to go to the railing to pee, Eddie saw Yoshi sitting on the front railing facing the sunrise, doing some strange chanting. Over and over he repeated "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*" in a kind of catchy sing-song way. Eddie could hardly pick out the sounds because Yoshi chanted so rapidly. He didn't understand what was going on, but it looked sort of like fun. He hoped he and Yoshi would become friendly enough so he could ask what it was he was chanting.

His first day as a free sailor, with an impressive-sounding job as ship's carpenter, he surveyed the crew. He was surprised to see that, like Yoshi, most of the other crew seemed to be teenagers as well. There were no other black men on the ship, but Eddie did not stand out. In fact, his skin color was actually not as dark as many of the others.

Over the first few weeks of the voyage, Eddie would learn that ten of the crew were light-skinned Yankees, all from small towns or farming villages near Boston, while seven were darker-skinned boys from a faraway place called Portugal. Two others were tribal Indians, whose skin was actually darker than Eddie's, from a country called Brazil. They knew the same language as the Portuguese, and they often spoke in that strange-sounding tongue.

The only fully adult men on *The Cape of Good Hope* were the Captain and the First Mate, both Yankees, as well as a Brazilian cook and two Portuguese boatsteerers. Except for the First Mate the older ones pretty much kept to themselves. The total population on the ship numbered only twenty-six, the majority of whom were foreigners.

Eddie was shocked at how isolated he had been from the realities of the world. He knew of course that there were mixed-

race people like himself, but he had thought that all people in the world were either black or white. He had never thought there would be such a wide diversity of human types, as represented just on this one ship. He knew the white people deliberately kept their slaves ignorant, in order to control them. He was now determined to learn more about the world on this voyage.

Eddie was also surprised to find out that most of the young crew had never been on a whaler before. Except for the Captain and First Mate, none of the Yankees had ever even been to sea. Once the ship got out onto the open ocean, therefore, the white boys got horribly seasick. Yoshi, the Brazilians and the Portuguese were all experienced sailors, and they laughed at the boys reeling with nausea whom they called “landlubbers.”

Eddie was glad he had gotten over his seasickness on the voyage from Savannah, not only because of his health but also because he did not want to be laughed at. By this time he only had a few queasy feelings in his stomach. As he watched the white boys stumbling along the swaying deck and vomiting over the side rails, he felt sympathy since he had so recently been in the same condition. Yet he also felt a secret happiness that those with darker skin color seemed superior, at least in this regard.

Eddie discovered that there was not much carpentry work to be done yet on the ship. It had just been refitted in Boston harbor. So he spent his time learning the skills of a sailor—along with the rest of the crew, it seemed. He learned fast, having already watched the sailors in the Savannah shipyard. All this wasn’t entirely new to him. And, besides, Yoshi acted as a personal mentor, giving him hints on how to climb the riggings, take in sail, make knots, and haul on lines. As a result, Eddie was not subjected to the merciless teasing which the experienced sailors gave to the landlubbers.

That first week the new men were not only physically sick, but they were confused by the unfamiliar orders of Captain Mowbray’s seafaring jargon and occasional alcohol-induced behavior.

One day the Captain staggered out of his cabin and ordered the First Mate to call all hands on deck. As the men crowded around,

he announced: "All the old salts I want on one side o' the deck and all the green men I want on the other side, so you's can be getting an estimation of yourselves and the other hands."

Yoshi remarked jokingly under his breath, but loud enough for Captain Mowbray to hear, "I don't see any salt around and I don't see nobody green." He raised his hand as if to show everybody, "Yoshi yellow, not green."

"You there, you young Japanese hand, I say you be green," the Captain shouted gruffly.

"Me greenhand then," Yoshi declared laughing.

The inexperienced young men on the crew, including Eddie, seemed all to identify with Yoshi's joke and took to calling themselves "greenhands." It was partly an irreverent jab at the Captain's drinking habits.

What seemed to bother the greenhands most though was their sadness in leaving their relatives and friends so far behind. As soon as they lost sight of land, several of the white boys started crying at the realization they would not see their family for such a long time. Most of them had never been away from home before. And, depending on the weather and the size of their catch, this voyage was scheduled to take two or three years before the ship would return to Boston. Eddie of course felt differently about leaving, since he left no family behind. Going on this ship was an opportunity for him—to escape slavery. But, remembering his sadness on departing the plantation, he could imagine how those boys must feel.

Eddie was uneasy that there were no other black men on the ship. For his whole life, most of the people around him had been of African origin. Yet Yoshi, the Portuguese, the Brazilians, and even these Yankees didn't seem to care much about skin color. Only one of them, a redhead boy named Jesse, had made a rude remark about having to share the ship "with a nigger." Eddie was used to such language from white Southerners, but the presence of Jesse reminded him that all Northerners were unprejudiced. But

except for this one crewman, racial matters seemed to have been left behind on the little ship.

Instead, there were other problems to be concerned about. What bothered Eddie the most was the stench in the forecabin, where he and fifteen other crewmen shared a small room with eight bunks. Except when one of the bunkmates was assigned to nightwatch, that meant two persons always shared a bunk. Eddie was thankful that his bunkmate had turned out to be Yoshi; it would have been worse if he had to share with one of the nauseous Yankees. Still, the suffocating smelly air in the windowless room was not helped by the fact that at first the Yankees were too sick to clean up their vomit.

Despite the crew's initial seasickness, the Captain insisted everyone learn the ropes immediately—and literally. Learning to work together as a team was a necessity at sea, Mowbray declared, seasickness or not. Everyone's lives could depend on it if a sudden storm came up.

"Besides," the First Mate claimed, "you'll get over the seasickness quicker if you're out in the fresh air and occupied with your duties."

So the boys complied, continuing to learn even as they continued to vomit. The Brazilian cook made then a plain diet of crackers and soup, that would help to settle their stomachs. The First Mate spent that initial week teaching the new crew how to let out the sails and how to take them in. The Captain wanted to get good speed at the beginning of the voyage, to get to the warmer climate. That was just fine to Eddie, who joined in eagerly to move the ship southward.

The Captain kept the crew busy every day. First they let out the sails, then they took them back in when the wind changed. Then they let them out again. Some of the boys threw up right onto the canvas of the sails, but it did not seem to affect the Captain or the First Mate. They would have preferred a more experienced crew, of course, but first-timers were often the only ones agreeable to sign onto a whaler. These inexperienced boys did not know that most

experienced sailors detested work on a whaling ship. They took the good jobs on merchant ships.

After several days of hard work, Eddie's muscles ached. Even on the plantation, in his job making barrels, he had not done such physically demanding work before. All the first-timers were totally exhausted. Except for three who were farm boys, the Yankees who grew up in a town were less used to intense labor. Some of them, Eddie learned, had run away from school, to seek a life of adventure on the sea, and this was their first job. They had been taken in by the lure of distant romantic locations, and had marveled at the stories told by old sailors about the exotic places they had visited. Tall tales of the sea had snared more than one unsuspecting youth, he figured.

As they chatted and got to know one another, Eddie learned that others happened to be on the ship for altogether different reasons. He saw why it had been so easy for him to get employment. There was a severe shortage of sailors who would agree to go on a whaling voyage. Some of the experienced crew, and one of the boatsteerers, had been "shanghaied" and brought on board the ship while they were drunk.

The Captain's drinking skills, it seems, sometimes came in handy while in port. After he'd treated an unsuspecting sailor to all the ale he could drink, the Captain would call the First Mate to escort the poor soul to a safe place to sleep—right aboard *The Cape of Good Hope* the night before it sailed! That was why the Captain had been in the tavern when Eddie met him.

This news was quite distressing to one of the Yankee boys who had signed up to get *away* from drinking. He was afraid that visiting taverns was going to ruin his health, and he figured that being on a ship would keep him away from alcohol. When he signed up for the voyage the Captain had assured him that he was a strict prohibitionist and that there would be no drinking among the crew.

When the other Portuguese boatsteerer, a big man named Giorgio with a barrel chest and a thick waxed mustache, who had

sailed with this same Captain on previous voyages, heard this story, he commented raucously: "The capt'n is righty on that one, Jack. There'll be no drinking by the crew for sure. And the reason is, cause the Captain will hog all the ale for hisself!"

The experienced sailors laughed mightily at that comment, while the duped greenhand looked disgusted. A captain of a whaler often had to use wily tricks to collect his crew, Eddie discovered.

For their part, the experienced sailors who had been shanghaied accepted their predicament calmly. "Grin and bear it, 'tis the only remedy," one of them said.

Once they were at sea, there was nothing they could do. The only shanghaied one who seemed really resentful was Harry, a married man, who was angry and depressed to be stolen from his wife and young son, especially knowing it would be years before his return. Some of the others were around age twenty, and still unmarried. Two of the novice Yankees admitted they had left their hometown because they had wanted to *avoid* marriage. They had felt the kind of conformist pressure to marry that a small town atmosphere could impose. They were glad to have an excuse to leave.

The crewmembers' discussions in the forecastle, sometimes late into the night, as to how they happened to come to sea gradually took on a confessional quality. One delicate young Yankee named Michael would say only that he had signed up as self-punishment because he had committed, in his words, "a sin unparalleled." He would not admit what that "sin" was, but he claimed he had to leave his village forever.

Another boy named Steven echoed that motive. Eddie wondered if perhaps their "sin" might have been the same as that for which Master Helms had exiled him. Eddie decided to keep his eye on those two. He noticed that the two of them started hanging around together after that. Pretty soon Michael had switched berths to join Steven as his bunkmate.

For his part Eddie decided to be honest with his crewmates. What could it hurt, he thought, since he was now far away from

slavery? To be safe, he said he escaped from Charleston rather than from Savannah. He told them about how he constructed his secret compartment and had sailed in darkness for a week to gain his freedom. Several of the crew expressed anti-slavery sentiments and admired him for his courage. They asked him many questions about what life was like as a slave.

Eddie was amazed to hear white men condemning slavery and congratulating him for escaping. A white Southerner would have claimed that, by running away, he had stolen his master's property. The Yankees had only bad things to say about white folks from the South: "lazy blue-blooded autocrats who think they can run the country," said one. Eddie was surprised at their vehemence. The Yankees really were abolitionists. Slavery violated their commitment to free labor, and their sense that they did not want any aristocrat trying to oppress their own highly valued independence.

Yet Eddie also noticed, in the way every slave had trained himself to recognize the slightest unexpressed nuances of white folks, that two of the Yankees remained silent after he told his story.

One of the Yankees, though, did not remain silent. That tough-looking redhead named Jesse was quite open in his hatred of black people. One evening as a group was sitting with the Captain and First Mate, eating dinner, someone said something derogatory about the lazy white Southern aristocrats being too proud to do their own labor. Jesse spoke up, saying, "The reason I don't like Southerners is 'cause they fuck niggers. They're the ones who brought the niggers to America. This is a white man's country and the niggers shoulda stayed in Africa." He looked sharply right at Eddie while he said this.

"Yeah, I wish my family had never been brought to America. We would've been a lot better off as free people in Africa." Eddie's bluntness surprised him. Talking back to a white person? At first he was nervous that the Captain might object to his vehemence, but neither he nor the First Mate said anything. That shut this Jesse up for now, but Eddie knew he was going to have to look out

for that one. Thankfully, no one else seemed to echo Jesse's racist comments.

Later, the First Mate took Eddie aside, "The Captain and me really liked the way you shut up that loudmouth Jesse. From the first day of our sailing I put me finger on him as a troublemaker. You don't be worried none about offending the Captain. He admired the way you stood up for yourself like that. He wouldn't brag about this hisself, but I bet you didn't know that this here very Thomas Mowbray used to be skipper of a sloop that ran a regular route between Boston and Norfolk, Virginia. I been his First Mate for many a year now, and I worked with him there as well. He bought a lotta collapsible big wood crates and stored them aboard. If there was any empty cargo space as we departed Norfolk he'd set them up in the hull, and then go walking around talking to colored slaves. If he found any he thought could be trustworthy he'd offer them the opportunity to escape aboard his sloop. He hid them in the boxes, and fed them on the journey.

"When the sloop docked in Boston, he offered a job to those men who wanted to work for him. The rest he turned over to some colored folks who he helped gain their freedom in previous years. They call the practice 'The Underground Railroad,' but if truth be known a lot more slaves escaped the South by ship than by rail. Sometimes, if there wernt no food to feed this boatload of people after they got to Boston, Captain Mowbray would use his own savings to get them vittles. "Hungry mouths has got to eat," he used to say.

"Those people was mighty grateful, and more than a few black babies bear the name of Thomas after your ole Captain. But he didn't know when to stop. Used up all his profits, as well as all his savings, on that stuff. That he did, I swear to you on a barnacle's backside. That's why he ain't got no money to speak of today. Most captains his age are retired by now, and sitting comfy in their highback rocking chairs by the fireplace. But Captain run up so many debts they took his sloop and sold it on the auction block. That they did. I never seen a grown man cry like he did when he

lost his sloop. That's when he started drinking so much. Used the bottle to drown his frustrations, he did, I swear.

"You see, he don't really wanna be captaining a whaler, if the truth be known, but he ain't got no choice. So, Thomas Mowbray's still out there working at the behest of the skinflint millionaire ship owners. Though they got a lot more money to afford to bring whole plantations full of escaped slaves to freedom, they don't lift a finger. That's why they're rich, and why a good man like Captain Mowbray is poor. I've seen this again and again in me lifetime: the generous people are poor and the stingy penny pinchers are rich. Whatever you like it or not, you gotta learn that's the way of the world we live in. You can't get through your life without selling part of your soul. It happens to everybody, one way or another, but those who're rich, you can bet your bottom dollar, have done it a lot more often. I know that for a fact."

Eddie took in all this information in silence, but it increased his admiration for the Captain, even while he saw the tragedy of this fragile man's weaknesses. Just as with the tragedy of Master Helms, Eddie realized that he should not expect perfection in others. In one way or another, all human beings are flawed. Eddie accepted this reality, appreciating other peoples' good points even while acknowledging their faults and problems. But, now that he was a free man, and away from America, he hoped he would no longer have to worry about slavery. Besides, there were more immediate issues to worry about.

The biggest problem to many of the crewmembers were due to the bugs that infested the ship. The pigs, chickens and ducks being kept in cages on deck were always scratching at fleas. The Yankees felt sure those fleas were jumping off the animals and onto the crew. After scratching themselves raw for several days, the farm boys tried dunking the animals in barrels full of seawater.

Squawking chickens ran frantically around deck before being caught, and one of the pigs got loose. The poor pig tried so hard to escape being recaged that it squeezed under the railing. Before anyone could catch it, the pig fell off the edge of the ship. The boys

saw its terrified look as it tried to swim in the salty water. The swine squealed loudly every time its head raised above water.

Not wanting to lose any of their precious fresh meat, and thinking this would give his green crew a chance to practice their lifesaving technique, the Captain half-jokingly yelled: "Man overboard!"

Eddie and some of the Yankee boys let down the whaleboat which was tied at the rear of the ship, as the First Mate had taught them to do. They rowed clumsily toward the panicked animal. Giorgio led the other crewmen in taking in the sails, and the ship came to a stop. The boys on the boat were half serious, not wanting to lose their future dinner, and half kidding as they rowed toward the pig. One joked, "I told that man overboard not to eat so much. The reason he fell off is cause he's so fat."

Steven yelled out, "That fella's so ugly I don't think we should save him. He looks like a pig."

"No, mates," cried Michael, "that's no fella. It's my girlfriend." Everyone was laughing as they pulled closer to the terrified pig. "We've got to save her, or I'll be horny in my bunk tonight."

Feeling comfortable enough to joke with Michael, Eddie retorted, "That hog's the only girlfriend *you've* ever had, that's for sure."

Their insulting humor continued as they rowed up to the pig, which was so scared that he was swimming toward the boat. They got to the pig and Eddie reached into the water to grab the pig's front legs. Then he looked ahead and saw, coming straight toward them, a dark fin rapidly slicing through the water.

"Shark!" yelled several of the men aboard ship.

Eddie froze in fear for a second. Then the pig let out a terrible squeal. Eddie jerked up, pulling the pig right out of the water, with the shark's head surfacing right behind. The terrible monster snapped its gaping jaws, just missing the pig's rump but catching the pig's tail. Eddie and the pig fell over backwards into the bottom of the boat, which rocked wildly from the impact of the shark. The

pig cried in pain from the loss of its tail, but did not move as Eddie held it tightly. Both of them were too scared to move.

The other boys in the boat were just as scared. Hanging on for dear life, they could clearly see the shark circling the boat, waiting for another chance to attack. As they sat paralyzed in fright, they jumped at the sound of an explosion. The Captain was shooting his pistol at the shark. After the third shot hit the water, the shark disappeared as quickly as it arrived.

The shaken boys rowed back to the ship and hauled the pathetic squealing, and now tailless, pig back up onto the deck. It ran to the center of the deck, well away from the side railings. It sat there quietly, too afraid to move.

Eddie felt dizzy as he climbed up the rope ladder to the deck. Visions of the shark's monstrous open mouth, with its multiple rows of glistening white razor-sharp teeth, kept playing through his mind. As he climbed on board, the sailors on deck gave him a hand in applause. The Captain looked relieved that he had not lost any crewmember—human or animal. Eddie collapsed on deck.

The First Mate, never the one to miss an opportunity for humor, announced: "This here piggy has done won his sea honors. He bravely fought off the devil hisself, and for that I hereby christen him by the name of Sharkey."

After that day the crew adopted Sharkey as their pet. Eddie prepared a soothing ointment he had learned on the plantation to heal the pig's wound. The crew convinced the Captain not to recage the brave pig, and from then on Sharkey had the run of the deck. The tailless hog had learned its lesson, and from that day it never once went near the side railings. No matter how much the ship tossed and turned, the surefooted Sharkey was always to be found near the middle of the deck. Eddie and Sharkey became great friends.

The boys tried no more experiments with washing the animals and resigned themselves to the fleas. However, bedbugs were another matter. Steven caught a big one biting him and he conducted a trial in the forecandle.

"Mr. Bedbug, who gave you the liberty to commit such bloody depredations on the leg of an American citizen? You plead strongly for mercy, but revenge is as sweet to me as my blood was to you. So Mr. Bedbug, you must take your leave of this life."

With that he ceremoniously squashed the bedbug between his fingernails, to the laughter of his crewmates. Then, turning to the others in the forecastle, he announced with a serious expression, "If any man here decides to convict me of willful bedbug slaughter, I'm willing to abide the consequences."

He got three cheers from everyone present.

Giorgio, one of the old salts, as the experienced sailors called themselves, dourly said, "It's useless to kill a bedbug, because then the others show up in your bunk to attend the funeral."

"Bedbug funerals are largely attended, believe you me, for they always make it a point to show their strength. Then it's mighty hard to persuade them to leave. I've tried all ways I ever heard of. I've tried to become the generous dodge, and give them half my berth. But they are hoggish in their dispositions, and choose to root around at their own sweet will. They insist on monopolizing the whole bunk."

"And you can't discharge them at the end of the voyage. They are bound to get into port, even if no one else does. Politeness avails nothin' with them."

"I've anointed them with kerosene oil, buried them in blubber soap, scalded them, and even pickled them. In short, I've done everything that the invention of mortal man could suggest for their extermination, but all to no purpose. They still remain livelier, larger and saucier than ever before."

For his part, Eddie followed the example of Yoshi and the three Brazilians in washing their bodies with salt water every day. The other sailors did not want to do that, because of the sticky feeling the salt left on the skin. But Eddie felt he could put up with the sticky feeling better than the bedbug bites.

Besides, Eddie learned, the salt and the sunning on deck afterwards helped to heal the bites. Yoshi regularly washed their

bedding and left it hanging in the sun to dry. Eddie and Yoshi became even closer as they bathed and sunned their bodies afterward. Neither of them minded their body getting darker in the sun. The Yankees thought they were crazy to lie in the sun, and to wash every day. Once a week was plenty for them. That was all the Captain allowed, for distribution of fresh water.

Yoshi could not stand the Yankees' body odor, and wondered why the foolish whites did not utilize the soothing rays of the sun and the cleansing seawater all around them. Yoshi scrubbed down their berth, which was fortunately somewhat separated from the beds of the others, and they did not have to deal with bedbugs. Eddie learned to follow Yoshi's advice.

In talking with the old salts, the greenhands gradually realized that their hopes for financial profit as crewmen on a whaler were hopeless. Several of the Yankees had been lured by company flyers which implied a large amount of money would be distributed to the crew at the end of the voyage. A couple of the Yankees explained that they had signed up so they could use their profits to buy a farm together. The First Mate laughed in disbelief.

"Why, the only farm you could buy with a crew's cut off a whaler would be an ant farm," he told them with a sad smile.

When the First Mate saw the disappointed looks on the new men's faces, he tried to cheer them up.

"Relax, Jack." The old salts always called any sailor "Jack" whose name they could not remember. "Relax. You're not fated to be here on a whaler for the money. No, me laddies, some men are born with a roving disposition, and there's nothing like the sea to bring that out.

"Once you get used to the rolling deck under your feet, you miss it when you're on land. When I tried living on a farm years ago, I found myself bored to tears. There's nothing ever to do except spending all your time chopping weeds and hauling wood for the winter. On the sea it's a whole different kind of life, the life of excitement, exploring new parts of the world, as ole King Neptune rears his violent ocean storms, and sends waves crashing

over the bow. It's the exhilaration of the chase, as that ole man whale tries to elude the harpoon."

He sat and thought for a moment, then added: "And it's the quiet times too. The beauty of the sun setting over the open sea is more pretty a picture as ever you'll see in any book or painting. A man o' the sea don't need no painting to hang on the wall, cause you got it all right in front of your eyes. That you do, I swear on a shark's ass."

Eddie agreed with the First Mate about the beauty of the sea. When he was working on the boats docked in the Savannah shipyard, he used to climb up the top mast just to see the view. He had never been so high. Now, on the open ocean, when he climbed up the mast he felt like he could see forever.

Second week out, he was assigned to be lookout on the early morning shift. As he sat in the crow's nest, watching the sun appear in all its blazing glory over the waves, he was overcome with joy. It reminded him of times he had gone out to the sandbars at the plantation to watch the sunrise. On the open sea, from the masthead, it was even more glorious. He inhaled the fresh ocean air, just to remind himself that he was really here, as a free man.

The First Mate was right, Eddie thought to himself. Life as a seafarer did provide an emotional feeling that no landlubber could appreciate. It was also going to provide him another emotion, which he did not expect.

11

North Atlantic

By their second week at sea, the greenhands had gotten over their seasickness and life in the forecabin improved. Eddie and Yoshi had become very comfortable with each other. They

were not only bunkmates, but were becoming closest friends as well. Yoshi listened with amazement as Eddie told him about life in South Carolina as a slave.

"More Yoshi learn about white men, more Yoshi want get away from them," Yoshi declared. "White men barbaric for make slavery." He was even more anti-slavery than the Yankee boys. "How can one person hold other person as slave? Every person have Buddha inside them. And so all persons equal. Nobody be slave, nobody be master. Slavery not moral way to live."

In sharp contrast to Master Helms' statements that sex was immoral, but slavery was ordained by God, Eddie was fascinated by Yoshi's Buddhist religion that did not condemn sex but did condemn slavery. Yoshi explained that Buddhists do not believe in an all-powerful god, but instead focus their religion on how to attain enlightenment. A Buddha is not a god, he said, but an enlightened person. The Buddha who founded the religion in India, hundreds of years before Christianity began, was a wise teacher who laid out many ideas for his followers. There have been many Buddhas since then, Yoshi explained, and will be more in the future. The Buddha is not a god, but a teacher who gives instruction on how to live a happy life.

Eddie listened quietly as Yoshi did his daily chanting of the Buddhist mantra *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*, and taught him about Buddhism. When they were alone together one night, Eddie asked Yoshi to explain about the chant.

"Chant come from 700 years ago, from Buddhist monk in Nihon name Nichiren. Words *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo* mean 'I give devotion to Mystic Law of Universe.'"

"Mystic Law? What is that?" Eddie asked.

"Mystic Law of Universe is karma."

"Karma?" Eddie didn't recognize the word at all.

"Karma is idea that every action have results. Our life is product of all actions we ever take. If we bring unhappiness to another, then bad karma for our own life unavoidable result. We unhappy. If we benefit others and bring happiness and good things

to another, then good karma come in future. That is single certainty in universe. Like Buddha say, all other things are transitory and impermanent.

"Goal of life," Yoshi went on, "to accumulate as much good karma as possible. So it balance out all negative karma each person creates. No one perfect, and our self-centered actions can lead to others' unhappiness. Even stepping on ants as we walk create bad karma, lives of sentient beings destroyed. So, in Buddhist moral code, one concerned about his karma should do things to help others."

Yoshi had never tried to push his religious beliefs onto Eddie or the others, but now that he had been asked, Yoshi was happy to explain about the teachings of the Buddha and the philosophy of the Japanese sage Nichiren Daishonin.

"Yoshi family devotee of Nichiren temple. Yoshi grow up learning practice this kind of Buddhism. Nichiren very wise man.

"Buddhist way look at things see ten different worlds. Lowest worlds are worlds of misery, greed, anger, and stupidity. Buddha not talk about sin, but Buddha say good life try not do greedy, angry, and stupid things. Try to put self in position not to be in misery. When catch self do these things, think Buddha teachings and stop. If we generous to others, and not greedy just for own self benefit, if we try not to let anger control our mind, and if we avoid do stupid things, then we make better life. Greed, anger and stupidity make bad karma that make misery."

"In middle neutral worlds, neither good or bad. These conditions of being are states of peaceful existence. There nothing wrong with these conditions of life, but Buddhist aims for higher worlds.

"What are the higher worlds?" Eddie asked.

"The least higher world is heaven."

Eddie had heard Master Helms speak of the Christian heaven, and he thought he knew about that. "Oh, that is the place that the white people want to go after they die."

Yoshi, though, explained a view of heaven that was different: "World of heaven not something to hope for when we die. Heaven is condition of life here and now. We in heaven when we experience happiness because someone has done something that creates great joy for us. There nothing wrong with this, and we should appreciate every happiness we get in life. But big problem of world of heaven is that is dependent on things and events other than our self. If someone give us gift, or good time, we happy. But no one can receive gifts or good times all the time, every day. If we dependent on these outside causes for happiness, we unhappy when they not constantly come. No one gain permanent happiness this way. Buddhism teach it necessary find happiness inside own self.

"Buddha say three routes to gain happiness inside own self. First of higher worlds is world of learning. Buddha say people should try learn as much as can, from child to old age, in every day in life. Education high praise in Buddhism. Buddha was teacher, and Buddhists give teachers much respect. Person who live in ignorance, and not take advantage to learn new things, missing out on good things of life. Person who learn something new, constant every day, enter high state of life.

"Even higher than world of learning is world of creativity. To create something new, of benefit to others, is high prize Buddhist goal. When artist create beautiful inspiring art, laborer build house to shelter people from bad weather, chemist create medicine that help people get well, or writer writes book that helps readers live better—person who is creative holds status even higher than teacher.

"Buddhist world, even higher than world of learning and creativity, is world of *bodhisattva*. A *bodhisattva* is person devote self to help others. Whether this medical doctor or nurse who help people get well, or person who help poor or other unselfish acts—Buddhism prize, above all, those devoted to help others.

"Above all worlds is world of Enlightenment or Buddhahood. No one reach Enlightenment without first make much higher

worlds in their life, by devote self to happiness, to learning, to creativity, and to help others. Nichiren teach all people have potential for Buddhahood within them.

"Many Buddhist people say person must reborn countless times to become Buddha, but Nichiren say every person can become Buddha in this lifetime.

"Some Buddhist people say women cannot become Buddha, and have to be reborn as man first. Nichiren say anyone, no matter what sex or race or condition of life, can raise their life condition to level of Buddhahood. All people equal. Even most desperate poor and deprived person has as much potential to become Buddha as most wealthy privileged person." Eddie liked that part.

"Nichiren very wise teacher who read many scriptures, but he say common man not have to read all that. He say most profound teaching of Buddhism in Lotus Sutra. That most important scripture people need.

"What most important," Yoshi emphasized, "is chant basic phrase, *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*, for great benefit enter one's life. Chanting these word every day open up mind and soul to higher worlds.

"Power not in words by themselves. Power in meditation. Chanting focus mind, so you can make good meditation. In meditation, you can open eyes to see reality. You see law of universe is law of karma. Person see that to be happy he must keep mind focus on Buddha nature.

"When one aware of Buddha nature, one see must do good for others. When one aware of Buddha nature, gift waves go out from him for benefit of others. And gift waves echo back to him. Everyone life make better by presence of person with good will.

"Power not magical. Power come from good will and compassion. No need wait till after die. Good karma make heaven on earth for everyone."

Eddie found this religion more appealing than anything he had heard from white folks. Eddie learned to mouth the foreign words, and before long was chanting *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo* like an

adept. Yoshi told him the more times he repeated this phrase, the better his life condition would become.

Yoshi explained that he himself never felt bored, or felt that he was wasting time, because if he had nothing else to do he could improve his karma by chanting. Soon Eddie was regularly chanting along with Yoshi. What Yoshi said proved to be true; even as he struggled to pronounce the strange words correctly, he felt a calm peacefulness spread over him. Like Yoshi predicted, Eddie never felt bored. Every moment he had something to do, something to occupy his mind. Eddie saw the proof, in the way he felt his life condition improving.

As the ship sailed steadily southward, after a week the weather got warmer. Yoshi took to sleeping nude. He said it was healthy for the skin to be able to breathe, as he put it, free from clothing. He encouraged Eddie too to discard his underwear when they went to bed.

Yoshi had a beautiful trim body, with small but firm muscles, and Eddie was happy to comply. He could not fail to notice how affectionate Yoshi was becoming when they were alone in their berth together at night, but he was not sure what he might have in mind.

When the Japanese youth put his arms around Eddie and hugged him warmly, Eddie was not certain if this was just the way Japanese men were, or if it meant something more. To Eddie, Yoshi's openness with his emotions seemed relaxed and free. He was also wonderfully free of any kind of racial superiority. Eddie felt a comfortableness around this gentle Japanese that he did not feel with the coarse Yankee sailors.

So when it came time to go to bed, Eddie took Yoshi's advice and pulled off his underwear. Yoshi saw but made no comment and just rolled over to go to sleep. Eddie felt disappointed Yoshi didn't at least give him one of his hugs. He waited a while, listening to the sounds of the other sailors, listening to Yoshi's breathing, but then finally decided to go on to sleep.

Later, when everyone else in the forecandle was fast asleep, and just as Eddie was drifting off himself, Yoshi's hand moved onto his chest. Eddie didn't move. The hand started lightly rubbing his chest, then moved slowly down to his stomach. Neither one of them said a word.

Yoshi's hand moved further, until it rubbed in Eddie's curly pubic hair. By this time Eddie was excited and erect. At last, Yoshi's hand moved down to the base of his cock. Then slowly up the shaft. As the hand moved about half way up the shaft, it stopped. Eddie detected hesitation. After a minute the hand moved again, all the way up the shaft to the head. Then Eddie heard a little gasp, and Yoshi's hand jerked away.

Eddie wasn't sure what was going on. He lay there awake for a long time. He was sure Yoshi was awake also, but neither of them said a word. Eddie felt confused and frustrated. His balls ached from the arousal and then Yoshi's sudden withdrawal. It had been a long time since Eddie had had sex, longer than any time in the last ten years. He did not understand this Japanese person at all. Finally, in aggravation, he fell asleep.

The next day Eddie noticed that Yoshi was silent and somewhat standoffish. Eddie worried he had done something to offend Yoshi. But he couldn't imagine what that might be. After all, it was the Japanese who had taken the initiative. Was there something that Yoshi did not like about an erection, Eddie wondered? Finally, at dinnertime, as Eddie was eating alone, Yoshi sat down next to him.

"Please pardon what happen last night," Yoshi began.

"Well, I didn't mind what happened," Eddie replied, "but why did you stop so suddenly? Did I offend you?"

"No, you no understand. I wish you pardon me for stopping. That not right thing for me do. It just, when feel you, I very afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"How big you are! I never feel one so big. I afraid you hurt me."

"Oh, I wouldn't ever do anything to hurt you," Eddie replied earnestly. "What could I do to hurt you?"

"It just, I not know if I can take all way."

Eddie did not have a clue what Yoshi was talking about. If Yoshi thought he could not suck it all the way down his throat, then that was certainly no big deal to Eddie. Besides, sucking the other guy is what Eddie most enjoyed.

"You promise you not hurt me? You pull out when I say?" Yoshi pleaded.

Eddie was relieved to see that Yoshi was interested in fooling around together, but he thought this Japanese was overly concerned about a little cocksucking. "Yes, of course, I promise. I don't want to hurt you."

Yoshi looked relieved and smiled broadly. "OK, tonight we try." Eddie decided to wait patiently to see what would happen once they were in bed.

That night, after finishing his evening chants, Yoshi climbed into the bed. Once again Yoshi did nothing until after he was sure the other boys in the forecastle were asleep. Eddie was wide awake, waiting hopefully for Yoshi to make his move.

As he lay on the bunk on his back, with his arm rubbing up against Yoshi's naked body, he could feel his cock swelling in anticipation. He could not wait to bury his face against Yoshi's abdomen. Late at night he at last felt Yoshi's hand, but this time it went straight for his penis. He was surprised to feel something cold and greasy in Yoshi's hand. He was rubbing the grease all over his cock, which soon made it hard.

Yoshi then pulled back the covers and moved his body squarely over Eddie's abdomen. Eddie did not know what was happening, but he felt Yoshi rub the erect penis against his own anus. Then to his surprise, Yoshi began to press his weight downward.

Eddie felt his cock slide inside Yoshi. He had never known about doing such a thing; he didn't see how this was possible. But, as Yoshi's muscles relaxed, he pressed farther. Yoshi squinted his eyes as the large size became too much for him, and he raised up slightly.

Eddie lay perfectly still. After a minute Yoshi resumed pressing, and the cock went deeper and deeper. Eddie had never felt anything like this. It felt even better than getting sucked. Soon Yoshi rested his full weight on Eddie's groin, with the cock entirely up inside. Eddie was amazed. With all the oral experiences he had with the other slaves on the plantation, he had never heard of anything like this. He was not even aware that the anus could take something as big as a penis entirely inside it. Everything with Yoshi was always a surprise.

After a moment of stillness Yoshi started raising and lowering his body, making Eddie slide in and out. Yoshi expertly brought the head almost all the way out, then pressed down again so the whole shaft felt the warm pressure of his sphincter muscle. Eddie was in heaven. By that time Yoshi also had a full erection. As Eddie grabbed his legs, Yoshi stroked himself as he moved up and down.

Eddie had difficulty suppressing his groans of pleasure as he came closer to orgasm. Sensing this, Yoshi became more excited and stroked himself more rapidly. Then, with a firm thrust, Eddie released himself deep inside. As his body shook with pleasure, Yoshi's own orgasm spurted out onto Eddie's stomach and he fell over on top of Eddie in exhaustion. They embraced with an intensity that Eddie had never experienced before. After Joey's death, Eddie thought he would never have such strong love in his future. Now he learned with this little Japanese teenager that such feelings were not absent, but even greater.

The next day both Yoshi and Eddie were relaxed and happy, a new closeness evident between them. They could hardly wait until lunchtime, when they got a break. They went off to the aft part of the deck to have their lunch in privacy.

"I've never done that before," Eddie began, "it was fantastic!"

"Ah, that how we do in Nihon."

"Where I come from we just suck each other, mouth to cock."

Yoshi gave a look of disgust. "I no can do."

"That's OK. Is it all right if I suck yours?"

Yoshi thought a while, "I never do. We try tonight. You suck me. I see if I like."

That night they switched roles as Eddie became the teacher. He expertly licked his tongue all the way down Yoshi's belly, around his pubic hair, and lightly over his balls. Yoshi groaned in excitement. When his penis got hard, it was only half as big as Eddie's but Eddie liked its shape and size. He could easily take it all the way, swallowing Yoshi's cock and both testicles at the same time. Yoshi seemed to especially like that.

Eddie rubbed his own penis against Yoshi's leg. Before long both of them were dripping warm fluid. It tasted delicious in Eddie's mouth, as Yoshi spurted in ecstasy. Then Eddie released his own pleasure onto Yoshi's leg. Once again they lay together in total contentment. Eddie was happy that he was not only a free man, but that he had also found such a wonderful love. This seafaring life was definitely the place for him.

Each night after that Eddie and Yoshi would exchange their newfound techniques. One night they would do it "Nihon style," then the next Eddie's way. Yoshi seemed squeamish about touching a penis to his mouth, but that did not bother Eddie, who sucked Yoshi with delight. For his part, though Eddie loved thrusting his cock in and out of Yoshi, he wasn't about to try that himself. Yoshi did not expect reciprocation. He told Eddie that it was his role as *ototobun*, as "younger brother," to be the passive one.

He did seem passive, even feminine, outside of bed as well as in. Yoshi joked, "Yoshi like firefly. What light up most is my behind."

Both were happy with their respective roles, and pleased with their mutual discoveries of the joys of both oral and anal sex. After they had done it several times Yoshi's muscles loosened up and Eddie was able to move his large member in and out with ease. They did not even need to use grease any more. Yoshi just spit some saliva in his hand and rubbed it onto Eddie's cock. Eddie was still amazed at how easily his whole penis slid inside. Yoshi begged him to shove it in harder, so his balls would rub up against

Yoshi's butt, and Eddie responded with gusto. They always got a good night's sleep after doing that.

Eddie asked Yoshi how he had learned how to do this. Yoshi told of his youth and his *ninja*, his lover.

12

Nihon

In spite of his occasional awkwardness with English, Yoshi was a wonderful storyteller. Over the next weeks as Eddie and Yoshi deepened their connection, sexual and emotional, the Japanese youth regaled Eddie with tales of life in Nihon, the country that the Yankees called Japan.

When he was a young boy, about nine years old, Yoshi's parents had sent him to acting school to be trained for the *kabuki* theater. *Kabuki* was the most popular form of theater in Nihon, he explained to Eddie in his delicate but twisted English. In *Kabuki* performances, the female roles were played by young boys. The most talented young actors became famous far and wide, with those who could act most graceful and feminine receiving the best reviews. Yoshi was one of the leading *kabuki* boys in Nihon's capital city of Kyoto. The shogun Tokagawa himself had attended many of Yoshi's performances.

Upper class and wealthy Japanese men flocked to see *kabuki*. The attractions for them were more than the theater plays themselves. They also came to admire the young boy actors. Yoshi said proudly, "I like offer my beauty, object of men desires."

After a performance, he explained, the rich patrons of the theater hoped to be able to enjoy the intimate company of such an actor. The theater owners, of course, wanted the boys to keep the patrons happy. They encouraged the boys to make love with the

men. The acting teacher was also the teacher of sex. It was he who first introduced Yoshi to the pleasures of anal sex.

"But," Yoshi told Eddie, giggling, "No Nihon man who fuck me have big one like you. That why surprise first time feel you."

From his earliest memory, Yoshi said, he had been a particularly gentle and beautiful child. His parents hoped he would become a *kabuki* actor, and they raised him to emphasize his natural grace and refinement. They hoped their beautiful son would attract the attention and patronage of numerous men, and perhaps even of the shogun himself. That is why they named him Yoshi, after the Shogun Tsuna Yoshi, who ruled Nihon two centuries earlier.

Shogun Tsuna Yoshi, Yoshi enthusiastically reported, was so fond of male love that he kept over one hundred and fifty boy concubines in his palace. He brought in the best scholars to educate them. The most intelligent of them eventually became the Shogun's leading government officials. That is why his rule was so long and peaceful, Yoshi declared, because Nihon was administered by talented officials with great personal loyalty to the shogun. Tsuna Yoshi was considered a very wise man. Yoshi was proud to be named after him.

"Yoshi very famous. Theater owner gave beautiful jeweled coat, as sign of success as *kabuki* actor. Yoshi very beautiful in jewel coat." He batted his eyes and winked at Eddie.

When Yoshi was ten years old, he explained, one night a handsome samurai warrior came to see his performance. This samurai was not rich, but he saved his money to rent a boat so he could invite Yoshi for a ride on a beautiful lake. Yoshi remembered that boat ride as being so romantic, in all the ways he could imagine. The samurai played plaintive love songs for him on an intricately carved wooden flute that he had made especially for that night. Yoshi had been courted well by many, but no man had ever treated him with so much respect and so much graciousness.

The first time he visited the samurai's modest living quarters, he told Eddie, he asked for some tea. When the samurai discovered he had no firewood, he willingly burned his special wooden flute

to heat the water for Yoshi's tea. The boy was so touched by that sacrifice, and by numerous other acts of compassion which the man did for him. When the samurai had to leave Kyoto to participate in a military campaign in the shogun's army, he promised to take Yoshi's memory with him at every moment.

Yoshi felt that his *ninja*, meaning skillful warrior, was a model of manliness, loyal, steadfast and honorable. He loved this man deeply, and after the samurai left he went to the temple and offered prayers, saying the Buddhist mantra that Yoshi called the Mystic Law of the Universe, for his lover's safe return.

In the battle against rebels who plotted for power to overthrow the shogun, the samurai led a charge against the rebel stronghold with such bravery that the shogun himself personally praised him. Shogun Tokagawa wished to give him a reward and he asked the samurai what he desired more than anything else. The samurai answered that he would like to live forever in the arms of his beloved, the kabuki boy-actor Yoshi.

Being a wise leader, Shogun Tokagawa ordered his official to pay the theater owner to release Yoshi from his sexual duties to the theater patrons. Yoshi was happy, because he could be with the handsome samurai every night after his theater performance. Yoshi became even more famous, yet no matter how much the patrons desired him they respected his exclusive love with the samurai. It was, after all, on the order of the Shogun.

On following nights, as Eddie and Yoshi whispered softly in their bunk in the forecabin or out on deck under the blazing stars, Yoshi talked more about his past, and especially about his love for his parents and for his beloved samurai. Yoshi's parents treated the warrior with great respect, which he returned in kind. The samurai's parents had both died, and Yoshi's parents adopted him as Yoshi's older brother. The love bond between all of them became so firm that they each considered the others to be a united family.

Besides his loving family, Yoshi talked most about religion and morality. Eddie had never met anyone who talked about spiritual matters as much as Yoshi did. Eddie had never been interested in

the Christian religion that the white men tried to impose on the slaves, so he was surprised to find himself so fascinated by Yoshi's Buddhist philosophy of life. This became part of Eddie's struggle to figure out how to be truly a free man.

Eddie asked about the Buddha that Yoshi worshipped. He could see the Buddhist religion had a much different attitude toward sex between males than what the whites had told him about the Christian god.

Yoshi explained, "Buddha not god. Buddha man, very enlightened man—teacher. Buddha taught every person try find enlightenment his own way. What most important is show compassion and kindness, alleviate suffering, and help others be happy.

"Doing this, Buddha taught, you gain indestructible happiness for self as well." He quoted what he called the *Rishukyo Sutra*: "Desire is pure, pleasure is pure."

"Did this Buddha man consider sex to be sinful?"

Yoshi answered, "Three evil paths which Buddha said to avoid are greed, anger, and stupidity. Those are three worst things. Buddha give precepts, good advice. He say avoid sexual misconduct. That mean do not rape, or forcefully impose self sexually on another person who not willing. But for sexual enjoyment and love that two willing people feel for each other, Buddha place no prohibition.

"Nothing should desired so much it cause misery, or done to such excess it interfere with enlightenment. Acts of love between two compassionate people give each other pleasure is holy union. If each make other happy, then that is good moral act. It not matter sex or age of persons. Buddha not name sins, only say what make people happy.

"But, I think, slavery bad sin," Yoshi added—to Eddie's wholehearted agreement.

Yoshi went on to explain that Buddhist monks are prohibited from having sex with females, because of the reality that this would often result in pregnancy and then the monk would have to spend his time gaining money to support his children.

"This rule against sex with female," Yoshi said, "very sensible. Monk should devote self to help community as whole not just own family. That why monks not marry. It very improper for monk even touch female in Nihon.

"On other hand, monk is male just like other, and have physical need of body and emotional need of mind. To suppress love and sex is crazy.

"I will never trust advice of monk who frustrated and repressed in sexual needs. How can he give advice to other people on their relationships if he not experience loving relationship in own life? How can he help others become happy if he not happy?

"I think sexual repression big part of reason why white men so violent and tense. That good reason to avoid them."

Eddie found this fascinating, though he really didn't know what a monk was. Yoshi explained: "Monk is man who no have wife and child. Monk is man who devote life to help others. Since it no good for monk have sex with female, it make sense for monk have male lover. The right person to be monk's lover is novice who study under him. Novice choose which monk he want to be his teacher. No monk force or exploit young boy. Monk offer only love, support, and education. Monk teacher of boy, and also lover.

"Novice can change monastery or leave monkhood, any time. Novice learn about all aspects of life, including love, from his monk teacher. There nothing wrong with two people of same age having sex," Yoshi said, "but most fulfilling and stable relationship is between adult man and growing boy. Boy learn from experience of older lover, and become educated, and adult revisit own youth. Both benefit. This best way, what we call way of golden love."

Yoshi said he could enjoy sex with another person of his age like Eddie, and he admitted that he was physically attracted to Eddie. But, he said, his dream is to live his life with an older man. He wanted someone with longer life experience who would teach Yoshi all his knowledge. In return, Yoshi said he would devote himself to take care of this man in his old age. After he becomes an experienced adult, he then would plan to take a young boy as

a lover, to educate and love him in his youth, and then this youth will take care of him in his old age.

"Older-younger relationship is way of Nihon. Real love is not just about sex, but also about take care. By having lover of different generation, there always adult take care of young person and take care elderly past lover. By this pattern, monk who not have child always have someone take care him. Each generation care for next. This way best.

"Many monk write beautiful poetry express love feeling for boyfriend." Yoshi recited a famous Japanese poem written by a monk for his youthful beloved and then translated the words into English for Eddie:

Charming Boy—you look so handsome!
Your face is more beautiful than rosy red dawn clouds.
Your coy glances cause me to smile.
You are enough to make the girls envious,
and cause even the old people to sigh.

"This kind of male love poetry seen by Nihon people as noble and spiritual. It unite two person spirits in love. After all," Yoshi reiterated, "end goal of Buddhism is individual happiness and personal fulfillment."

All of that made sense to Eddie. He wished he had learned more about his own African religious heritage, beyond the few vague stories about the spirits which he remembered Tombo telling him years ago. He admired Yoshi for having his own Nihon religion, not an alien one forced on his people by their enslavers. He hoped some time in the future to discover a complete spiritual belief. If not an African one, he hoped he would find something similar to it.

For now, he felt, the Buddha religion would be a good start. He would aim for happiness and fulfillment, while avoiding the four lower paths of misery, greed, anger and stupidity. Maybe by this means, Eddie thought, he also could reach enlightenment.

That sounded a lot more positive than the promise of “salvation from sin” and going to the white man’s heaven after death, which is what Christianity offered. Christianity was all about suffering; Buddhism was all about happiness.

Yoshi quoted other Japanese love poems he had committed to memory:

In days of old there were many blossom boys.
Young peach and plum blossoms,
Dazzling with glorious brightness,
Joyful as nine springtimes.

Men’s roving glances gave rise to beautiful seductions.
The blossom boys’ speech and laughter was fragrant.
Hand in hand they shared love’s rapture,
Sharing sheets and bedclothes.

Couples of birds in flight,
Paired wings soaring.
The peach and plum blossoms record a vow:
I’ll never forget you for all eternity.



One evening, after reciting one of these love poems for Eddie’s delight, Yoshi’s eyes filled with tears.

Eddie put his arm around his shoulder and pulled him close.
“Are you crying?”

“Yoshi remember samurai *ninja*. He read such poems to me.

“What happened to him?”

Yoshi’s eyes glazed over. He was silent a long time before answering. “Yoshi and *ninja* very happy together. We make vow eternal love each other. We compassionate each other when problems come; we enjoy each other in cheerful times.

"After we live together over two year—when Yoshi thirteen year old—Shogun order samurai attack evil warlord in far north part Nihon. Yoshi samurai leave for north. Yoshi cry many day when he leave.

"Every day Yoshi chant protect lover. Though he fight in many battle, he not hurt. But then, two month after campaign begin, major battle. Yoshi samurai lead attack, and evil warlord die. But Yoshi samurai bad hurt in fight.

"Mother and father tell me not go, but I travel to north. Yoshi responsibility nurse love back to good health.

"When I go north I shock see bad condition many samurai hurt in battle. I see firsthand horror of war." Yoshi described the gut-wrenching pain he felt when seeing one wounded samurai after another who had fought for the unity of Nihon.

"Yoshi see terrible suffer. When finally locate ninja he have big gash all over body, and ugly infection in wound. He open his eyes and with weak voice speak to me. He say he happy see Yoshi face one last time. He know he not live much long.

"Yoshi feel crazy worry; this person Yoshi plan spend whole life with. Tell noble lover Yoshi want kill self so Yoshi spirit go with him into next reincarnation. He very no like this, and with all remain strength he say no. Though he not talk more than whisper he beg Yoshi to live and experience life long and full. He say he not die peaceful if he know Yoshi end charmed life too soon. Ninja make Yoshi promise to live. Ninja say this way we can meet again in future life.

"Yoshi not want live without him, but he insist make that promise to him. Yoshi tell him want make thousand prayer for his reincarnation into happy future life. He ask Yoshi hold him one more time, so he can think about much happiness together. Yoshi cannot believe this happen. It nightmare inside dream. Then, when Yoshi hold him, *ninja* spirit pass from physical body into universe.

"Yoshi feel total destroy. Other samurai make funeral and burn ninja body. Give Yoshi box of ash. Yoshi walk all day to reach sea,

and scatter ash off high cliff into sea below. Yoshi tell other samurai Yoshi will jump off this cliff also.

"In Nihon lover mourn by kill self. That Nihon custom," Yoshi interrupted his story to explain. "No do this seem Yoshi no really love ninja. Make dishonor on Yoshi and on parents.

"Yoshi chant prayer for ninja ten hour. Then go back and climb top cliff overlook sea. Yoshi watch wave crash on rock below. Yoshi want jump over edge. But Yoshi remember promise and samurai last wish for Yoshi not end young life.

"Yoshi take off jewel coat, most precious possession. Yoshi throw coat out into sea. That Yoshi sacrifice for *ninja*. Yoshi hope fishermen find coat and report Yoshi drown in sea."

Without his distinctive ornate coat, the mark of a famous kabuki actor, he told Eddie, Yoshi walked sorrowfully all day. He could not go back to Kyoto, and he despaired that he would ever see his parents again. He felt sorrow at the pain they would feel when his death was reported, but it could not be avoided. In the evening he reached an isolated fishing village. He told the fishermen his family had been killed in the battle, and he wished to become a sailor to get as far away as possible. As luck would have it, a boat was soon leaving to go whaling off the Aleutian Islands to the far north.

And so that is how Yoshi became a whaler.

Traveling around the Bering Sea for three years, Yoshi had thoroughly learned the locations of the channels and dangerous shoals in the whaling grounds north of the Aleutian Islands. When they stopped over on the islands he became friendly with a native Aleut family. The Aleuts looked like Japanese people. He fit right in.

The Aleuts admired his gentle nature. They considered it to be a reflection of spiritual power. They believed Yoshi to have both the spirit of a man and the spirit of a woman within him, making him twice as spiritual as the average person. As was commonly believed among many Native Americans, an androgynous person

was a person of high status. Yoshi was called a "Two Spirit Person" in the Aleut language.

Yoshi explained that he was adopted into an Aleut family, who treated him kindly. Though he missed his own parents terribly, and his love for his samurai ninja remained as strong as ever, he felt fortunate to have ended up with a new family on Unimak Island.

After they sat silently for awhile, Eddie's curiosity could be contained no longer: "Then how did you end up in Boston?"

"That sad part," Yoshi answered.

"Yoshi go with Yankee whaler who hire to guide ship. Four weeks catch some whale. Yoshi boil blubber, to get home fast. Then, when sail back south, Yankee captain no bring Yoshi home. He say Yoshi good worker and want keep Yoshi for all trip. When sail past Unimak no stop, Yoshi in chains. Yoshi cry big when watch Unimak disappear. After that Yoshi big angry at Yankee captain and no do work for him for entire rest of voyage. But Yoshi spend all time learn talk English from boy on ship. That how Yoshi good talk English. Boy say when ship arrive Boston, Yoshi join other whale ship and go back Aleut family. That why Yoshi join crew on *Cape Good Hope*. Yoshi no want white man money. Yoshi want go home Unimak."

After he had been tricked so dishonorably by the Yankee whaling captain, Yoshi said he had no more trust of white men. From what he had seen on his voyages, and during his time in Boston, Yoshi said, he much preferred the Aleuts to the Yankees. He felt no loyalty to Yankees or their business. He just wanted to fulfill his promise to his *ninja* lover, to live a long and happy life. He had no hesitation, he confided to Eddie, about abandoning the ship in mid-voyage.

"You're going to leave me?" Eddie answered in alarm. "I thought we were buddies."

"Yoshi have prior obligation. Yoshi promise marry kind Aleut man. Man love Yoshi much. Yoshi Aleut family prepare for big wedding, before Yoshi stolen by Yankee captain. That why Yoshi no like Yankee," he declared. Yoshi made Eddie promise that he

would not reveal Yoshi's plan to jump ship as soon as they got back to Unimak Island. Eddie thought he had found a great new friend, but now he learned their relationship would be over when they reached the Aleutian Islands. Eddie hoped that would be a long time in the future.

13

Equator

As Eddie and Yoshi became more intimate and comfortable with each other, their natural joy of life came out. Considering what had happened to him, Yoshi seemed remarkably cheerful and free of bitterness. He explained to Eddie that the Buddha taught it was useless to be bitter about something bad that happened in the past, because everything that happened is already over and nothing can be done to change it. Neither should one worry excessively about the future, the Buddha said, because so many factors influence it that one cannot control or predict what will happen. A person can construct a happier life, the Buddha taught, by focusing on the present, and making sure that one approaches each day with a determination to make that day as happy and fulfilling as possible.

Yoshi counseled Eddie not to wallow in bitterness concerning what happened to him and his ancestors in slavery, but to focus on living life fully each and every new day. He also told Eddie not to worry about the time in the future when Yoshi would leave. The future, he said, will take care of itself. Yoshi was confident that Eddie would find the best situation for his own future. Worrying in the meantime would do not one bit of good. Eddie should concentrate about enjoying each day right now that they remained together. The future, he repeated again, will take care of itself.

With this attitude, Eddie found that he was able to enjoy each day with Yoshi. Instead of being bitter that Yoshi was going to leave him, Eddie felt lucky to have found such a good friend, and he valued the time that they would have together. As Yoshi said, the future will take care of itself. For now, Eddie was happy. They joked around as they worked together on *The Cape of Good Hope*. Once Eddie made a snide comment about Yoshi's tight physique: "It looks like you haven't got much of a bottom."

With a glimmer in his eye, Yoshi replied, "If Yoshi no bottom, Eddie not happy for single day."

He always laughed loudly at his own jokes. It looked as if he knew he had Eddie hooked and used his experienced charms at attracting men to keep Eddie entertained.

After all, Eddie had learned, Yoshi had been sexually active since he was a young boy and he had sex with many men. Despite his loving memory for his samurai ninja, Yoshi was determined to enjoy sex as much as possible. Sexual fulfillment was part of his promise to his ninja that he would live life to the fullest. He had a large store of sexual jokes he had learned in the *kabuki* theater. Some of them were understandable, but Eddie could not see the humor in most of them. Whether Eddie understood or not, every time Yoshi told a joke he laughed and laughed.

Yoshi told a joke about a Buddhist monk who seduced his novice. As the monk was having intercourse with the boy, the novice's penis got hard with excitement. Just as the monk approached orgasm, he thrust all the way in, pressing as firmly as he could, and reached his arms around the novice's body. When he touched the boy's penis, he and the novice both came at the exact same moment. Feeling the spurting cock, the overexcited monk exclaimed in alarm, "Oh dear Buddha! I've pierced him through!" Yoshi laughed a long time over that one.

He did not mind making fun of the foibles of sex, but he clearly thought of male love as magnificent. He called it the "beautiful way." There was a naturalness in the way Yoshi accepted it, which

could only have come from growing up in a society that valued love between people no matter what their sex.

Eddie felt sure the other cabin mates in the forecastle must have heard them when they made love at night. But if anyone did overhear, no one said anything about it. Eddie suspected he and Yoshi were not the only couple similarly enjoying themselves.

In the increasingly warm weather most of the crew had taken to sleeping nude; with two nude bodies in bed together it did not take much imagination to guess what might happen. The Brazilians seemed awfully affectionate with each other, so Eddie guessed that they were enjoying themselves sexually just as Eddie and Yoshi were doing. At times Eddie thought he detected sounds of lovemaking coming from Michael and Steven's berth. Evidently, Eddie concluded, after seeing the easy acceptance of male love among the crew, they had gotten over their Christian guilt.

The conventions of behavior in established society melted away, as more of the crew adapted to the realities of life on the little ship. Either they would be sexual with each other, or not at all. It was just like back at the Helms plantation. With no females anywhere around, there was no alternative in this all-male world.



After four weeks at sea, early one morning just at the crack of dawn, as Eddie and Yoshi snuggled in each other's arms, they and the others were awakened by an alarm cry: "All hands on deck, all hands on deck!"

They stumbled out of bed along with the other boys. The First Mate called to Eddie in particular. The hull had sprung a bad leak, and they needed his carpentry skills. With no time to put on clothes, the crew scrambled naked out of the forecastle and into the hold below decks.

As the others scrambled in confusion, Yoshi had the foresight to scamper up the rigging. He lowered the sails, to bring the ship to a complete stop. This was important if repairs were going to be done. When Eddie got into the hold he had no trouble locating the leak. Water was spewing up from the leak, like a fountain. The hold was already a foot deep in water. The Captain, wearing only his underwear, directed the crew to man the pumps. Their thorough training in the previous weeks came in handy as they expertly turned the cranks to pump out the water. The survival of the ship depended on the crew's muscle power to get the water out at least as quickly as it was coming in.

Eddie waded into the water and felt for the hole. By pressing his palm flat against the timbers he could slow but not halt the rush. Sticking his face below water he saw the place where a section of tarring between the timbers had cracked and fallen out. Though his eyes were stinging in the salt water, he could see that it was too big a hole to fix by stuffing tree gum into it. He stood up and, while still wiping his eyes and sputtering, told the Captain, "It's too big to pack. I've got to carve a wooden wedge and then hammer it in tight."

"Then do it!"

Eddie bent down again in the water and stuck two fingers through the hole. He felt for the shape of the hole. It was worse than he thought, angling outward away from the ship. He had repaired this kind of hole in a hull many times before, while working in Savannah, but only when the boat was in dry-dock. Now they were nowhere near a dock, and had no ability to raise the hull out of the water.

As the rest of the crew was working the pumps or joining Yoshi striking the sails, the First Mate hurriedly brought Eddie the carpentry toolbox and a solid piece of wood. Eddie took out the hammer and chisel and began hacking away at the wood. To get the exact shape he had to stop frequently to measure with his fingers. Without tarring, the wooden plug had to fit perfectly or else it would still leak. Once he was satisfied with the plug's shape,

Eddie carefully drilled a hole in the small end. After the plug was hammered into place from outside the hull, he could then insert a nail on the inside to hold it firmly in place.

The First Mate held a blanket over the leak to slow the inflow of water. Eddie had to work slowly and carefully, lest too much pressure cause the wood to break and he would have to start over. As he worked, he noticed the sweat on the faces of the boys pumping furiously. Despite their efforts, though, the water level in the hold continued to rise. The Captain looked increasingly worried, and Eddie knew that he must be wondering if this new carpenter he had hired really knew what he was doing. If Eddie's carving was not exactly right, the ship would eventually sink. The chances of another ship passing in this part of the open ocean were slim. They had not seen even one ship since leaving Boston. With no rescue possible, the entire crew would drown. Even the greenhands realized this danger as they pumped with all their strength.

Finally, Eddie got the hole drilled; he was satisfied that this wedge was as good as he could make it. He explained to the Captain how the piece had to be inserted and hammered into place by someone swimming underwater outside the hull.

Without hesitation the Captain himself took the wedge. "This calls for experience," he said in a calm businesslike manner. He tied the hammer to a rope around his waist, took the precious chunk of carved wood plug, and headed topside.

Eddie waited inside the hold, helping the First Mate slow the water with their hands pressed against the blanket over the hole. Yoshi joined him and was chanting loudly, *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo, Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*, over and over again.

Eddie quietly chanted the words himself, though Yoshi was going so fast he could hardly keep up. As he chanted he waited to feel the Captain insert the plug from the outside. Eddie shuddered to think about a shark coming while the Captain was in the water, but there was no other way to seal this type of hole.

Eventually Eddie felt the tip of the plug being inserted from the other side. He hoped the Captain would be able to hammer while swimming underwater. He heard the thudding sound of the hammer's blows, slowly driving the plug into place.

Yoshi chanted even faster, so that the syllables blended together in a buzzing sound like some kind of machine. "Pump faster!" Eddie yelled to the perspiring crew, then stuck his face under water. Just as the hole he drilled came into view, Eddie knocked three times against the timber to signal the Captain to stop hammering. After another gulp of air, Eddie carefully inserted the nail into the drilled hole. The plug held securely in place. As he came up for air, he gave Yoshi a look to say that he was praying along with him that the Captain could get safely back to the whaleboat.

Not long after Eddie had finished, he glanced up to see the Captain looking down from aboveboards. Good, Eddie thought, he made it. Yoshi looked relieved, but continued his chanting as before. The Captain was still soaking wet. Now if only the plug would hold tight without breaking.

"Well?" the Captain's eyes asked when Eddie looked up.

"Seems to be in place, sir, but we won't know for sure till the water's pumped out. Then we can tell if it's still leaking. If it's dry then *The Cape of Good Hope* is as good as new. If it's still leaking, we'll have to keep pumping till we can get her to a dry-dock on land."

The Captain's eyes showed the tension. They all knew they were far out in the Atlantic approaching the equator, nowhere near land. If the plug leaked, the nearest dock would be in Brazil, and no one on board knew if there were any facilities in Brazil to repair a ship like this. The whole voyage might have to be canceled, or at least delayed so long they would miss the whaling season in the Pacific. Impatiently the Captain yelled to the exhausted men at the pump, "Keep her going! Don't slack!"

After more pumping the crew was able to get the water level down below the plug. Eddie daubed dry cloths around the area, to see if it was still leaking. Yoshi now abruptly stopped

the chanting, as if he already knew the conclusion. Everyone sat silently, watching the wood plug. After a tense minute of waiting, and seeing no more water come in, Eddie turned to the Captain standing above him and announced, "I think we've done it."

The boys, not even noticing their nudity by this time, rang out with a cheer. The crewmen on the pump collapsed in the shallow water which still remained in the hold.

Eddie carefully constructed a protective wood pyramid frame over the plug so no one would accidentally knock it loose. He could feel a new respect from the crewmen for his quick and skillful carpentry. He had saved the ship and the lives of everyone on board. As long as there was no direct impact on the wood plug, from either side, it was as secure as the rest of the hull. The First Mate announced that if Eddie's plug would hold until they got to the British shipyard in the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic, they would be fine.

Eddie was proud that his skills had saved the ship. He gave a look of thanks to Yoshi who sat quietly with a serene look on his face. Had those strange words helped the wood plug to fit? Had they protected the Captain from sharks as he swam under the hull?

Eddie had no idea. But he noticed that since starting to do that chanting himself, however clumsily, he was also starting to think differently about things. Somehow those syllables had an effect on him. He knew he never would have been able to perform that task if he had not been trained in carpentry at the direction of Master Helms, and if he had not had experience in ship repair from Captain O'Neill.

Now, instead of the resentments that he felt before, he was thankful that both of his white masters had given him perhaps the greatest gift that a slave could have: training in a specialized skill. He still chafed at the injustices of slavery, but he now felt fortunate. He let whatever resentments he retained evaporate into the thin air. To his surprise, Eddie felt a weight on his shoulders lighten. It was as if he himself was cheered as he released his resentful feelings. He was no longer burdened by the bitter memories. One

more link to his time as a slave was now broken, and he felt a new optimism about his future as a free man. Eddie Free Man. That is what he now was.

The rest of the day the Captain allowed the ship to sail easily, without any worry for speed. The entire crew, including Captain Mowbray himself, was physically and emotionally exhausted. Eddie felt a new respect for this Captain, which was not diminished when the Captain appeared on deck drunk later that evening. Eddie could see that he used his private store of liquor to relieve his loneliness. He was required by his position to keep a certain separation from the crew. As far as Eddie was concerned, the Captain had earned that drunk.

Eddie also felt gratitude to Yoshi, whose quick thinking in climbing the masthead to lower the sails had brought the ship to a stop. Yoshi told Eddie, however, that his chanting was of far more importance to protect the safety of everyone on board. Eddie did not know if he believed Yoshi's prayers were responsible for their success, but neither was he prepared to deny their effectiveness. Any number of things could have gone wrong, with disaster resulting. They could not have long kept *The Cape of Good Hope* afloat at the rate it was taking in water, if everything had not worked. And every single thing did work. Eddie silently offered his own thanks to Yoshi and his chanting.

The crew had done well, considering that most of them were inexperienced. After everyone had a good rest they were in the mood for a celebration. And what better place and time to celebrate than at their upcoming arrival at the Equator!

For days the old salts had ribbed the greenhands about crossing the equator for the first time. They had even convinced some of them that a great huge cable actually traversed the world, which they would have to pull up above the mastheads to let the ship pass underneath. Eddie had never even heard of the equator before, but he could not believe how gullible some of those Yankee farmboys were. Yoshi did not understand the Yankee humor at all.

The Portuguese and Brazilians seemed to hold a bemused tolerance toward the weird customs of the *Norte Americanos*.

With the temperature hot and humid and winds light, the crew was eager for diversion. After lunch one of the old salts went aloft to look for approaching ships. Curiously enough he soon sighted one close by.

"Sail ho," he sang out, "'tis old Neptune's clipper."

The greenhand sailors, who had in the previous weeks been worked up to a state of excitement about the crossing, looked in vain for the strange sail. The old salts suddenly seized them from behind, hustled them forward and forced them down into the forecabin. They slammed the door and closed the boys inside.

Eddie, Yoshi and the others heard a deep hoarse voice hail *The Cape of Good Hope*: "Ship a-hoy! Hallo! Give me a rope's end for I'm acoming to see if you's got any strangers aboard."

"Aye, aye, sir!" They could hear the First Mate sing out, "Heave him a rope there some of you." There were loud clomping sounds on the deck over their heads.

After the clomping sounds ceased, the hoarse voice yelled, "Well, it looks like everyone here on deck is one of me loyal subjects. But what about the forecabin?"

"Oh your Eminence," yelled the First Mate, "You don't be wanting to go down there. It be too smelly and foul for your Royal Highness."

"Oh blathersmarts," the voice rang out, "The only foul odor I can smell is a bunch of landlubber strangers."

With that, the crew inside saw their door flung open to reveal King Neptune himself. He was wearing a mask with long strands of seaweed serving as hair and beard. With a heavy cloak thrown over his shoulders, and a crown of starfish on top, the King of the Sea also carried a long harpoon with which he threatened the young men. A mix of nervous laughter, whimpers of genuine fear and peals of raucous hilarity sounded in the tight space.

"Strangers!" he thundered, "take off your shirts so's I can see yous better." When the boys did as they were told, he commanded

his assistants, "I still can't tell about these here landlubbers. Bring 'em out for me inspection! One at a time!"

The old salts grabbed Michael, who looked genuinely terrified, and blindfolded him. Then they dragged him out and slammed the door leaving Eddie and the others inside. They could hear splashing and sputtering sounds amid the laughter of the officers and crew. At first it seemed to go on and on.

Next they came for Eddie. He didn't know what to do, so he went along accommodatingly. They blindfolded him and dragged him onto the deck. He was led aft until abruptly ordered to stop. A voice announced that he was the King's barber, and "every man has to be properly cleaned and shaved afore he can be presented to His Eminence. What's your name, landlubber?"

Just as Eddie was about to reply, a shaving brush covered with grease was shoved into his mouth and pulled out. He heard the laughter as he spit the slush out of his mouth.

Then King Neptune bellowed, "I can't hear him. Hold a speaking trumpet up to his mouth so's I can hear."

Eddie felt the brass voice magnifier against his lips. "Now, what'd you say yur name was, stranger? Hold your head up high when speaking to royalty," the King demanded.

As Eddie raised his head and tried to repeat his name, a bucket of saltwater poured into the trumpet and rushed down his throat. As he coughed, the old salts laughed uproariously.

"Well, if we're not going to throw you overboard, you've got to follow me rules? Do you agree to do that, me laddie?"

"Yes sir," Eddie bellowed, followed by another wad of grease in the mouth."

"Every last one of them?"

"Yes sir!" he sputtered.

"Then stand at attention," the King thundered. As Eddie stood rigidly the King said, "The first rule is, every man of me children is got to keep his ass clean. You never know when you might be needing it. Is your ass clean, me boy?"

"Well, yes sir," Eddie replied hesitantly.

"Let's see about that. Drop your trousers for the royal inspection." With that Eddie felt his pants being pulled off. Then he was turned around and made to bend over.

"Now open your legs and spread your cheeks," the King demanded. As Eddie obliged, Neptune announced: "It don't look too clean to me. Looks pretty rotten down there. Me thinks I can smell the malodorous odors from me throne!" More laughter. Then he commanded, "We got to give him a Royal washing."

With that Eddie felt a bucket of sea water splash his behind, soaking him. Next a greased hand rubbed over his ass and made washing motions in the crack. Then suddenly a finger shoved inside. Eddie winced in surprise at the feeling. The old salts laughed again.

After Eddie halfway regained his composure, though still ordered to remain bent over and spread, the King put several questions to him, to see if he truly agreed to follow Neptune's laws:

"Will you swear never to walk, when you can ride, unless you choose to walk?"

By this time Eddie would agree to anything. "Yes sir!" he said, and in went a couple of greased fingers. He jerked, and the laughter continued.

"Will you swear never to kiss a maid when you can kiss a mate instead, even when you should prefer the maid to the mate?"

"Yes sir!" The greased fingers shoved in again.

This time they did not pull out. Eddie had gotten used to it, and it did not hurt him after the initial jolt. The fingers stayed inside him, massaging while the King quoted his final rule: "Will you swear to always keep Neptune's laws, keep your mates happy and satisfied, and respect the sea, as long as you may soever live?"

"Yes sir!" After he had said this, with a final rubbing around, the fingers were pulled out. Eddie sort of liked the feeling, and he began to understand how Yoshi must feel when they were having sex. He was getting aroused.

Eddie was then ordered to stand up and turn around. When the crew saw he was semi-erect, King Neptune announced, "Nice

piece of sausage there, mate. I think this sailor's gonna enjoy the seafaring life. The Royal Court may be acoming to visit you tonight. Be ready with some of that there grease." The old salts were splitting their sides with laughter.

Still blindfolded, Eddie was told to step up some steps and sit down on a plank of wood. His Majesty told the Royal barber that Eddie was ready to be shaved. The barber did this with relish, dousing the grease in Eddie's mouth and ears, and up his nostrils. Then he scrapped the nasty mess off Eddie's face with a huge piece of metal from a barrel hoop.

Once the ritual shaving was complete, King Neptune ordered Eddie to stand up. Hardly had he gotten on his feet than the plank on which he was standing was jerked away and he tumbled into a vat of saltwater. Eddie tore off the blindfold and crawled out of the vat like a drowned rat, as the men guffawed.

King Neptune came forward and gave him a big hug while Eddie stood there naked. Then said in a kindly voice, "Now you're one of me sons of the sea. There be no more greenie about you." Turning to the others he announced, "I hereby proclaim, by the power invested in me by all the nobles of the great ocean, that Eddie Freeman has become an official and certified *old salt*!" The crew applauded.

Finally, King Neptune ordered Eddie to kiss "my deputy, the shark." Someone had carved a wooden shark fin and strapped it atop the back of Sharkey the tailless pig. Eddie did as he was told, and Sharkey oinked happily.

Next it was another of the neophytes' turn. Eddie took a seat with the others and watched with increasing bemusement as the process was repeated exactly the same for each one of the rest of the boys. He saw the harmless fun in the ritual. He thought the sexual overtones curious and, in fact, appealing. As the ceremony went on, Eddie noticed that the Captain was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps King Neptune's voice sounded familiar for a reason.

The ceremony provided entertainment for the sailors and also for each of the boys after they could observe the others undergoing

the same ridiculous treatment. But more importantly, this ritual served as an initiation for each of the new men. For Eddie and the others, they now felt genuinely accepted as *old salts* themselves, part of an egalitarian select brotherhood of sailors. After that day, there was not one more joke about them being inexperienced greenhands; they were now to be treated respectfully as equals and seasoned regulars of the sea.

14

South Atlantic

After the equator-crossing event the crew seemed happy and content. The funny ceremony led even morose Harry to come out of his depression a bit. And the normally dour Jesse laughed as heartily as the others. Maybe, Eddie thought, the racist redhead was not quite as devoid of humanity as he appeared. Two days after the ceremony, heavy clouds drenched the ship with torrents of warm tropical rain. The Captain ordered all hands on deck to hold the canvas sails in position so they could collect the precious drinking water into the now half-empty water barrels. The crew was happy to get this drenching of fresh water, and soon shirts and pants were discarded on the deck.

After all the barrels were full, the rain was still falling. Yoshi brought out soap and encouraged everyone to wash themselves. Soon the entire crew, even the officers, were engaged in a collective outdoor shower. The men scrubbed each other's backs, and everyone was soaped from head to toe. After rinsing themselves, again with Yoshi leading the way, they soaped their clothes. The rest of the afternoon the naked crew spent doing laundry on the wet decks just as efficiently as a group of professional washerwomen. The immaculate Yoshi was especially happy to have everything—

and everyone—cleansed up. For the first time, he said, he could smell them without feeling repulsed.

No sooner had they completed the laundry than the ship sailed out from under the clouds. The crew basked naked in the warm sunlight. Gone was Yankee restraint and coldness. Several of the boys pranced freely around the deck, as frisky as dogs after a bath. They played a game of tag, spanking bare butts and grabbing crotches as they jumped and frolicked fore and aft.

Later, Yoshi explained to Eddie that his dislike of the white Yankees' poor cleanliness habits is why he initially chose Eddie as his bunkmate, that and the whites' general unconcern for their personal appearance.

"Yoshi like Eddie because Eddie keep clean and neat. Besides," he said, "Yankees' pale skin ugly. Eddie dark color much attractive."

This was naturally a surprise to Eddie who suddenly realized the extent to which he himself had accepted the white man's view that a lighter skin color was naturally more beautiful.

Eddie began to appreciate his color. He didn't mind getting darker as he and Yoshi sunned themselves on deck. He was grateful for everything he was learning from this small person with strange eyes. Eddie was also grateful for the loving intimacy he experienced with Yoshi every night. As the voyage continued, they became an inseparable pair. For each of them *The Cape of Good Hope* had indeed become a symbol of their hope for the future.

In the weeks following, as *The Cape of Good Hope* continued southward toward their stopover at the British colony of the Falkland Islands, a new closeness developed among the rest of the crew as well. Prompted by their initiation ceremony and the naked play in the rain, most of the boys dropped their inhibitions. They engaged in "peeing contests," lined up along the side railings, to see which one could urinate furthest out into the ocean. Then there was a "big balls contest" among those in the forecabin, to judge which person had the largest testicles. That was followed, inevitably, by a "big dick contest," with each one stroking himself into his largest possible erection. Eddie confidently thought

he would win that contest hands down, as it were, but both the Portuguese man named Giorgio and one of the Brazilian Indians were larger. What was most surprising to Eddie was to see that the self-confessed "sinner" Steven was even larger. With a tool like that one, Eddie could see why Steven had not let it go to waste.

Becoming bolder, Yoshi suggested they have a "big asshole contest," to see how many fingers they could take. Yoshi greased his hand and gently inserted one finger into each boy's anus. Everyone passed that test. Then he did it with two fingers, making sure to massage the inner passage to help relax the sphincter muscle. As each boy spread his cheeks while the others crowded around to watch, Yoshi expertly inserted three and then four fingers. The Yankees were intensely interested in this, since most of them seemed to have no idea such a thing was physically possible. Yoshi felt like he was doing a good service for these boys, by helping to prepare their backside for the joys of intercourse. He amazed them by having Eddie grease his hand and then, previously prepared by Eddie's generous endowment, Yoshi was able to take Eddie's entire hand. With his own erection obvious and unhidden, Yoshi showed them how to relax and take their own fingers.

After this, they had no inhibitions left. Most of the boys began to spend a lot of their off-duty time, especially in the forecabin, in the nude. It only made sense in the warm tropical weather. Eddie saw there were other reasons as well. At night, barely concealed pairs had their sexual enjoyments with each other. Michael and Steven were particularly loud in their moans of pleasure. What one did in one's own berth was considered one's own private business, even if others could easily tell what it was. A kind of code of ethics developed, with never a mention of the orgasmic moans coming from the berths.

Michael and Steven, however, went even beyond these bounds. They kissed each other openly, and often were seen holding hands as their love blossomed. They spent their free time together, as lovestruck as any blushing bride and groom before a wedding ceremony.

One day Eddie and Yoshi found themselves naked and alone in the hold, down below decks. Passionately aroused, Yoshi bent over a barrel and spread his cheeks. It was a sight Eddie could not by now refuse, and he was soon rock hard. As he thrust into Yoshi's eager little bottom, they did not notice that the Captain himself came in.

When his eyes adjusted to the dark hold, seeing Yoshi bent over the barrel with Eddie standing behind, the Captain just gave a little smile to the two lovers. "Excuse me, fellas," he said and quickly left. He never said a word about the incident. Perhaps he valued his skilled carpenter and his experienced Japanese sailor, and did not want to alienate them over a useless display of conventional morality.

On a ship full of healthy young men, the Captain must have sensibly realized, sexual feelings were bound to arise. The way of the sea seemed to involve a pragmatic acceptance of human needs. To do otherwise would be to enforce an artificial rigidity on the crew, and would inevitably result in discord. Every experienced captain realized there were plenty enough stresses on a whaling voyage, without having to add sexual frustrations to the list. The laws and morality of the landlubbers were left behind after they crossed the equator. The crew continued sailing southward, on their all-male, multiracial and self-contained little floating world of *The Cape of Good Hope*.

As the ship continued its southward journey the Brazilians hoped the Captain might decide to put in dock in their country. They excitedly told the crew about the fleshpots of Rio, and the wild eroticism of Brazilian tropical nights. After that, Eddie thought he heard an extraordinary amount of rustling and heavy breathing in the berths that night.

Captain Mowbray decided, however, that they should head straight for the Falkland Islands. With the ship's leak successfully repaired, and with a replenishment of fresh water from the rains, there was no need to lay over so soon. Though the Brazilians stood lookout for hours at a time, hoping to catch at least a glimpse of

their homeland as they passed the coast of Brazil, they never were able to catch sight of anything.

A steady ocean breeze kept the hot weather from becoming uncomfortable, and the crewmen spent most of their off-duty time on deck. Sailors had to become adept at finding plenty of ways to amuse themselves. Some would play complicated card games. Others would sit quietly and read books they had brought along.

Though he could not read, Eddie spent hours laboriously copying his name "EDDIE FREEMAN" in the block letters of the style that the Captain had written for him. He also practiced his signature. He could soon both print and sign his name from memory. Michael wrote down the letters of the alphabet for him and he memorized these. He still did not know how to read, but he prided himself that he had at least learned the alphabet. He thought for sure he would have an advantage if he became literate in the future. But for right now, Eddie thought that the ability to sign his name was a mark of his status as a free man. The sea had granted him his freedom and now, he laughed aloud at the thought, he considered himself a loyal patriot in the Kingdom of King Neptune.

Both Michael and Steven delighted in teaching Eddie the alphabet. Since Eddie was so determined to learn how to read, he spent practically all his free time studying. He was fascinated by the strange characters of Yoshi's language, but he could never manage to remember how to write them. The only word he learned in Yoshi's language besides the Buddhist chants was an energetically said "Hai!" which Yoshi said not only to indicate "yes" but also agreement that he would do such a thing or share in this opinion. Eddie tried to convince Yoshi to learn how to read English, but Yoshi said he already knew how to read the characters of his own language and he had no desire to learn to read the white man's language. However, he realized that reading English might be important for Eddie's future, so he sat patiently as Michael and Steven served as teachers.

The four of them became a close little group. Eddie was grateful for this help, and with the example of Michael and Steven he

realized his assumptions about all white men needed to be revised. They were genuinely accepting of him, and he loved them for their concern for his future. They not only taught him how to read, but also how to read a map. There were maps of the whole world in the Captain's quarters, and the Captain allowed them to study and teach Eddie about the world. Eddie was elated to see how big Africa was. When he was a child he thought South Carolina was the whole world, but it looked so tiny on the maps that Eddie gained a whole new perspective on life. Not all the world was like the South. In fact, when Steven showed him how small the slave states were, and how most of the world no longer allowed slavery, Eddie saw that Tom's hope for the end of slavery in the South was not unrealistic. But what amazed him even more is how much of the world was covered in water. The land, even the big continents, was not most of the world. Eddie decided he wanted to be a citizen of the sea. He felt no loyalty to any country. The sea was his first love, and his true home.

Eddie felt that becoming educated to the realities of the world was truly a milestone for him. He wished Tom and Joey could see him sign his name. Somehow, when he was just waking up he felt that the spirits of his grandfather Tombo, his grandmother and mother were communicating to him their pride, to know that their offspring had escaped slavery and was becoming an educated free man.

Besides reading, music was another way in which Eddie and the other crewmen occupied themselves. At any one time there was usually at least one person singing or playing an instrument. Eddie loved the wide diversity of songs that he had never heard before. As they took turns, the others enjoyed Eddie's drumming that he learned from his grandfather Tombo, and he sang plantation spirituals and songs that the fieldhands sang to pass the time while they did their labor.

While Yoshi could not sing much, he was good at playing a flute. He had carved a wooden flute in memory of his slain samurai lover. The tunes were simple, but with a haunting melodious

Japanese style which Eddie had never before heard. Giorgio and another Portuguese crewman had brought along a fiddle and an accordion on which they banged out raucous Portuguese dance music. The Brazilians would bring out pots and pans from the cook room, and beat on them with an infectious rhythmic quality that reminded Eddie of the African drumming of his grandfather. All in all, the music on board *The Cape of Good Hope* had quite an international flavor.

The Portuguese accordion and Brazilian drumming sometimes would lead the boys into an impromptu dance. Not discouraged by the absence of women, some of the boys used their pillows, cloaks and bed sheets to fashion mock partners to dance with. Others made dresses for themselves and assumed the female roles in the dance. These "girls" made up in energy what they lacked in grace. In contrast, the delicate boy Michael was a model of gracefulness. He particularly seemed to enjoy playing the girl and openly flirted with Steven like he was a budding beauty. They had become a couple much in love with each other. The other crewmembers respected their relationship.

Even after Michael's convincing cross-dressing, Yoshi stunned the entire crew with how well he passed as an Asian lady. The Yankee boys and their "beaus," both living and manufactured, had a regular old-fashioned breakdown dance. Steven and Michael seemed to particularly enjoy dancing together. They called their dancing style a dragged-out, double shuffle. The Captain said their stomping was so energetic it sounded like a locomotive going at full speed over a rickety track where the rails are loose.

The next day everyone was relaxed and comfortable. Even Captain Mowbray seemed more relaxed. When he and Eddie were checking the condition of the plug they had installed in the hull, the older man took the opportunity to tell Eddie his feelings. The Captain seemed desperate to reach out beyond his loneliness, and he trusted Eddie as someone he could talk to. He complimented Eddie, saying: "You're a good man, Eddie Freeman. Me and every other man aboard appreciate what you did to save the ship when it

sprung that leak. You do your job and you stay outa other people's hair. You just keep acting the same way you been acting, and you'll get no trouble from me, I swear to you."

After a moment of silence he opened up even more, and advised, "It's good you've got your mate with the little Japanese fella. That's always the best way on a long voyage, to find a partner where you two can be together. You and your mate are members one of another, more than any man and wife could ever be. Landlubbers don't realize that, but the old salts all do. Many's the night when I lay alone in my captain's cabin, remembering fondly of me and me mate snuggling in our berth together when we was young.

"Sometimes I think I'd gladly go back to th' forecastle, just to get that feeling again. Call it whatever you will: admiration, friendship, infatuation, yearning, or love. But whatever you call it, appreciate what you have. While you've got it. That's a lesson I've learned, in the years of struggle I've had to go through."



On Thanksgiving the Brazilian cook served up a fancy meal of roast chickens, the last ones on board. After dinner the crew organized a complete musical revue, and invited the officers to watch. The Playbill, printed carefully on a white sheet which served as a stage curtain, announced: "Everyone Welcome, dry and wet, fore and aft, men, women, and others. Tickets Gratis! Children half price!!"

Yoshi began the evening with a *kabuki* performance. Though everyone was again amazed at his feminine costume and mannerisms, they soon grew tired of the Japanese sounds which no one understood. Even Eddie had to admit he found the intricate performance stuffy and bewildering.

After polite applause for Yoshi, the next act offered earthier entertainment. Steven performed a raunchy song titled, "My Dog Eyes Make Mince Pies," which he dedicated to Michael. Next Michael sang the popular song "I Dream of Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair." After Steven's comic antics everyone was surprised at the quality of Michael's high tenor voice. The last time he sang the refrain, he changed the name Jeannie to Steven. And though everybody laughed, his musical selection was the best of the evening and his beautiful singing voice inspired all of those who heard it.

Eddie followed that with a knee-kicking dance plantation-style. The whole crew, from the Yankees to the Brazilians, loved his exuberant dancing. Next was a performance titled "Chicken in the Straw," held in honor of their chicken Thanksgiving dinner. Several Yankee farm boys came out with their arms folded like chicken wings, and sang their song, off-key, to the tune of "Turkey in the Straw." In between stanzas they fluttered about deck flapping their wings, while crowing and cackling like hens. The scene sounded to Eddie like he was in the middle of a poultry yard. The total silliness kept everyone in a fit of laughter.

That was followed by a fiddle solo by Giorgio, billed as "The Portuguese Violinist." And after that, for a grand finale the Brazilians performed a dance they called the Cuban rumba, accompanied by the Portuguese accordion player and drummers. Before the night was over, everyone had joined in, and they rumba'd late into the night.

As the festivities were winding down, Eddie and Yoshi, along with the love-bitten couple Steven and Michael, walked aft to look at the magnificent starry sky. Yoshi remarked that he liked to stare at the constellations of stars at night as he did his regular evening chanting of *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*. It reminded him of times he had done the same thing at his home in Nihon.

With the ocean mist spraying lightly on their faces, Eddie was overcome by the beauty of the wide open space. He bent down to give Yoshi a kiss. He saw Steven do likewise to Michael. As the two

couples embraced, the night was suddenly lit up by a falling star. It streaked across the sky leaving a trail of greenish-glowing dust behind.

Yoshi said a meteor like that was a symbol of the Buddha, who brought enlightenment to a darkened world. As he looked out on the twinkling horizon, Eddie made a wish. He hoped that, wherever he ended up in the world, *The Cape of Good Hope* would take him to a place where he would feel as happy and free as he did precisely at that moment.

15

Falkland Islands

As *The Cape of Good Hope* sailed further southward in the following weeks and approached the British colony on the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic, the weather became noticeably colder. Even though it was the middle of summer in the southern hemisphere, they had sailed so far south they'd left the tropical warmth behind. Now they were approaching the Antarctic. There were no more showers in the fresh water rain. Gone were the crew's nude romps on deck.

Eddie was depressed to be entering cold weather again, since he had so enjoyed the warmth of the tropics. Instead, he and the other boys huddled under blankets in the forecabin. Pretty soon Yoshi complained that the cramped quarters were starting to smell again. The emotional atmosphere of the ship changed from that of those carefree, playful, warm days to one of moodiness and introspection. Harry's depression returned full force, and he was so lackluster in his work that the Captain must have regretted his underhanded manipulation to get this crewmember.

The Captain was also starting to feel stressed about the slowness of the voyage. He kept pushing the crew to keep the ship moving along at top speed, saying that it was important for them to get to Cape Horn before Christmas. "That would be the best time of year to be rounding Cape Horn," he said, "if ever there was a good time to be at that god-forsaken, stormy point..."

It was as if the Captain were prophetic, Eddie thought, for late that night a near disaster struck. The crew was awakened by the alarm bell: "All hands on deck! All hands on deck!"

As the men scurried up from below, they could see a large merchant ship coming right at them through the thick fog. If they didn't act quickly the two ships were going to ram head on. While the Brazilian cook continually rang the alarm bell in hopes the other ship would hear them and swerve to avoid disaster, Captain Mowbray and the First Mate screamed orders above the racket.

Eddie and Yoshi climbed the main mast along with several others. They tugged to take in the sail, while other crewmen readjusted the aft sail to force the ship to turn. At the same time others struggled to keep the steering wheel as far to the right as it would go.

The sails flapped fiercely as they were reeled downward to the crossarm. Several of the sailors, including Eddie, threw themselves onto the descending arm to add their weight. It was all happening so fast. But in a moment Eddie found himself back down on the deck with the hull of the other ship looming at him through the fog.

High up on the masthead he could hear Yoshi rapidly chanting his Buddhist mantra over and over. Eddie wondered if Yoshi was praying for the disaster to be averted or if he was preparing himself for passage to the next life. Yoshi chanted rapidly, as *The Cape of Good Hope* leaned sharply leeward. The other ship was turning also. Miraculously the two vessels glided right past each other. Eddie could clearly see the name of the ship on the bow and the startled faces of the other ship's crew as they passed. The two hulls came within less than five feet of each other.

Before they knew it, the other ship disappeared into the fog. There was a moment of stunned silence as everyone realized how close they had come to being sunk. Several men started laughing compulsively.

Eddie looked up toward Yoshi to share the relief of anxiety with a broad smile. Just then he saw a tell-tale sight. "Look," he shouted, "the warning light's out."

The crew started jabbering and pointing.

"Silence," Captain Mowbray bellowed angrily. He too stared up at the mast. The warning lantern near the top arm was indeed dark. It should have been burning brightly. That would have made the other ship know they were there, even in the fog.

"Who the hell was on lookout?"

It was clearly one of Captain Mowbray's rules that the on-duty watch was responsible for that warning lantern. If it went out, that was the person whose duty it was to climb up the mast and relight it. There was no doubt about that rule. That light should have been burning.

For a few seconds there was no reply. Then a trembling voice admitted meekly, "Me, sir."

It was Jesse, the redhead who had insulted Eddie with racist remarks, on more than one occasion.

"What happened to the lantern?" the Captain bellowed.

"I don't know, sir. I guess it went out."

The Captain was fuming: "You *guess* it went out! Then why in the devil's name didn't you keep an eye on it? I'll bet my right arm you fell asleep during your watch! You slimy good-for-nothing. And why didn't you warn us earlier, before that merchantman was on top of us?"

"It's such a heavy fog, sir. I couldn't see it."

"*Couldn't* see it, or *didn't* see it? Cause you were fast asleep in your sweet candy-ass dreams. I ought to have you lashed for falling asleep at your watch. Into the pig pen with you... for a week."

Some of the experienced sailors jeered at Jesse. Though ship collisions on the open sea were rare, they were every sailor's

nightmare. Few crimes were considered as serious on board ship as falling asleep during one's watch. It was especially important for a lookout to stay awake on a foggy night. Too many lives were at stake.

The First Mate clamped chains around Jesse's wrists and ankles, then threw him into the filthy pig pen with the remaining food stock. He locked Jesse securely inside, just like one of the doomed animals. The usually surly sailor's lack of protest seemed to indicate his guilt.

Though Eddie felt no love lost for the obviously prejudiced redhead, he was bothered by the sight of that pathetic man locked in that cage.

It was too close a reminder of slavery, and of his own experience when he had inadvertently angered his master. This was the first inkling to Eddie that the life of a sailor was not exactly free. Once they had signed their papers, which Eddie could not even read, each one of them became legally bound to the power and authority of the Captain. They were required to abide by all the Captain's rules and decisions.

Eddie respected Captain Mowbray and understood his anger at Jesse. He could see he had to act harshly to impress the other crewmen with the need to stay alert on watch. But what about Jesse? There was no way of knowing for certain that he had in fact fallen asleep. The fog *had* been extremely thick; maybe the lantern had blown out *after* Jesse had already sounded the alarm. Maybe it was the lookout on the other ship that had fallen asleep.

What really burned at Eddie was the fact that one man could be thrown into chains and deprived of his freedom at the whim of another man. Eddie doubted the freedom of the life of a sailor. What had he gotten himself into?

Captain Mowbray might be a good master but, just as sure as Eddie had ever lived under enslavement with another "good master," he knew that as long as he remained aboard this ship the Captain was still the master. His dislike of Jesse did not affect the

matter. Eddie realized the master's anger, which was now turned against Jesse, might one day be turned against him.

As the crew silently returned to their quarters, Eddie gave a final glance to where Jesse was sitting forlornly. Jesse noticed his stare and yelled out, "What're you looking at, nigger? Ain't you done enough against me already?"

Even in his own humiliation, the man seemed to need to blame somebody else for his misfortune. All Eddie did was notice the light was out. It wasn't his fault Jesse was being punished.

Eddie felt his anger rise. He was happy to see this man who'd always seemed antagonistic to him in chains, and in shame to the rest of the crew. He felt a silent joy at the humbling of his enemy. But he felt serious qualms about his joy at his antagonist's misery.

The next day seemed like a bad time for everybody. After the near collision even the ship itself seemed to be in less good spirits. During his inspection of the hold on the morning afterward, the Captain discovered that the hull had started a slow leak on the forward bow. Yoshi said it was like the ship was crying from the scare. The Captain was concerned about this new leak, but at least he felt lucky that this occurred so close to the port at the Falkland Islands. The British shipyard there was among the best in the world, and they could re-tar the leaking hull quickly and efficiently. It would give them the least loss of time on their journey.

Within a day they had arrived at their destination. The Captain was relieved that no other problems occurred before they reached the British shipyard. As soon as *The Cape of Good Hope* was secured at dock in the Falklands safe harbor, the crew took off for the town. Eddie could hardly believe the boys' excitement at getting on dry land again.

Several headed straight for a tavern, including, Eddie was sorry to see, the poor fellow who had come to sea to avoid alcohol. Others talked of finding "a lady," meaning one of the town prostitutes with whom they could have quick sex. They asked Eddie if he wanted to go, but he made the excuse he did not have any money. He was relieved no one offered to loan him some cash.

The truth is, Eddie had never used money in his life, and he had no idea how, and how much, to pay for anything.

Eddie was determined his first use of money would go toward something more constructive than a prostitute. He had never had the opportunity to have sex with a woman, and he had no desire to do so. He felt quite satisfied with Yoshi.

With the amount of sexplay going on among the boys in the forecastle, he did not understand why they expressed so much interest in a woman. Maybe they preferred girls, even though they were willing to be sexual with their mate on board ship. On the other hand, Eddie had the distinct feeling that several of the Yankees were going along with the prostitute visit simply to establish themselves to each other as "real men."

Not so with Michael and Steven, who were by now an inseparable pair. Yoshi accompanied them for a walk around the island. Eddie decided to stay with the ship. As ship's carpenter, he felt a responsibility to watch how the British ship workers did their repairs. Eddie agreed with the Captain when he said the British had the best shipyard he had ever seen. Though they talked with an even funnier accent than the Yankees, saying things like "bloke" and "blimey," Eddie could tell they knew what they were doing when it came to ship repair.

Once *The Cape of Good Hope* was docked, they stretched several chains underneath the hull. With teams of large horses and a series of pulleys, they raised the hull out of the water. Then their master craftsmen went underneath in a rowboat and did the work. Eddie watched intently to compare their techniques of hull repair with what he had learned in the Savannah shipyard. He felt he received a complete education within less than eight hours.

By the end of the day his makeshift plug was replaced, some other joints refurbished, and the hull was completely re-tarred. Eddie admired British efficiency. After the tar dried overnight, the ship would be ready to be lowered back into the water.

That evening Eddie remained camped out by the shipyard. The Captain, who had left when the work was finished, staggered back

to give one last inspection. When he saw Eddie, he handed him a bagful of apples. Eddie could smell liquor on the Captain's breath. The apples were the first fresh fruit Eddie had eaten in a while. He wolfed them down hungrily. But, remembering the previous events that ended with Jesse in the pig pen and Eddie feeling like he'd inadvertently betrayed a fellow sailor, Eddie remained reticent.

The older man apparently noticed this and knew why. He took out a flask of whiskey from his coat and gulped a long swig. Then, after a period of awkward silence as the liquor loosened the Captain's tongue, he confessed his own pent-up feelings in a way he would not normally have done. "Tis a lonely job to be captain of a ship, me laddie. You can't let yourself get too close to the crew."

Eddie said nothing.

"I know you're thinking that I acted rashly with young Mr. Jesse up there in his pig pen. But I *had* to do it, mate. A captain's got to show his authority, or else the whole ship could fall apart. I know cause I seen it happen. Maybe in the future one of them boys'll think about being stuffed in a pig pen afore he wafts off to sleep on his watch. If you don't give them something to fear, they slack off. And then, there'll be a real disaster. We almost had one aplenty that night with the merchantman. Scared the tar outta me, that it did. And it should have you too, if you've got any sense in that brain of yours."

Eddie took in all the words of the Captain, but he said nothing. He respected, appreciated, pitied, and feared the man, all at the same time. With no response from Eddie, after another long period of silence Captain Mowbray took another swig from his flask. Then, perhaps not knowing if Eddie was sympathetic or condemnatory of him, the lonely Captain staggered off into the darkness.

The next morning the crewmembers filtered in from their one night on the town. Some bragged about the "pussy" they had gotten. Some merely held their heads to contain their splitting headaches, which let everyone know how they had spent their time.

The most pathetic figure was Harry. His time on the voyage had been one depressed day after another. His one hope, he now revealed to the others, was to get to the Falklands and find another ship going back to Boston. But when he was shanghaied he had no money in his pockets, and he knew that he would have to get a job working in the Falklands for a while before he could have enough money to pay for the fare home. He was afraid to say anything to the Captain, fearing that the Captain would prevent him from leaving the ship. Now that his plan was frustrated, he confronted the Captain angrily.

"Look, I went everywhere on this island searching for a job, but since it's the end of the whaling season in these parts there's not one job available. I have no money, and without a job wouldn't even be able to eat here. You know what you did. Now I need you to do the honorable thing and give me enough money to get back to Boston."

Captain Mowbray had a tormented look. He did not like having to deceive men to get enough crew to sail, but with the ship's owners breathing down his neck to get the voyage started before the whaling season ended, he'd felt that he had no choice. All he could say was, "Harry, I'm so sorry, but I don't have enough money to do that. With the cost of these repairs to the hulk, plus the exorbitant cost of the meager amounts of food available in the stores here, the money is just not there."

Harry looked desperate: "Sir, just take what you would spend for my ration of food for the rest of the journey, and give it to me now in cash. You'll have no less cash than you would otherwise."

The Captain's mind raced. If he did this for Harry, what would stop the others who were there against their will from making the same demand? He would not have enough crew even to continue the voyage. How would he answer the ship's owners when the entire voyage had to be abandoned? It was times like this when the Captain wished he had never signed on to lead another whaling voyage.

He said simply, "I'm sorry, son, but I can't do that. This crew is barebones as it is. I need you and every other man aboard. I promise you that I will do my best to get you all the best rate of pay when we return from a successful voyage."

"Don't you see I don't want your goddamned money?" Harry exploded. "I don't want to come back a year or two from now. I want to get back to my wife and baby son, right now. Don't you understand that? I just want to be back at my home with my family." Knowing that the Captain was anti-slavery, Harry went for the jugular. He lashed out at the Captain, saying "You're no better than one of those slave catchers that's always patrolling for escaped slaves. You took me against my will, and now you need to let me go home. That's all. I just want to see my little boy." With this, Harry broke down completely, and collapsed on the ground as he cried. Eddie saw that others also had tears in their eyes.

The Captain, disgusted with himself as much as anything else, turned and walked away. Eddie guessed that he must be welling up with tears as well. Everybody there realized the same thing. At last, realizing there was no alternative, the First Mate ordered the two boatsteerers to carry Harry back on board. Harry hung limply in their arms. Even he realized that, without a job, there was no way he could stay in the Falklands.

The Captain had not a moment's respite from this emotionally draining incident, because right after this the cook arrived with a load of fresh vegetables and live chickens. He had not been able to purchase nearly as much food as they had stored when the ship left Boston. Some of the experienced men complained about this; they knew they had a long time ahead of them before they landed at the next stop in the Hawaiian Islands. But the cook said there was no more food to be bought in the small town's stores, even at the exorbitant rates that the island's merchants were charging. The rush of whalers arriving in the preceding weeks had cleaned the Falklands storekeepers out of stock. The Captain and First Mate quietly talked about the need to ration food in the upcoming month, since they had such a poor re-supply. It was not a good

sign, the superstitious First Mate told the worried Captain, that a ship takes off without enough food for the voyage.

With its tarring dry, *The Cape of Good Hope* was eased back into the water. As the crew filed on board, and the Captain made the final payment for the repairs, Eddie started to worry. Yoshi, Michael and Steven were nowhere to be seen.

The Captain ordered the crew to prepare to unfurl sail. He then approached Jesse, who had spent the night chained inside the pig pen. "Have you learned your lesson, young man?" the Captain intoned loudly for all to hear.

Whether Jesse had really fallen asleep on his watch or not, he had definitely learned that to do so was considered a serious offense. He nodded his agreement earnestly. Taking pity on him, Mowbray asked in a loud voice, "Does the rest of the crew promise never to endanger our ship by falling asleep on their watch, for the rest of the voyage? And does everyone promise to be diligent at all times while on duty?"

The crew rang out in unison, "We promise, sir," with Jesse's voice being the loudest.

"Alright," the Captain announced formally, "I hereby pardon you." With that, he ordered the First Mate to unchain Jesse from the pig pen. Jesse shook his arms and legs on being released.

Just at that point Yoshi, Michael and Steven showed up, running like they were being chased by wild tigers. Later Yoshi would explain to Eddie that they'd almost arranged a position to remain on the island, and had to run, out of breath, to get back to the ship before it departed.

After seeing the quaint island Michael had liked the natural sights and the refined culture of the Englishmen. He told Steven he wanted to stay there so they could live together as a couple. He liked the fact that the Falklands were so isolated from every other part of the world.

During their tour of the island, they had lunch at a small restaurant and the elderly owner took a liking to them. He told them he could not afford to pay them a salary, but he would

provide them with food and a spare room where they could sleep, in exchange for working in the restaurant. Michael thought that, if they all got along well and the eatery was profitable in the next whaling season, the elderly man might agree for them to take over his business in exchange for taking care of him in his old age. Yoshi said this was the way businesses were inherited in his country, and he thought they should jump at the opportunity.

Even if things did not work out with this restaurant, Michael felt, if they could just survive until the next whaling season they could easily get jobs working for one of the other merchants. In addition, Michael said that, after talking with a number of experienced sailors, he had a bad feeling about going into the dangerous waters around Cape Horn.

Steven thought seriously about this idea, but at the end he insisted (over Yoshi's strong objections) that they should honor their contract with Captain Mowbray and return to the ship.

It was a decision that he would soon come to rue.

When the three of them returned to the ship Yoshi came on board, took one look at Jesse, and exclaimed, "You need bath!"

For once, the Yankees agreed with the ship's resident Japanese sanitation specialist. A group of boys grabbed Jesse and threw him over the railing into the harbor. Eddie imagined this was their playful way of letting Jesse know they could also mete out punishment to anyone falling asleep on the watch. Everyone's life, after all, had been endangered.

Jesse got the message. After floundering about for a couple of moments, he reached the shore. Yoshi commanded him to strip, threw him some soap, and ordered him to wash his stinking clothes and himself before he got back aboard. The sight of the plucky little sissy Japanese ordering the big tough redhead around was a source of amusement to everyone, especially the Portuguese.

Jesse, for once, did not even have any insulting words to say to Eddie. He was totally humbled, and hardly in a position to backtalk anyone. As soon as he'd come aboard, holding his cleaned wet

clothing to hide his nakedness, the ship cast off. The wind filled the sails, and *The Cape of Good Hope* was on its way.

16

Cape Horn

Once they were out upon the open sea again there was plenty of work to be done. Buckets of tar were melted, and the old salts began to dip pants and coats in it for waterproofing. Yoshi had collected straw while on his tour of the island, and he wove straw hats for himself and Eddie. He showed Eddie how to cover the hats with tar, making waterproof headgear.

Eddie asked about shoes, fearful that he would be expected to cover his nice shoes in tar. No, Yoshi laughed, they would not wear shoes, even in the cold weather. Bare feet were much safer on the slippery wet decks and riggings. Eddie's shoes could remain in his footlocker, where they had been kept since the beginning of the voyage.

The Captain revised the crew's work schedules, eliminating the evening "dog-watch," as they called it, when the dog was supposed to be on watch. Since there was no dog on board, some of the old salts had taken to call the evening shift the "pig watch," in reference to Sharkey. During that time nobody did much of anything in the way of labor. But now there were work shifts twenty-four hours a day.

Until they rounded Cape Horn and got back into warmer waters, the Captain ordered, half the crew would be on a four hour watch, while the other half was off duty. The schedule alternated for the two shifts, so they could get out of dangerous waters as quickly as possible. This new schedule meant no crewman could get any more than four hours sleep at a time. Eddie sensed the

Captain did not like cold weather any more than he did. He was glad to comply with the stricter work shifts if it meant they would get back to warm weather sooner.

Eddie learned that every mariner feared Cape Horn. There at the southern tip of South America the convergence of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, combined with frigid winds blowing up from Antarctica, produced horrendous storms. As the ship approached the cape, dark rain clouds appeared ahead on the horizon. The Captain ordered all livestock carried below. Even the pig Sharkey had to give up his cherished freedom.

This would be the time, Eddie thought nervously, when the First Mate's statements about "the thrill of danger" and "the power of the sea" would be tested. Now they would have the chance to see if their hard training and teamwork would pay off. If it didn't, he reckoned, they might all end up deep beneath the churning waves of Cape Horn. According to the old salts, many a ship rested deep within what they called "Davy Jones' locker" at that forlorn place.

When they first reached the squalls, the Captain ordered the crew to hold canvases to catch the rainwater. Once again their water barrels were refilled. In contrast to their earlier experience with the warm tropical rains, this time the effort was cold and unpleasant. Eddie was grateful for the tarred coat and pants issued to him, and for the straw hat Yoshi had made, but each day it became more difficult to keep dry. By their fourth day in constant downpours, most of the crew was sneezing and coughing with colds. Like the others, Eddie was getting thoroughly sick of it. He did not care if he never saw rain again.

As they got closer to the Cape, Eddie noticed that Yoshi intensified his daily Buddhist chanting. The December rains were coming down in sheets, chilling the bones of everyone above deck. Those off duty shivered in their nightshirts and blankets below. On the fifth day of the storm they passed a merchant ship going the opposite way. In the driving rain all the First Mate could make out in their signal-flag message was "heavier storm ahead." Heavier!

Eddie did not see how it could get any heavier than it already was. He had never seen rain this hard.

About five minutes after the ship passed, the crewmen were just changing work shifts when someone yelled they heard something off the starboard bow. The entire crew rushed to the side railing and listened. Someone else claimed to hear it, saying it sounded like a man overboard hopelessly calling in distress. But the wind was blowing so hard they could not be certain. Everyone peered as far as they were able to see in the dim light, but they were never able to glimpse anything.

After *The Cape of Good Hope* sailed on, the men became depressed, questioning if the sound had been someone fallen or thrown off the other ship, and maybe clinging to something in the water. It was an object lesson to all of them to be especially careful and attentive in the rough seas, no matter how cold and tired they were. The Captain got them to pledge to watch out for each other, and to notice immediately if someone were not in his place.

By the next day the storm had indeed grown even worse. No sooner had Eddie's shift settled wearily into their berths, after an exhausting duty, than the cry rang out: "All hands on deck! All hands on deck!"

As they dressed again in their cold sopping wet clothes and climbed up the swaying steps, they saw the problem. The main sail had torn loose and was flapping wildly in the wind. If it was not soon hauled in, it would be torn into shreds.

Several crewmen climbed up the rigging, holding on for dear life while the ship was tossed and turned in the sea like a toy. Others slid along the deck, with waves crashing over the railings, trying to catch the loose ends of the flapping sail.

Michael managed to catch a bottom corner of the sail, but no sooner had he grabbed it, before anyone else could latch on, than a fresh gale of wind carried him completely off his feet and into the air. The others looked on in shock as the young man flapped in the blowing gales like a pennant over a flag. Then, an instant later, he

lost his grip and went flying like a slingshot into the dark turbulent waters.

"Man overboard! Man overboard!" the First Mate yelled.

This time it was no test, or no half-serious rescue of a pig. A human life was at stake. And it was dear, darling Michael to boot. Eddie's mind flashed back to the time on the Savannah River when he hesitated, and was able to do nothing to save his friend Joey in the water. This time Eddie sprang to action, rushing astern to the whaleboat to let it into the water. He, Yoshi, Steven and the two Brazilian Indians were the first crewmen into the boat. Steven's eyes were distraught with fear.

As they lowered the boat into the churning waters they could hear the Captain yelling orders for the rest of the crew to "lay to under bare poles." That meant they were furling every sail on the ship, to try to bring it to a halt. It was risky to flounder without any sail, but it was their only hope to find Michael.

Eddie, Yoshi, Steven and the Brazilians looked everywhere for any sign or sound of Michael, but they could hear or see nothing. They pushed the whaleboat out away from the stern, in the direction the boy was flung. But still nothing. With every passing wave the little boat tilted at an angle of over forty-five degrees. They held on firmly to the boat and the oarlocks; each one desperately searched the surrounding waters for any sign of their friend. Finally, as they drifted dangerously far away from the ship, they heard the Captain yelling to them through the voice trumpet, asking if they saw any sign of Michael. When Eddie yelled back "No," the Captain ordered them to row back to the ship.

Eddie knew this was the proper order, but Steven refused to accept it. He kept scanning the waters, vainly looking for his friend and lover. Then a big wave crested right at them, almost flipping the little whaleboat over. Steven was so obsessed in his search for Michael that he himself lost his hold and went careening out of the whaleboat.

Eddie's heart sank as Steven disappeared beneath the dark waves. Then just as suddenly he bobbed up again, gasping for

breath. As Steven swam to the side of the boat, Eddie held his oar out for him. Steven grappled at the oar, but another wave hit and he was pushed under again.

Eddie and Yoshi looked in vain for him. Then Steven bobbed up and, with a power that surprised them all, was able to swim back next to the whaleboat. Eddie reached over, grabbed him after the next wave and managed to pull him into the boat. Once he was back inside Steven sat right back up to continue looking for Michael, still ignoring his own safety.

The Captain yelled again for them to return to the ship before they capsized. Eddie, Yoshi and the Brazilians began rowing furiously, two on each side. Steven did not touch an oar, but kept looking for a sign of his beloved.

Waves were sloshing over the sides. The boat was taking in too much water. None of the four oarsmen could stop rowing if they wanted to get back to the ship. Eddie was forced to order Steven, "Bail!"

Steven looked at Eddie with anger, but then, with one last forlorn look out into the darkness, seemed to realize what had to be done for any of them to survive. As the others continued rowing frantically, he took the wooden bowl in the bottom and bailed water out of the boat. His tears only added to the water, but there was nothing else that he could do. With great difficulty they rowed back to the stern. Giorgio and Harry dropped into the boat to secure it, while Steven and the others pulled themselves up the rope ladder to the deck.

Fortunately, while the fruitless rescue attempt had been going on, the crew had managed to get the main sail safely furled and the ship safe again from total disaster.

When the would-be rescuers got to the deck the Captain embraced all five of the wet shivering bodies. They stood there trembling; he looked straight into Steven's eyes.

"I had to order you back. Losing one good man is bad enough. I couldn't have stood to lose five more. I'm so sorry."

Steven was already crying, but now he broke down completely, sobbing and calling out Michael's name repeatedly. The Captain helped Eddie and Yoshi escort him into the forecabin. They stripped the soaking wet clothes from him as he cried, then wrapped him in a dry blanket and laid him in his berth.

Eddie and Yoshi stripped off their own clothes, and grabbing the blankets from their berth, crowded into Steven's berth with him. With Yoshi on the inside and Eddie on the outside, they held Steven between them, their bodies pressed close to his.

"Oh, if only I had done what he wanted and we had stayed in the Falklands," was his plaintive guilt-ridden plea. Sobbing, all three of them let out their sorrow at the loss of their friend.

As the ship continued to toss and turn in the storm, they cried themselves to sleep. Some of the Portuguese crewmen, also wet and cold, placed their own blankets over the black-white-tan threesome in sympathy, and also in honor of their devotion to their lost comrade. Everybody on the whaler, not just Steven, would miss the darling, gentle, golden-voiced Michael.

For the next two days, while its crewmen worked to repair the mainsail, *The Cape of Good Hope* floated helplessly in the raging storm off Cape Horn. Somebody suggested that maybe the spirit of the Cape resented this ship with the name of its rival carved on the bow.

The old salts called the capes "the two sisters." The Cape of Good Hope was "the good sister" and Cape Horn was "the bad sister." Eddie could certainly see what they meant about this one being the bad one. Several crewmen once again got seasick from the wild rocking of the ship. Water continually poured over the side rails. So much water seeped down into the hold, they had to man the pumps once again to keep the ship afloat.

As shifts alternated, the crew was forced to keep pumping around the clock. The Captain assigned four men on lookout at all times. As the ship drifted, they could not afford to get close to any rocks sticking out of the water. In such a storm that would have

meant a sure crackup of the hull and a wreck on the desolate tip of South America.

Finally the storm abated a little. The Captain wanted to get out of these waters as quickly as possible, even though repairs on the mainsail had still not been completed. He ordered the crew to unfurl the sails for the yardarm and the stern. With two small sails only, he hoped, the ship might be able to travel safely. As the crewmen climbed the rigging, while the ship continued tossing and the rain and wind whipping, they held on tight. Everyone was still reeling from Michael's death; no one wanted another disaster. Amazingly, they were able to unfurl the sails without anyone even losing his balance or slipping on the wet surfaces. The Captain was relieved when every man was back on deck safely.

As the boatsteerers fought to keep the rudder steady, the ship gradually moved westward. For another day they traveled with the rains still pouring down. Then Captain Mowbray plotted a different course and the ship turned north-northwest. They had rounded the Cape. For another day the rains continued, but with less intensity. As soon as a clear sky broke through the clouds the Captain wisely ordered a slow sail. Everyone was exhausted from the non-stop work and lack of sleep. Finally they could get a solid night's rest.

As it happened, the next morning was Christmas Day, but no one felt like celebrating. Some crewmembers stayed in their berths, nursing their colds and their aching muscles. Others sat quietly on deck, peering silently into the distance. No one had any gifts to give. It was just as well, since anything presented would only remind them of the presents they might have received from their relatives had they stayed at home. Many of the crew shed tears that day, missing their family and friends. Many of the younger ones regretted ever leaving home.

Steven continued to be distraught. In the two months since they had left Boston, he had fallen deeply in love with Michael. He'd considered Michael to be his life mate, and they were already planning their future together. Now Michael was gone. Yoshi

understood those feelings of emptiness and powerlessness at the death of a loved one. Despite his affection for Eddie, Yoshi still missed his samurai and looked forward to his own homecoming and reunion with his beloved Aleut man on Unimak Island.

No one offered a funeral ceremony for Michael, so Yoshi took Steven with him to sit together on the stern. There, facing in the direction of Cape Horn, he chanted his Buddhist mantra for two hours. Yoshi gave special prayers for Michael's spirit to be reincarnated into a new and better life.

Eddie reacted with depression and bitterness over Michael's death. It reminded him of how he felt when Joey had drowned in the Savannah River. He watched Yoshi's ceremony for a while, and then angrily retreated into the ship's hold to be alone.

Finally, Yoshi completed his chanting and left Steven sitting in silence on the stern. When he climbed down the stairs looking for his own current mate, Eddie confronted him: "If your Buddhism is so great, how come your chanting didn't save Michael? It didn't save your ninja either! How can you have faith in something that doesn't work?"

Yoshi must have understood that Eddie was lashing out aimlessly, that he was just a convenient target for his frustration. He too was mourning over their friend's death.

"Buddha say nothing in world permanent. Buddha say all living thing get sadness, sickness, death. Buddha never promise no suffer in life. Buddha only say chant make suffer less bad. Maybe chant help Michael die quick, so no suffer. There always death. If no death, world too crowded. Too much people. If too much people, then world really suffer big. Death not worst suffering. Death might be welcome. Yoshi wait and see.

"Buddha say nothing accident. Everything happen, happen for larger purpose. That we not know, but faith tell Yoshi it true. If Michael fate die Cape Horn, we can nothing. By Buddha chant, change poison into medicine. Yoshi chant Michael reborn high life next time. Yoshi chant ninja high new life. No chant for stop death.

That impossible. Instead, Yoshi chant for high life. Steven need high life now.

"Yoshi chant for high life for Steven and Eddie, whether this life or future one not know. Yoshi chant ninja memory every day, as long as have voice. Now Yoshi chant Michael memory too. Yoshi believe Buddha chant make suffer less bad. If Yoshi no believe, Yoshi big suffer all time. Yoshi no see mother, father, Nihon home ever. Yoshi continue live, only by faith. With no chant, no happy, no hope future, no life. Yoshi continue live, only by faith *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.* With no chant, no happy, no hope future, no life. That all Yoshi can do."

17

South Pacific

For the next week *The Cape of Good Hope* sailed rapidly north by northwest, in a direct line toward the Hawaiian Islands whaling grounds. They were already late, but the Captain wanted to arrive before the whales left their winter birthing grounds in the calm waters between the Hawaiian islands of Maui and Molokai. It would require several weeks of fast sailing to get there, barring no more problems.

For dinner on New Year's Day, 1861, the cook fixed the last of the chickens on board. After that, the only fresh meat left was the tailless pig Sharkey, but everyone strenuously objected to the idea of eating him. After all he had been through—falling overboard, being mauled by a shark, surviving Cape Horn—they felt he deserved to live. In truth, the men had become as attached to the brave pig as to any pet.

Sharkey grew affectionate with the crew, as he sure-footedly walked the deck like it was his natural environment. No matter

how much the ship tossed and turned, Sharkey managed to stay away from the side railings. The others agreed with Eddie when he said Sharkey was smarter than any dog he had seen. They were prepared to forgo a baked ham dinner, in exchange for keeping him.

What the crew was left with in the way of food, however, was increasingly unsavory. Once the fresh fruits and vegetables had been eaten, all they had left were rice, dried potatoes, poor quality salt beef, flour, and hard tack biscuits. Hard tack more than lived up to its name. The First Mate kidded they should sell it as roof slates for housing, since he claimed it was "considerably harder and more durable than stone slates." It was so hard that one of the Portuguese actually broke his front tooth off while trying to bite it.

There was no medical doctor aboard the ship, much less a dentist, and the Captain could not figure out what to do for broken teeth. He consulted a medical book in his cabin and made up a poultice of baking soda and cream of tartar to paste on the man's gum. The only other cures the book seemed to suggest were purging, bleeding and emetics, none of which sounded too hopeful for a broken tooth.

To supply some variety in the bland food the cook boiled flour into a thick pudding called "duff," but the men complained about it even more than the other food. The flour was infested with insects, some of which ended up in the duff. To relieve their disgust, as well as the boredom of life on a small boat, they started making jokes. This time, though, their humor was more malicious, and at the expense of the cook.

Eddie felt sorry for the poor cook, who could not control the fact that only limited stocks of foodstuffs had been available for purchase in the Falklands. Never missing an opportunity to show cruelty, but with uncharacteristic cleverness, Jesse claimed to have found a piece of the cook's old sock in his portion of stew.

With this start, the others chimed in with one insult after another about the cooking. As the crew ate, they exclaimed

things like: "Here's half a cockroach in my duff. I must'a already swallowed the other half."

Another chimed in, "Look, here's a big worm—ah, fresh meat at last."

Pretty soon some of the boys wrote up a fake menu and nailed it on the kitchen door. Their "Bill of Fare" had the following offerings:

APPETIZERS

Portuguese Man O'War, raw
Cream of Bedbug Barnacle
Bird-droppings Pate
Cockroaches on the half-shell

ENTRIES

Deviled Duck Lice in
Deck Sweepings Stew
Baked Rat in Worm-juice
Stir-fried Cockroaches

DESSERTS

Frozen Saltwater Treat
Tar in Cupcakes
Hardtack Taffy (without Taffy)
Slushbucket Delight
Molasses-covered Bedbugs Rope Trimmings Pie
Cockroach Surprise

The insults were so relentless that the cook fairly boarded himself in the ship's mess, refusing to come out where he was such

an object of criticism. While the Yankees complained, some of the other crewmen took matters into their own hands. The Portuguese and Brazilians started doing their own fishing. Yoshi gave up completely on the disgusting American foods. He tried to educate the cook constructively about ways to get fresh foods from the sea, but the cook felt so put upon by all the criticisms that he refused even to listen to Yoshi's ideas. Yoshi only took a daily portion of rice, which he picked out grain by grain to get rid of the bugs. Then he cooked it himself in a more sanitary way.

To supplement his basic diet of rice, he constructed a seine from a cooking sieve and some netting, and hung it from the bow. Yoshi would eat anything from the sea: tiny squids, plankton, seaweed, and practically everything else that ended up in his seine. Eddie did not exactly go wild over the taste of Yoshi's seaweed soup, but he believed Yoshi when he said they would get sick if they did not eat fresh food.

During his off-duty hours Eddie took to spending his time fishing, just as he used to do on the seashore back home in South Carolina. He caught tuna, carp, mackerel, and dolphinfish, which was interesting to watch because it turned different colors as it expired. When Yoshi prepared the fish for them to eat, no part of it went to waste. He preferred to eat the body raw, saying it was quite popular to eat raw fish in Japan. Eddie was not sure if he could believe that, or if Yoshi was pulling his leg.

Yoshi boiled the head of the fish in a soup, into which he emptied the contents of the fish's stomach. He explained he got nutritious fresh plantfood that way, gathered by the fish from the sea floor. The Yankees were totally repulsed by Yoshi's diet, but Eddie decided he would trust his friend's judgment. He figured that someone who grew up on an island would know best what foods of the sea to eat.

One day in late January Yoshi was preparing minced tuna and seaweed salad for the two of them. He asked Eddie to help while he cooked their rice. Yoshi put the crushed tuna in a cloth bag, tied it with a cord, and asked him to dip the bag briefly into

the sea twice for a quick rinse. He wanted to get rid of the sour tuna taste, he said. Eddie took the bag and leaned over the railing, letting the bag drop heavily into the seawater. He did not like the sour taste either, so he raised and dropped it several times to rinse it thoroughly. Then he leaned over farther, resting his abdomen on the railing, while he held the bag to drain. The tuna juice dripped into the water.

Just as the dripping had almost stopped, Eddie gave it a final little shake. Suddenly a huge white mouth opened from the water and a twenty-foot great white shark propelled itself up over half way out of the water.

Once again Eddie beheld at close range the rows of gleaming white teeth which had given him so many nightmares after he rescued Sharkey. Only this time, the mouth was so wide open Eddie could stare straight down the gullet deep into the beast's insides. There was plenty of room in that gullet for Eddie. Before he could even jerk back, the huge mouth clamped shut on the bag of tuna, swallowing it whole and biting through the cord. Eddie was left holding the end, cut clean across not a foot below his hand. The shark splashed heavily back into the water.

Having heard the noise, Yoshi and some other crewmen came running over. They found Eddie paralyzed with fright. "Shark" was all he could mutter.

Yoshi looked at the cut cord which Eddie still held, and exclaimed, "Yoshi say dip quick only two time. Shark smell tuna and come."

Eddie was so shaken that he ran into the forecastle, crawled into his berth, and did not come out for any supper. After that he had nightmares of the shark's gaping mouth every night for a week.

Eddie's nightmares were made worse by the fact that, after that day, the shark continued to follow the ship, hoping for another meal. Crewmen often spotted its fin in the calm waters. Sometimes they could even see the outline of its entire huge body when it swam alongside the ship. The First Mate claimed that whenever

a shark started following a ship for several days, it meant that a sailor would soon die on board. Everyone became extra careful in climbing aloft after that. Those who had still not recovered from their poor health at Cape Horn huddled fearfully in their berths.

Giorgio decided to prey upon the shark before it got a chance to prey upon them. He fastened a slab of the worm-eaten salt beef on a large sharp iron hook, tied it to a chain, and threw it overboard. Eddie, not daring to watch, stayed below. Sure enough, before too long, the shark gobbled the beef and got snared by the hook. The Portuguese feared the powerful beast might even break the chain with its thrashing in the water.

For a long time the shark fought against the chain, but it could not bite through the iron hook that had pierced its mouth. The more it pulled against the chain, the deeper the hook went in. Eventually the fish weakened, and the men began to pull it in. When the immense creature was drawn alongside, the Captain took careful aim with his pistol and fired at its head. Finally the shark died.

After they hauled the body on board, Yoshi declared he would prepare a feast for the entire crew. Except for Eddie, who became nauseated just looking at the monster, the whole crew crowded around while Yoshi prepared to dissect it.

One smart-aleck Yankee boy, seeing the fish was a female, stuck his hand up inside the body. He joked that he had finally gotten his hand in some snatch. No sooner had he done this, than he let out a scream and jerked his hand away. "Something's moving in there."

When Yoshi cut open the body and got to the uterus, he discovered the shark was pregnant.

"She follow ship hope for easy meal, cause she hungry, cause she need get food for baby."

Yoshi sliced open the uterine sac, and out flopped six small sharks still alive. The crew was totally fascinated. Giorgio drew up a bucket of seawater. When they put the baby sharks in the bucket, the little fish began to swim around. Someone joked that these could become the crew's new pets. But the premature sharklings soon died.

Yoshi expertly cut up the carcass, then he and the cook prepared it as a massive dinner. He cooked the fin for himself, claiming that shark fin was a great delicacy in Japan. Eddie refused to eat any of it, or even to come into the galley where it was being prepared. He hoped, however, that shark meat would become a favorite food for others. That way, he figured, more of the monsters would be killed. He hoped every shark would be wiped off the face of the earth. Nothing in his whole life had ever terrified him the way this fish had twice done.

Though Yoshi, the Portuguese and the Brazilians ate several hearty meals of shark steak, many of the Yankees could not stomach it. Yoshi took some shark liver soup to the sick ones in the forecabin, begging them to eat some fresh food. He told them shark liver had curative properties, but they refused even to touch it. They only wanted their familiar fare of salt meat and dried potatoes, no matter how many worms and roaches were in it. Yoshi could not understand how they could eat some disgusting thing like hard tack, while turning down a delicious bowl of fresh seaweed, fish liver and plankton soup.

Though several of the Yankees were sick, the most pathetic person on board was Harry. After being so disappointed in the Falklands, once back on board the ship he stayed in his room most of the time. Captain Mowbray had not insisted he work as the others were expected to do. Only when Michael was lost did Harry come out of his depression enough to try to help the others. He never participated in the joyous antics of the other crewmen. No one wanted to be around him for long, because all he did was talk about how much he missed his wife and child. He caught a bad cold at Cape Horn, which seemed to get worse after Christmas Day. He spent that whole day crying. After a month of a constant diet consisting almost entirely of salted food, with no fresh fruits and vegetables, he had developed severe malnutrition as had several other Yankees. Yoshi was not surprised when Harry began to show signs of scurvy.

By the beginning of February *The Cape of Good Hope* was still far south of its destination in the Hawaiian Islands, where plenty of fresh food awaited. In the meantime, Eddie decided he was right to follow Yoshi's more varied diet of seafoods. He wondered why the Yankees were so rigid in sticking with their familiar foods.

The Captain consulted his medical book to care for the sick crewman. He mixed some powders from the medical chest, but that only made Harry feel sicker. Then, reasoning that scurvy was due to "bad blood," the medical manual suggested bleeding some of the bad blood out of the sick person's body. Having no leeches on board, the Captain cut a little slit on Harry's wrists and allowed about a cup of blood from each arm to drip into a pan. Harry did not object, but Yoshi thought this idea was crazy. The Captain, though, was only following standard American medical advice. He did not know what else to do. They did not listen to Yoshi's pleas for everyone to eat his sea-based diet.

Harry became progressively weaker after the bleeding, so much so that he did not have the strength to eat anything at all. He then developed dysentery as well and seemed to give up altogether. He started having delusions and kept calling for his wife. Finally Harry just fell asleep. He was so distraught over the separation from his family, and so weakened by malnutrition, that both his mind and his body just disintegrated. Harry died in his sleep on February 7, 1861.

This time the Captain and crew conducted a funeral. They wrapped the body in his blanket and carried it midship across deck on several oars held by crewmen. The Captain read some verses from the Bible, at times having to stop to prevent himself from bursting out into tears. Then they carried the body to the railing and, with a final prayer for Harry's soul, and for the well-being of his wife and child, slid the remains into the sea.

The First Mate said the spirit of the shark was now satisfied, and there would be no more deaths. Eddie shuddered to think what the sharks would do to the body in the watery depths. He could not imagine a worse death than being eaten by a shark. Yoshi

sat on the stern alone, quietly chanting his prayers. This time he faced northeast, toward Harry's New England home. There was no joy in his chanting, as one more of the crew had died. Eddie did not join him. Yoshi and Eddie did not talk about it, or anything else, afterward.

They were still a week's sailing from Hawaii, if there were no tropical cyclones to slow them down. The sky was clear, in fact. It had been a beautiful day, though a depressing one. Now in the late afternoon, the sun was setting off the port bow. A few clouds scattered above the horizon were turning shades of purple. The Captain confided to Eddie that he dreaded having to write two sorrowful letters of sympathy to the families of the two lost crewmen, to be mailed from the post office at Lahaina on the island of Maui.

He sipped from a flask, trying unsuccessfully to be surreptitious, and sighed heavily. He admitted to the young man standing beside him at the helm that he felt terribly guilty, having shanghaied Harry onto the voyage and having persuaded young Michael to sign up with grand promises of money that he knew were gross exaggerations. He cursed his lack of knowledge of medicine and the near uselessness of the medical manual. What could he do? He was just an employee of the whaling company. He had been commanded to leave Boston by a certain date, and he was already two weeks overdue because he could not manage to locate enough crewmen. If he had not tricked some boys onto the ship he would have been dangerously understaffed.

Eddie listened sympathetically. He liked Captain Mowbray. But he also thought himself another victim of this harried man's trickery.

The Captain took another swig, draining the flask, and cursed the life of a whaler. "The real money to be made from a whaling voyage is amassed by those who never take a step out of Boston. Enormous fortunes," he declared, "are being accumulated by the ship owners, the shipbuilding companies, the owners of the docks, and their merchant suppliers. Precious little is left over for us, the

men who're actually risking our lives. It's always like that; those who do the actual work get the least pay."

The Captain said he himself was thoroughly disgusted and was hoping to retire just as soon as he could afford to do so. As he retreated to his cabin, Eddie could imagine him unlocking his liquor cabinet, maybe not even bothering to refill the flask, and proceeding to douse away his guilt and sorrow in more whiskey.

For the next several days the Captain stayed drunk most of the time. The First Mate and the crew ran the ship. They knew how the Captain felt; indeed, they also mourned the two deaths. Harry's funeral reopened Steven's feelings of despair, and he wished he could also drown his sorrows in drink. The First Mate worried about the other sick crewmen and hoped they could make it to Hawaii, where medical care and fresh food awaited them. Eddie was glad he had followed Yoshi's dietary advice. More than just a sexual attraction, Eddie loved Yoshi deeply, for his wisdom and his concern for helping others.

Yoshi did not need gratitude; by helping others he said he was following the *bodhisattva* path, and creating good karma. By this means, he said, he was moving along the path toward enlightenment. "This what all people do—whether know or not. We here to seek enlightenment. That our Buddha-nature."

Eddie still felt some sense of disillusionment that Yoshi's supposedly powerful chanting could not save either darling Michael or pathetic Harry. But he found Yoshi's Buddhist ideas to be a superior philosophy of life, a much better way to get people to act nicely to others than the Christian fear of punishment in hell after one's death. He didn't see Christian morals as being effective. After all, the fear of Hell had not prevented Master Helms, and all those other masters who professed to believe in God's judgment, from enslaving human beings and treating them less than animals.

Yoshi said every person creates our own Heaven or Hell right here on earth in our everyday life. Buddha taught that we should be concerned with creating as much happiness as possible in this

life, he said, not just waiting for some supposed judgment leading to eternal torment or paradise after death.

Eddie was amazed that Yoshi could continue talking about happiness even in the midst of their present depressing situation. Eddie could not know that things would take an even worse turn on the following day.



On February 12, still one full day away from its arrival on the island of Maui, *The Cape of Good Hope* suddenly scraped bottom on a submerged reef.

Giorgio, the Portuguese man on lookout, had not been able to see the upcoming shallows and was not prepared for the jolt. The ship thudded to a stop with the mastheads swaying sharply. Giorgio fell out of the crow's nest, missed grabbing a line as he fell, and hit the deck hard.

"All hands on deck! All hands on deck!" the alarm cry went out once again. As Yoshi and Eddie rushed to aid the fallen man, the other crewmen climbed aloft to reposition the sails. They had to reverse the ship's direction immediately, or else it would become impossibly aground. Then the hull would be pounded into kindling wood by the waves.

Mercifully, the crew was able to get the ship aright, under the able direction of the First Mate. *The Cape of Good Hope* eased off the reef without any damage. The Captain appeared on the deck, but in his alcoholic haze, he was not of much use.

Once the ship was back into deep water and out of danger, everyone's attention turned to the injured Giorgio. The fall had knocked him unconscious. The barrel-chested Portuguese was a big man, and his weight had fallen fully on his left foot. When Yoshi first ran up to him, blood was gushing out of Giorgio's leg. The foot lay lifeless to one side, grotesquely twisted with the heel facing upward. It was almost completely severed, with the white

bone sticking out at the shin. Yoshi grabbed the leg above the break, firmly choking the leg with both hands to stanch the flow of blood.

Giorgio recovered consciousness enough to begin screaming in pain. The First Mate bid the Captain to go get the man some liquor. Old Mowbray did as he was told. Now the First Mate was in charge. He bent down and carefully examined the leg. He had seen injuries like this before.

"Relax matey," he comforted Giorgio, "we can't save your foot, but if we can get you sewed up quick you're not gonna die." Then came the bad news: "The problem is, your bone's sticking out, and we gotta whittle it away. Once that's outta the way I'll have you sewed up in no time. Just like sewing a torn canvas, it is."

Through his pain, Giorgio nodded his approval. He was an experienced seaman and must have seen this kind of injury before. If it would save his life, he'd resign himself to the loss of a foot. When the Captain arrived with the whiskey, Giorgio gulped it greedily. This would be the only thing available to deaden his pain.

The First Mate directed Yoshi, now covered in blood, to keep holding the leg tightly to prevent more loss of blood. Eddie felt like he was going to faint just looking at it.

The Mate drew him aside and said quietly, "I can sew him up, but not unless that bone's outta the way. It needs a clean cut, done quick to minimize the pain. You're the ship's carpenter. Go get your saw."

Eddie protested. "I don't know anything about cutting bones!"

"And there's nary a man here that does either. If you delay, that man's gonna die. No doubt about it. Get yur saw, and be quick at it."

Eddie looked aghast. He could hardly stand even to look at the injury, much less to hold it while he sawed into a man's legbone. Nevertheless, he did not want Giorgio to die. He ran to the hold to find the ship's tool kit. He could not believe he was going to perform surgery. Not even Master Helms would try to do something like that for an injured slave, though he regularly treated the slaves' medical problems. He'd call a doctor. That was

not possible here. Now Eddie had to cut off a man's foot, and with a wood saw no less.

He came back on deck with the saw, and looked bewilderedly at Yoshi still tightly holding the bloody stump. As Giorgio cried in agony the First Mate sat down straddling the uninjured leg, to hide the sight of the sawing from Giorgio's eyes as much as to keep the body still. Other men held Giorgio's arms and upper body, bracing themselves for what would follow.

As the First Mate blew sawdust off the blade and poured whiskey over it to clean it, Eddie looked at Yoshi. He had nothing else to appeal to except Yoshi's faith. "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*," Eddie said quietly.

Yoshi returned the stare and repeated, "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*."

Eddie placed the saw right where the bone stuck out from the bloody pulp, and grabbed the jutting bone firmly with his other hand. The First Mate slid the saw further up the leg, into the flesh, and nodded for Eddie to begin.

Eddie pulled the blade sharply toward him, then pushed it forward firmly to get a good start. Giorgio let out a blood-curdling scream. Eddie thought he was going to faint. The First Mate nodded silently for him to continue. Eddie started again and got his rhythm going, just like he did when he sawed a log. That's what he tried to imagine he was doing, as he blocked out Giorgio's screaming. Before he knew it he was finished.

Bone is softer than wood, he kept trying to think to himself, to avoid the reality that he was cutting through human flesh.

Once he had completed his task he laid the bloody saw aside. The First Mate clipped away the remaining tissue, severing the foot completely, while Giorgio continued to scream loudly. The Mate then took the canvas sewing needle and began to expertly stitch the flaps of skin together over the stump.

He splashed more liquor over the wound, yelling "another bottle!" as he emptied the first one. The Captain ran to get it; this was no time for formalities of rank. The Mate pushed the flesh as he sewed. Eddie's cut was smooth, and the skin folded right over

it. Eddie was amazed the Mate could do this with a human body. It looked to Eddie just like the Mate was thinking that he was doing nothing more than repairing a slit in a sail.

After the stitching was completed, the Mate splashed more liquor over the inflamed flesh and then wrapped strips of a clean bed cloth securely around the stump. Only after it was completed and tied did he signal Yoshi to let go of his hold. If the blood did not gush out and leak through the sutures, he explained, it would work. Yoshi quietly repeated his Buddhist mantra once again, and then released his hands. Nothing happened. The mate looked up and smiled.

For the next twenty-four hours, until they got to Maui, Giorgio was either crying in pain or passed out. Yoshi sat beside him for most of the time, chanting continuously in a soothing voice, while wiping the Portuguese man's face with cool seawater. The First Mate periodically doused the stump with more alcohol to prevent infection. Despite Giorgio's painful experience, the First Mate was happy. He knew the operation was a success and Giorgio would live.

The others were not as sanguine. As they sailed into Lahaina harbor, the Captain and everyone on board thought about how the year 1861 had not begun on an auspicious note for them.

Isolated on their little floating world, the crew of *The Cape of Good Hope* could not know that 1861 was developing into an even worse year back home in the United States. Years of national compromising on slavery had at last reached their limit, and the newly victorious Republican Party under Abraham Lincoln stood firmly opposed to any further territorial expansion of slavery. The Southerners, committed to slavery as the basis of their way of life, resisted. The Union was falling apart.

18

Maui

As soon as *The Cape of Good Hope* docked in Lahaina harbor on the Hawaiian Island of Maui, the cook took three crewmembers to purchase fresh food, while the Captain and First Mate rushed Giorgio and the other ill crewmembers to the local clinic. The doctors and nurses there were used to sudden infusions of many new patients when a ship arrived in harbor. Captain Mowbray promised the crew that as soon as the men in need were admitted, he would go to the Post Office to collect all the mail waiting for the crewmen. That is what most of the men wanted, even more than the feast of fresh food that the harried cook promised to prepare for them as quickly as possible.

Eddie stayed on board with the rest while Captain Mowbray was gone. Eddie, of course, was not expecting any mail, but he waited patiently with the others before exploring this new and foreign island. He had never seen anything like Maui. The jungle grew right down to the beach; he imagined there must be lots of dangerous snakes and strange critters of all sorts back in those lush green trees and bushes.

What kept most of the crew on the ship was the hope that the Captain would bring a letter from home for them. These days, letters from the East were sent by railroad to St. Joseph, Missouri, and from there by the Pony Express through the wild Western plains and mountains to California. From San Francisco, a merchant clipper shipped mail and supplies for the whalers to the Kingdom of Hawai'i. Eddie learned that the correct spelling of this independent nation was an apostrophe before the last letter, so he practiced writing Hawai'i in this new way, with an emphasis on the final "i" that was pronounced like two "ee" letters together. On this long journey mail often got lost or delayed along the way,

so there was no certainty that a crewman would hear anything from his family during the entire voyage. The Yankee boys tore through the mail sack when the Captain brought it back from the post office. Thankfully their letters had arrived safely.

Eddie listened as some of the men read the missives aloud. Besides personal news, the mail held news of the secession of the States of the deep South, led by South Carolina. Not only did the leaders of South Carolina follow through with their threats to leave the United States, but they were joined by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Georgia. The newspapers reported that Louisiana and Texas were also expected to secede soon, and the rebels were planning to form their own independent government. It would not be possible for the North to isolate South Carolina by itself, as the victorious Republican Party hoped. Now all Eddie's friends in the Sea Islands and in Savannah were no longer under the control of the United States. Eddie wondered what they thought about all these developments.

The Harbormaster, an Englishman named Mr. Spencer, who had followed Captain Mowbray from the Post Office, answered the crewmembers' questions. He explained that the Americans living in Lahaina, almost all of whom were from the Northeast, were quite disturbed about the recent secession of the Southern States. Practically all them were either Yankee sailors, or Christian missionaries sponsored by New England churches. Though most of them were anti-slavery, what really upset them was the news that the seceded States had seized Northern-owned property within their borders.

This had an effect even as far away as Hawai'i. Many New England ships and cargoes that were docked in Southern harbors were confiscated by the rebels. That loss included Yankee ship owners residing in Maui who were hit hard in their pocketbook. It was bad enough that the United States seemed to be dissolving, but to suffer confiscation of their property was more than they could accept. Because of these factors, they were strongly in favor of fighting to keep the South in the Union, even if it meant war.

Whether they were Republicans or not, they wanted the new President Abraham Lincoln to stand firm and enforce the laws. Their sense of order, of everything on which they had based their life, seemed to be threatened. The Americans in Lahaina were totally united in support of the Union.

While the Captain, the Harbormaster and members of the crew continued to discuss news and politics, Eddie accompanied some of the others who headed over to the beach where a little market had been set up to cater to the sailors. Eddie was still too scared of this strange place to go exploring by himself, but he was ready to overcome his fears when he saw some fruit stands on the beach. He had an intense craving for fresh fruit; it had been so long since he'd eaten anything fresh.

As he walked over to the stands he noticed how stocky and solid these people were. These must be the Native Hawaiians, he realized. Their skin color was tan, about the same shade as his, and their facial features looked like the Brazilian Indians he'd met in the whaling crew.

Eddie approached the first stand, savoring the thought of a delicious apple, pear, plum, melon, or peach. Instead, he was surprised and disappointed to find none of those. He saw only strange fruits such as he had never seen before. He walked from vendor to vendor looking for something familiar to eat.

One of the vendors, a muscular Hawaiian man wearing only a loincloth and a string of colorful flowers around his neck, called out to Eddie as he stared at the strange harvest. "Hello, Jack. Want to try some of my guanábana?" he said with a big smile.

"What's a guaná-bana?" Eddie stuttered.

"This." The Hawaiian picked up a round piece of fruit. He split it open with his hands and offered a half to Eddie. "Eat it like this," he said, sticking his tongue deeply into the fruit and lapping out the soft gooey insides.

Eddie thought he noticed sexual overtones in the way the Hawaiian looked at him as he stuck his tongue into the fruit. But

he wasn't sure and, besides, he just realized, he had another more pressing concern.

"Sorry, but I don't have any money," he said shyly.

"That's all right, Jack. Here," the Hawaiian offered, holding out the half *guanábana*. "Take it. My present to you. Your *aloha* to the island of Maui."

He took the fruit and licked it out cautiously. There were big seeds and fibrous membranes, but the flesh of the strange fruit was delicious. He had never tasted anything like this. It might as well have been food from the stars. Once he got started he consumed it hungrily.

The Hawaiian looked pleased. "You like it?"

Eddie nodded enthusiastically.

"You want some more? How about pineapple?" The fruit he pointed to did not look anything at all like any apple Eddie had ever seen. The Hawaiian picked up some other fruits, naming them as mango, papaya, banana, and some other Hawaiian names Eddie could not pronounce.

"But I don't have any money," Eddie repeated.

"That's no problem. I don't like white man's money. Have you got anything to trade?"

Eddie thought about his only possessions: his shoes and fine gentleman's clothes that still lay neatly folded in his footlocker in the forecastle. He had not worn them aboard ship, thinking he should wear only the sailor clothing issued by the Captain and save his nice garments for the future. Perhaps, he thought, he might trade an article of clothing for some fruit. He was certainly hungry enough to give anything for these fruits, if they were as delicious as the *guanábana* had been. But then, he thought in disappointment, these Hawaiians do not wear much in the way of clothing, and do not seem to need any in the warm climate.

"What about a nail?" the Hawaiian interrupted Eddie's thoughts. "You can have all the fruit here, if you give me a nail."

A nail? One measly nail? As the ship carpenter, Eddie had boxes of nails. Surely his skilled labor in saving the ship was worth

some nails. Captain Mowbray would never miss a few. Eddie did not understand the usage of money, but he was certainly practiced in the skills of trading. The slaves were always trading things among themselves.

"Sure," he answered, "I'll go get you several nails."

"You can bring later. You look to me like an honest man I can trust. So, now, you eat," the Hawaiian motioned an invitation to sit down. He took a knife and sliced open a pineapple, which to Eddie's surprise was bright yellow inside. He cut a slice for Eddie and placed it directly onto Eddie's tongue. And then cut himself a slice.

It was tart, tangy and juicy. It took Eddie a little getting used to the strange taste, but he loved it. He and the Hawaiian soon finished the whole pineapple. Next came something called a mango. It had a big white seed inside which the Hawaiian deftly carved around with his knife. He fed Eddie the mango piece by piece, intently watching Eddie's facial expressions of surprise and pleasure. He tried both a firm green mango, and a ripe soft yellow mango. Eddie liked both, but definitely preferred the ripe juicy one. It tasted like some exclusive delicacy he imagined kings eating in their palaces.

After that he sliced open a yellowish papaya, which was bright orange inside, and scooped out the handful of black seeds from the middle. When Eddie tasted a slice of papaya, he thought he was in heaven. He had never tasted anything so good. For his part, the Hawaiian seemed to be getting great enjoyment out of watching Eddie's reactions. He gave Eddie a wooden spoon to scrape the papaya insides.

Besides his delight in eating the fruit, Eddie was also enjoying the muscular bare body of the handsome Hawaiian. He looked to be about thirty years old, with every muscle taut. His arms were huge. But he also had a gentleness about him Eddie found quite enticing. The Hawaiian's body seemed almost totally opposite Yoshi's lithe, thin petite body. Yet both seemed to share that same gentle look in their eyes Eddie found so attractive. He imagined

this Hawaiian had the same depth and generosity of spirit. There was just something about him.

Reminded of Yoshi, Eddie exclaimed, "My friends would love your fruits also. Can I go get them? I'll give you some nails for each of them to eat." The Hawaiian man looked delighted.

Eddie ran back to the ship. He found Yoshi and Steven sitting on the dock. Telling them to wait just a minute, he rushed down into the hold, grabbed a handful of nails from his toolbox, and stuffed them into his pocket. He then led his two friends, without telling them where they were going, to his surprise gift for them.

Eddie and Yoshi were both concerned about Steven, who continued to mourn the death of Michael. That's why Yoshi had stayed with Steven on the ship while Eddie went to explore the market on the beach.

Eddie was happy to see that Steven laughed, probably for the first time since Michael's death, as he followed Eddie to the fruit stand.

When they arrived, the good-looking Hawaiian man had already cut open more fruits for them. It was like a whole feast of color was laid out on large fresh leaves for them. Eddie introduced his partners: "This is Yoshi and Steven. I'm Eddie."

The Hawaiian man smiled warmly, "You can call me Aikane." Sensing Eddie's uncertainty he repeated the name slowly: "I-ka-ney."

While Yoshi and Steven dined on pineapple, mango and papaya, Aikane had another surprise in store for Eddie. He took out a long yellow fruit. Eddie was struck by the shape.

"This is a banana, the symbol of manhood," the Hawaiian said. With a big smile he ceremoniously peeled back the skin to reveal a firm white interior. "And this is how you eat it."

He gently licked his tongue up the side to the tip, and then stuck the end of the fruit into his mouth. He slowly and enticingly pushed the banana down his throat, the sexual imagery unmistakable.

Yoshi noticed this also, and smiled to Eddie: "Yoshi think Aika-ne like Eddie."

Aikane pulled the banana uneaten out of his mouth and handed it to Eddie. With great ceremony Eddie followed Aikane's example. All of them laughed after that. The Hawaiian gave Eddie that special look which, despite their total unfamiliarity with each other's way of life, was understood by both of them.

After that Aikane kept peeling fruit, seeming to gain great delight in feeding them more and more. Each of them stuffed themselves with all they could eat. Eddie paid Aikane with the whole handful of nails from his pocket. Aikane's eyes fairly bulged from their sockets at seeing such a bonanza of nails.

"Why do you want these?"

"This is the invention of the white man we Hawaiians most admire. We can make almost everything we need for ourselves here on the islands, but even lava rock is not hard enough to pound into a piece of wood without breaking."

Seeing the exchange, several of the other vendors came over. They were interested in the nails. They inspected them closely, like the little pieces of iron were fine gemstones, while they spoke among themselves in the Hawaiian language. Aikane beamed, "This is truly the object for which the white man should take the most pride. We do not see how he makes these."

"You speak very good English," Eddie remarked a little surprised.

Aikane smiled broadly and puffed out his chest. "I was educated by the Christian missionaries from America, and learned to speak English. I appreciated their efforts to teach us, though their catechism was weird, not like our worship of Mother Pele..."

Having finished his meal, Yoshi, the ever fastidious Japanese, said, "Yoshi want bath." Yoshi enjoyed bathing more than anybody Eddie had ever met.

"There is no charge for bathing," Aikane laughed. "The water in Hawai'i is free. You want to go to a good place?" Aikane gathered up his few remaining pieces of fruit in a net bag, and the four of them left the market.

Aikane led them out of Lahaina town, up slopes that went toward towering mountains. From the distance Eddie thought they were areas with exceptionally taller trees, but then he realized the earth itself was higher. Eddie had never seen mountains before, since there were none in the South Carolina flatlands where until recently he had spent his entire life. He was amazed.

The whole journey was an adventure of new sights. They walked through fields of sugarcane and pineapple. The pineapple grew on a strange-looking little bush with long sharp leaves. Along the way Aikane pointed out the trees on which the papayas, mangos, guavas, guanábana and bananas grew. Eddie had never seen such a big leaf as on the banana trees. Aikane explained that they used the banana leaf to wrap food in, and also as a plate to eat on. He plucked one of the fruits and reminded Eddie of what he said was the proper way to eat a banana, and he laughed some more.

As they continued walking past the cultivated fields and into the jungled gorge between two mountains, Yoshi whispered to Eddie, "Ai-ka-ne like Eddie. He want make love. Eddie do," he nodded approvingly.

Eddie was certainly attracted to the muscular Hawaiian, but he had not been sure how Yoshi would feel about it. Ever since they had met, Eddie had only had sex with Yoshi. He was not attracted to the pale sickly-looking skin of the Yankees, and though the Brazilians were nice looking, he had been completely satisfied with his Japanese lover. But now Yoshi encouraged him, "Make love Ai-ka-ne. Maybe Ai-ka-ne be ninja for Eddie. Follow own heart. Yoshi be happy for you. Maybe *you stay here.*"

Eddie had tried hard not to think about Yoshi's plan for when they landed in the Aleutian Islands. It would only be another month or two before the ship arrived there. He realized he couldn't cling to his Japanese friend. All existence is transitory, Yoshi kept reminding him with Buddhist stoicism.

Anyway, as they trekked through the rainforest Eddie felt more and more at home in this warm tropical climate. As he watched the

handsome Aikane leading the way through the jungle, he could indeed fantasize about remaining here on the island of Maui.

Just then they rounded a bend in the gorge and came upon a wondrous sight. It was like nothing Eddie had ever seen before. High above their heads a small stream of water poured off a cliff and careened into a crystal-clear pool below. The water was white as it splashed and fell; its brightness contrasting gloriously with the lush dark green vegetation of the mountainside. This was a scene of unimaginable beauty.

Aikane stripped off his loincloth to go into the water. Eddie admired how casually the Hawaiian discarded his clothing. Though they were so different, Aikane reminded Eddie of Yoshi. His natural acceptance of his body was similar to Yoshi's and, as he stood there naked, Eddie admired what he saw. There was just one hesitation Eddie felt about walking through the jungle and going into the water.

He remembered the reptile-infested streams near the Helms' plantation. "What about snakes?"

Aikane laughed. "I have heard about those long things," he said. "There are no snakes in Hawai'i. The only long thing you have to worry about in Maui is this one!"

With that he playfully shook his penis, which seemed to be getting larger. Then the handsome Hawaiian dove into the pool of water. Yoshi was not far behind, and he encouraged Steven to join him. Eddie just stood transfixed.

He thought this island must be paradise. Yoshi was right; there could be heaven right here on earth, and this place seemed to be it for Eddie. With its lush tropical foliage, it was more beautiful than any place he had ever imagined. Maybe it was his African heritage, but there was something about this tropical scene that touched him in ways that he had never felt before. South Carolina had lots of plants, but nothing as beautiful as these. As they'd walked out here from the harbor, Aikane had told them the weather stayed warm like this year round. And there weren't even any snakes to worry about!

Yoshi was luxuriating in his bathing, while Aikane and Steven swam from one end of the pool to the other. Aikane called for Eddie to join them. Finally he stripped off his clothes and dove into the water.

It felt exhilarating to his body, just the right temperature. The four of them frolicked like little boys, being transported back to the days of their carefree youth. After they all swam back and forth for a while, Aikane came over to Eddie and gently supported him with the tips of his fingers as he floated on his back in the water. Aikane looked openly at Eddie's body with desire.

Realizing this, Eddie's body began to respond. Aikane beamed a smile. He then lowered himself in the water and, still supporting Eddie, guided him into the base of the waterfall. As the water splashed over his body and face, Eddie jumped up laughing. He grabbed Aikane around the neck, and the strong Hawaiian pulled him up next to him. The water cascaded around them; the two pressed their naked bodies together. Aikane held Eddie firmly to him. Eddie loved the powerful grip of the muscular man. Feeling Aikane's compelling hardness pressing against his own, he surrendered himself to this new friend.

Eddie couldn't see them for all the water pouring over him, but in his heart he knew Yoshi and Steven looked on approvingly. Indeed, as Yoshi motioned to Steven, the two of them snuck out of the pool while Eddie and Aikane kissed passionately under the waterfall. They gathered their clothes and headed back for the ship.

Yoshi, of course, had been worried about leaving Eddie alone when they got to the Aleutian Islands. He had developed much emotional sentiment for Eddie during the time they had been together, even though he had known it would be temporary. But he would never consent to remain on a Yankee whaling ship, even to be with Eddie. He wanted to return to his adopted Aleut family, and looked forward to marrying a more mature man and living the rest of his life as an Aleut. Knowing how much Eddie detested cold weather, Yoshi would not even consider asking Eddie to live in the frigid Aleutians.

At the same time, though, Yoshi was sure his feelings of love for Eddie, and his prayers for Eddie's well-being, would continue long after they were apart. Now at last he felt relieved and pleased when he saw that Eddie and Aikane were attracted to each other. He wanted Eddie to find happiness, and he saw that Hawai'i would be the place where Eddie would be able to do that.

Eddie did not return to *The Cape of Good Hope* until just before sunset, which was the deadline by which Lahaina harbor rules required all sailors to be back on board their ships. Aikane explained that the missionaries had influenced the Hawaiian government to establish such a rule to prevent drunken sailors from causing trouble to the townsfolk at night.

He insisted Eddie leave to get back before the police patrols began their nightly searching. But that was not as simple as it sounded. For he and Eddie had both fallen in love with each other during their day together and especially their time under the waterfall. Indeed, Aikane had invited Eddie to live in Hawai'i with him. The Hawaiian said he knew from the moment they met that he wanted him to be his husband.

"Aikane" was actually not a name, he told Eddie, but was the term of address in the Hawaiian language for an intimate male friend and lover. That is what he wanted Eddie to call him. Such friendships between men were completely accepted among the traditional Native Hawaiians.

Eddie would not have believed such acceptance of male love was possible, except from the knowledge he had gained from Yoshi. He told Aikane about the ninja lover relationships in Japan. Aikane was not surprised to hear of such things, since he assumed all people valued love. The Hawaiian people recognized and accepted marriages between persons of the same sex, whether two women or two men, just as they would a loving marriage between a man and a woman.

Aikane told Eddie he wanted to move to the island of Molokai, where the traditionalist Hawaiians continued to follow the old rituals and ceremonies. The Christian missionaries had stayed

away from that island because they feared catching leprosy. Molokai was the place where persons with leprosy were expected to live. The traditionalists left food for the lepers to eat so they would not starve. The traditionalists saw that, as long as one did not come into direct contact with the skin of a leper, there was no danger of contagion.

The lepers stayed in their separate settlement on the northern peninsula of Molokai, and were grateful to the traditionalist Hawaiians who helped them survive. The Christians, in contrast, turned their backs on the lepers.

In some ways, Aikane told Eddie with bitterness in his voice, he felt like he was becoming a leper in his own homeland, as more and more Hawaiians converted to this new foreign Christian religion.

He said he had been wanting to move to Molokai even before this, partly because the traditionalists there continued to defend the goodness of aikane relationships. They did not condemn people like the Christians did. No one's talents should be wasted, the traditional Hawaiians held.

"Now that we have met," Aikane declared, "this is the perfect time for us to escape to Molokai together."

Eddie was amazed he felt such confidence that he could have a happy life with this man he had just met for only one day, but there was a special feeling generated both by Hawai'i as a place and by Aikane as a person. Eddie felt that if he had a beautiful place to live, in a nice climate, and a nice partner to enjoy his life with, that those were the two most important things to set the stage for a happy life. With his skills as a carpenter, Eddie was confident that he could get work to provide for his needs. So, almost to his own surprise, Eddie agreed wholeheartedly that he wanted to stay with Aikane.

Unfortunately, Eddie found out that it would not be easy for him to remain as a resident. Aikane told him, "We'll have to hide you so the police don't find you. With the support of the

missionaries, police in Lahaina are paid by the shipowners to arrest sailors who jump ship.

"We have to plan carefully. You should wait till last day before your ship sails, then we will hide you at my family's home until the ship has departed and it is too late for them to search for you.

"Do you know how long the ship will be in port?"

"Captain didn't say," Eddie admitted. "I don't know. Maybe a day or two. Cook's got to buy more food."

"Then you get back to ship tonight before sunset. Don't make anybody suspicious. Meet me at the fruit stand tomorrow. Bring all your things with you then."

Eddie wrapped his arms around Aikane's shoulders and pulled him close. He was filled with emotions; his voice cracked when he spoke. "Thank you so much. You're saving my life." He had to pause to catch his breath and calm the beating of his heart. "Oh, Aikane, I know we just met, but I already feel that I am falling in love with you..."

As they walked back through the lush forest together, Eddie was lost in thought. He was so happy. And yet he was also so scared and so uncertain about the future.

What am I about to do? He thought over and over.

He knew he had become disillusioned with the life on a ship, with its dangers and constraints. Though he liked Captain Mowbray, the officer was still too much like a master. Eddie didn't want any master over him. He had risked too much to gain his freedom and he wanted to be genuinely free. Besides, the thought of going back through the storms at Cape Horn on every voyage was appalling to him. And then to end up back in Boston where he'd been so cold. He'd discovered he was happiest in the tropics; this is where he wanted to stay.

But he also knew he wanted to go back to have one last night with Yoshi and to get his blessing and advice. He would feel sad losing Yoshi; they would probably never see each other again. But he knew this was inevitable anyway. Yoshi had other plans that did not include him. So for now he wanted one last lovemaking with

his little Japanese teacher as a proper farewell. He also wanted to get his good clothes and steal a couple of boxes of nails. He figured that would suffice as payment for his services on *The Cape of Good Hope*.

At the beach Aikane and Eddie hugged tight for just a moment. "See you tomorrow," they both said, almost in unison, and then laughed. Eddie ran on to the wharf practically flying in happiness at his good fortune that fine day.

When Eddie climbed down into the forecastle, Yoshi was surprised.

"You should have gone with Aikane immediately."

When Eddie explained his reasons for coming back Yoshi was somewhat appeased. He grinned when Eddie nuzzled his cheek in an obvious gesture at sexplay. He too must have liked the idea of their having one last time together.

Still, he was upset about Eddie's idea of stealing boxes of nails from the ship. He said this would only create bad karma for Eddie's future. Even the thought of making such a bad cause could produce harmful effects.

"Buddha say for make good life, people have to have right thought as well as right action. Buddha precepts say no kill, no steal, no lie. That good moral code. No kill most important. Remember that. Kill, steal, lie cause much bad karma."

Eddie wondered what Yoshi would think if he knew that the set of fine clothes of his had been stolen.

Yoshi's argument did persuade Eddie to abandon the idea of taking the nails, but he did want to get his clothes and shoes. He had no idea when or where, but he figured he might need those clothes in the future. They were the only possessions he owned.

Eddie reiterated that his main reason for coming back was to say good-bye.

"Yoshi not understand this. Separation come soon enough anyway," he said, as if he needed to remind Eddie of his plan for when they got to the Aleutian Islands. "Might as well be now as later Eddie see Yoshi last time."

What Eddie should remember, he counseled, were all their good times together, not one final good-bye. Yoshi said, "Eddie go through life best, if think good time and forget bad. Life in now, no worry future, no regret past. Think about make now best. Make now happy. Happy self. Happy others. That Buddha way."

They retreated to their berth early, while everyone else was still on deck exchanging news of the day. Their bodies were soon pressed fully against each other, while they kissed deeply and long. Their bodies rose and fell with passion. They both came just from holding one another close. Then, as they lay there connected, body to body and spirit to spirit in the warm tropical night, they did not say a word. They did not have to, because Eddie knew Yoshi was thinking exactly the same thoughts as he.

Eddie thought about all the good times they had enjoyed together on the ship. Yoshi was right, there was no point in dwelling upon the bad things. Eddie resolved to forget about his resentments about slavery, about his fear of the storm at Cape Horn, and about his sorrow over the drowning deaths of his friends Joey and Michael. Instead, he focused on how fortunate he felt to have his freedom, to have found a place in the world where he knew he would feel comfortable, and to have had the good karma to have met such friends in his life as Joey, Michael, and especially Yoshi.

The lithe Japanese had changed Eddie's way of looking at positive and negative events. Indeed, Yoshi had changed his whole way of looking at life. He had made Eddie a better person, and given him a perspective he had never before experienced. For that, Eddie felt eternal gratitude. As he held Yoshi tightly he knew he would always feel love in his heart for the one in his arms at that moment. Focusing on the moment, as Yoshi advised him to do, Eddie fell asleep with intense happiness in his soul.

If only he'd realized what an error he'd made coming back to the ship...

19

Yoshi

Eddie had a wonderful erotic dream as he slept with his arms around Yoshi, remembering the events of his first day on Maui. He dreamed about those first knowing glances when he met the handsome Hawaiian man called Aikane, and their romantic sexual encounter later under the beautiful waterfall. He dreamed about their walk back from the waterfall; he dreamed about Aikane asking him to stay and be his husband, and he dreamed about the plans he'd made to break his contract with Captain Mowbray and remain in Hawai'i with this new friend.

The feelings of being loved and wanted stayed with him as the dream faded and he was snuggling romantically with Yoshi, comfortably back in his berth in the forecabin of *The Cape of Good Hope*. There'd still be a few hours before he'd make his escape. He lay holding Yoshi close. Though he knew this would be the last time he'd see his Japanese lover and teacher, he did not feel sadness. He took Yoshi's advice to focus on remembering their good times together on the whaling ship. He was grateful to the little whaler for having carried them both safely across two oceans. Today Eddie's plan was that he would sneak away from the ship with his few possessions in a sack that he had borrowed from Aikane. His new love would be waiting for him. The future seemed so good at that moment as Eddie pulled Yoshi tighter and slipped back into sleep.

Suddenly Eddie awoke with a jolt. Yoshi awoke at the same time. They both recognized the familiar sounds and shuddering of the ship as it began to move. No, this cannot be, Eddie thought to himself. He and Yoshi looked at each other in shock as they speedily pulled clothes on to go above decks.

"How come we're sailing? We're not supposed to leave Maui for another couple days!" Eddie shouted to Steven, the first crewman he saw when he reached the deck. Steven explained matter-of-factly that Captain Mowbray had decided to move on to the North Pacific whaling grounds immediately.

After talking with other whaling skippers after their arrival in Lahaina the day before, the Captain had found out the whales had already left Hawai'i for their return spring migration northward. *The Cape of Good Hope* had arrived in Hawai'i in February 1861, which was too late to get any good whaling. If the voyage were going to avoid financial disaster, the Captain could not delay.

"Where were you?" the Yankee boy asked. "Didn't you know?"

"We stayed with Aikane for the whole day," Eddie realized their adventure with Aikane had kept them from learning what was happening.

During the day, Steven explained, the Captain and the First Mate had been busy attending to all the details. But unknown actually to most of the crew, who were also off enjoying themselves around Lahaina, the Captain had sent the cook to buy more provisions. The First Mate hired three new men to replace the five who were being left under the doctor's care at the clinic. The Captain wanted more hires, but there were none to be found.

The two officers did all this fairly surreptitiously because they knew the crew would object to spending such a short time ashore. Captain Mowbray feared that some of them might even be contemplating jumping ship and remaining in Hawai'i. Being already shorthanded, he could not afford to chance losing any more. Once again he was forced to use deception to make his voyage a success.

The Captain had to spend that evening writing sad letters of sympathy to the families of Michael and Harry. He posted them in the harbor postbox with a heavy heart. He had not slept at all that night, when he and the First Mate unfurled the sails themselves at the dawn's first light.

Eddie just shook his head. How could he have been so stupid as to let this happen? Why didn't he just stay with Aikane in the jungle? It was his greed for those nails, he scolded himself, and that stolen suit of clothes...

When Eddie saw Lahaina receding in the distance in the early dawn light, he burst into tears. He thought about Aikane, probably still asleep, waiting for him to appear at the fruit stand later that day. He thought about their dream of a new life together dissolving in the depths of the sea that was now beneath him. He thought about his plans for a future on the beautiful tropical isle disappearing as easily as a piece of driftwood being swept from the beach by an encroaching wave. This was not what he wanted at all.

In his panic Eddie considered jumping off the stern of the ship and swimming to shore, but he knew the distance was already too great. Yoshi seemed to realize the officers should not even suspect Eddie wanted to jump ship, or he would never be able to escape. Quietly but sharply, he ordered Eddie to stop crying and to go below.

Back in the forecastle Eddie sobbed silently in the berth. "I didn't even get a chance to say good-bye to Aikane. I'll never see him again."

He was feeling more depressed and hopeless than at any time since Michael's death. The Japanese just held Eddie in his arms, not saying a thing.

Later that day neither Eddie nor the other crewmembers performed their work shifts with any enthusiasm. They all resented the Captain not giving them more of a rest after the dispiriting two months they had spent since Cape Horn. Some of them started purposefully breaking things on board ship.

To Eddie, it reminded him of the way the slaves on the plantation used to break things when they were mad at Master Helms. Eddie felt again that life for a crewman aboard a whaling vessel was not that much different from slavery.

While sharing Eddie's frustration, Yoshi resolved that Eddie must consider this change of his plan in a positive way. There

was some larger reason, he claimed, why Eddie was being carried north. "Buddha say nothing accident," he repeated. Eddie did not know if he believed this, but thinking it did help him deal with the disappointment. Maybe he was needed on the ship to help Yoshi fulfill his plan.

Maybe there was something he would do in regard to the upcoming conflict between the North and the South, that would enable him to have a hand in ending slavery. But he did not have a clue what that might be.

During the days that followed, Eddie gradually got used to the idea of continuing on the voyage. Under Yoshi's guidance, he resolved to experience as much happiness in the present as possible. Maybe this was just an opportunity for him to experience more time with Yoshi. Maybe he would even be able to return to Hawai'i and to Aikane later.

Buoyed by these more positive thoughts, Eddie began to enjoy his additional days and nights with Yoshi. As *The Cape of Good Hope* continued its northward movement, Eddie decided to take advantage of every moment left with his Japanese lover. The voyage from Hawai'i to the Aleutians took about six weeks, and knowing they had a finite period of time made it somehow easier to focus on the present.

The seas were calm, and there was not much work to be done on the ship. Time passed uneventfully in the month of March, but for Eddie and Yoshi spending their free time together rekindled the same type of relaxed loving interaction that they had first known in the tropics of the Atlantic. Yoshi was once again right, Eddie thought: mood is everything. He could have wallowed in misery, which would have been no good for either of them. Instead, he kept focusing on the pleasure of the moment in being with Yoshi. That is what he had learned from Buddha.

By early April they were approaching the Aleutians. Even though it would have been springtime in South Carolina, the weather was becoming quite chilly. It was almost as bad as Boston had been. As Eddie shivered, he was more definite than ever that

he did not want to live in this cold climate. He concluded that he had too much tropical blood in his veins to ever feel natural in such a place.

Yoshi, however, was not bothered by the cold. He seemed to accept things the way they were wherever he found himself. Eddie admired Yoshi's flexibility, and his plucky survival. Yet for Eddie the tropics beckoned. Yoshi assured him that once he had accomplished his larger purpose in life, he would find himself returned to a place where he would feel settled. Yoshi did not know if that place would be Hawai'i or not, but it might well be. He counseled Eddie to not ever lose faith. Everything would work out for the best in the end. "Never give up, no matter what!" he repeated with determination.

As if to prove what he admonished, he repeated for Eddie what had happened to him when he first arrived in the Aleutians, left the Japanese whaler crew and moved in with the Aleut family he'd befriended.

Yoshi regaled Eddie with stories about his previous experiences there after he'd faked suicide in honor of his fallen *ninja* lover and fled his homeland. He'd been gratified to discover such a warm and welcoming culture, even if the climate was cold, on the island of Unimak.

Yoshi said he was able to learn their language. And they taught him English also to be able to communicate with the American whalers. He soon became renowned as a guide. Yankee ships hired him to escort them safely through the Bering Sea. And his earnings made him a valuable addition to his adopted family.

They knew that, with his good looks and his talent at acting and dancing, he would be a prime candidate to attract a wealthy husband. Yoshi said Aleuts respected male marriages even more than did the Japanese. His Aleut family hoped he would find a generous husband who would contribute financially to their home. They were overjoyed that they had adopted this talented two-spirited foreigner into their family.

Yoshi reported that, just like on this ship, it was accepted in Aleut life that some men wanted male partners and some women preferred a woman to marry rather than a man. He thought it funny how Christian missionaries who came with the Russians had tried to force people to abandon such same-sex partners.

"Sometimes," Yoshi said, laughing heartily, "if boy-wife dressed so much like woman, or female-husband so much like man, Russians could not tell when couple was really same sex."

He said he'd been told of a man and his femininely-dressed boy-wife who got married in the Russian Orthodox Church at Unimak without the missionary suspecting a thing. Several months later a woman whose husband had just tragically drowned offered to have them adopt her new child after she realized she was pregnant. The boy-wife told the Russian missionary he was pregnant, and he later stuffed a pillow under his dress to create this impression. When the female secretly gave birth to a baby girl, the boy-wife claimed he had delivered it himself, and the woman told the missionary she had delivered a stillbirth. She moved into the male couple's home, to have a place to live and to nurse the baby, and they remained happily together as a household. The whole village cooperated with this deception.

"The man and boy-wife remain typical married couple to this time," Yoshi told Eddie. "Their daughter grew up in loving household. When she herself got older and had children, they all continued living there together. They are leading family in Unimak Island. Yoshi met them by adopted Aleut family."

"Yoshi happy when find this situation. Yoshi still feel loneliness for samurai *ninja*, but Yoshi know *ninja* dying wish want Yoshi live happy life.

"Yoshi see what Buddha say: nobody know what come. Buddha say everything impermanent. Since life so short, must seize life while can. Yoshi decide want happy for *ninja* memory. And then, after live one month Unimak Island, Yoshi meet Aleut man love Yoshi much. This man make good husband: much kind, everybody like. Yoshi Aleut family plan big marry ceremony.

"That when Yoshi work Yankee whaler, and bad captain not let Yoshi go home. Yoshi on that ship all way to Boston." His voice brightened, "Now Yoshi come back."



As they approached the windswept Aleutians, Eddie could see Yoshi's increasing excitement about returning to his adopted family and prospective husband. Eventually they sighted land, and soon Yoshi realized that this was Unimak Island, the very island where his adopted family lived. It looked like a pretty barren place to Eddie, but if Yoshi would be happy there then Eddie decided he should be happy too. Though he knew he would miss his little effeminate Japanese teacher, he could tell that this place was truly Yoshi's home. For that he felt genuinely happy. Yoshi's happiness now outweighed Eddie's own in his thoughts. He wanted to do everything he could to help Yoshi get on shore.

When the ship sailed close to the island, the Captain decided to send the whaleboat to shore to pick up a guide. Of course Yoshi had not told anyone (besides Eddie, that is) about his experience as a guide in the Bering Sea. Otherwise they would not have stopped in the Aleutians at all, and Yoshi would be forced to make the return voyage back to Boston.

Yoshi volunteered to help row the boat, but the Captain chose others who were bigger than the diminutive Japanese youth. He begged the Captain, asserting that he was stronger than any man on board, but the Captain refused. Yoshi was bitterly disappointed, but of course he could not show it or he would attract suspicion to himself.

Eddie wanted to grab the Captain and yell at him to let Yoshi return to his home. But they could not breathe a word of their true feelings. They watched helplessly as the whaleboat pulled away from the anchored ship.

The frigid water was much too cold for him to try to swim ashore, and there were no other boats he could utilize. His searching stares into the distant Aleut settlement were unavailing. There was no way he could notify his family who at that moment were probably settled warmly inside by their fire.

Wondering what to do, Eddie had a sudden idea. He remembered how a water barrel had helped him escape by providing a hiding place on the Yankee ship when it docked in Savannah. Maybe a barrel could be Yoshi's salvation also! Eddie remembered an empty water barrel sitting on the stern. Since it was watertight, Yoshi could stand inside it and paddle his way to shore. Eddie told his idea to Yoshi, who was desperate enough to try anything. They agreed to do it.

They checked out the barrel and pried off the lid. When no one was looking Yoshi climbed into it, and it was just big enough for him to stand inside without sinking. Then they went down into the hold and got some rope, which Yoshi snuck up to the stern and tied to the top rung of the barrel. Eddie found a yard long wood plank. With a little whittling to make a handle for Yoshi's small hands, Eddie figured it would make a dandy paddle. He got out the ship's tool kit, and with his skillful hands soon formed a nice handle. Becoming nervous about someone seeing him, he gathered the shavings into a pile and threw them in a bag.

He acted not a moment too soon. The First Mate peered down into the hold, asking Eddie, "What're ya doin' down there at this time o' th' e'evenin, matey?" Eddie made some stupid excuse, whereupon the First Mate said, "Well, come on outta there. Ya got no business down there now."

Eddie came up and attempted to make a little joke, but the mate's suspicion was aroused. He did not know what was going on, but something definitely appeared unusual. "Into th' forecandle wit' ya, now. I don't want t' see yer face for a while."

Eddie went to the forecandle as he was directed. Yoshi soon came in. Eddie told him about the paddle which he had to leave in the hold. In the dim twilight of approaching nighttime, Yoshi

tiptoed down into the hold and found the paddle. He managed to get it onto the deck, and slowly, as no one noticed, pushed it with his foot to the stern. There he left it behind the barrel under the railing, hoping no one would discover it. Then he returned to the forecastle to plan the next move with Eddie. Fortunately the crew remaining on the ship were down in the galley enjoying a late meal while the Captain was away.

For Yoshi and Eddie, everything for their plan was now in place. The only thing left to do was to wait for the proper time for Yoshi to make his escape. They decided that nothing should be done until nighttime, when darkness would hide the view of the barrel in the water. They could not take the chance that the whaleboat would return just as Yoshi was paddling to shore. It had to be done after the whaleboat returned.

They decided the best time would be right at the moment when the whaleboat pulled up to the bow of the ship, and everyone would be distracted with helping the Captain and Aleut guide aboard. The noise of the arrival would cover any sounds made by Yoshi as he slid down the rope into the barrel.

Also, Eddie thought to himself, if the barrel sank the whaleboat could make a quick rescue of Yoshi after Eddie yelled "Man Overboard."

In the meantime all they could do was to wait. They would be sure to hear the lookouts announcing when the whaleboat came into sight. Yoshi was so grateful that he planted a big juicy kiss onto Eddie's lips. They fell into the berth, the little home that had given them so much joy together, as Yoshi began smothering Eddie with kisses.

Realizing they did not have much time left, Yoshi ripped Eddie's clothes off him and stripped himself. No matter how many times he had seen Yoshi's body, and felt his touch, Eddie felt the same excitement of that first night when he discovered intercourse. Yoshi had a special way of making Eddie's cock stand at firm attention, sometimes with only the twinkle of his eye. Eddie was now fully aroused as their tongues intertwined in their mouths.

Then soon Eddie felt the incredible sensation as his cock slid deeper and deeper into Yoshi's body.

Yoshi reacted with equal intensity as he felt the fullness of Eddie's love. He pushed down more, making sure Eddie was as far up inside him as possible. Eddie shivered in delight. They stopped then, soaking in the joys of the moment as if there were no past and no future. There was only the now. Eddie forgot about the tension they both felt, as he determined to make this last experience with Yoshi an extraordinary one.

They kissed for long moments, feeling the sweat moistening their bodies as they pressed against each other. Now Yoshi started flexing his hips, creating gentle spasms of pleasure for Eddie. Every movement between them led to new heights of joy, at once unique and at the same time reminding Eddie of the many times he had done this exact same thing with Yoshi before. Generated by the desire he felt for Eddie, as his penis rubbed against Eddie's abdomen, Yoshi spurting warm liquid come onto Eddie's chest.

They remained still for a long time, as Eddie held Yoshi wrapped in his arms. Then, while Eddie was still inside him, Yoshi began to move his hips from side to side in the skillful way that his *kabuki* training had taught him. Feeling this, Eddie gave himself over to all the thoughts and feelings he had for the one he now held. He wanted their bodies to become one. He wanted to crawl up inside Yoshi, and experience as much touching and body contact as possible. He shook with jolts of electricity going through his body, from his toes up to his head and back down again to his cock bursting deep inside Yoshi. With that he let loose in wave after wave spurting deep into his mate.

They held each other in silence. Each moment seemed like an entire night of tenderness. There was nothing more to say. The time had come. Wordlessly they got dressed. Tears filled Eddie's eyes. Yoshi noticed and wiped them away. With that, they heard the lookout announce the approach of the whaleboat.

This was the announcement they had been listening for. With the eyes of everyone on deck straining in the opposite direction to

watch the arrival of the whaleboat, Eddie walked to the stern. He placed the paddle he had carved into the empty barrel, slipped it over the railing, and lowered it with a rope. As the barrel hit the water it made a little splash. Eddie looked to see if anyone heard it, but no one noticed. Yoshi arrived and silently crawled over the railing. As the lithe Japanese grabbed the rope it occurred to Eddie that he was risking himself to help a friend escape to freedom. This was exactly the same way Tom had helped him make his escape from Savannah. He had been given a benefit by a friend, and now he was passing the same benefit along to another. It was surely what Yoshi would call karma.

Before descending on the rope, Yoshi kissed Eddie's hand, saying, "Buddha blessings Eddie. Yoshi chant benefit Eddie every day, as long as have voice. Eddie no forget Yoshi."

With tears streaming down his face, all Eddie could say was to repeat, "Eddie no forget Yoshi. Never."

As the whaleboat was drawing alongside the other end of the ship, Yoshi slid down the rope. He landed perfectly inside the barrel. Eddie had estimated well; Yoshi's weight was heavy enough to secure the barrel from tipping over, but not heavy enough to sink it.

Yoshi untied the rope and balanced himself. With one final look up to Eddie, he grasped the paddle firmly in appreciation. Then he started paddling toward shore. Eddie watched until the darkness enveloped him and Eddie could see no more.

Eddie pulled the rope back in, as he chanted simply, into the void: "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.*"

He continued chanting longer than he had ever done before, longer than he figured it would take Yoshi to reach the shore. Whatever spiritual strength he could send to Yoshi by these words, Eddie was determined to do whatever he could to help his little Japanese lover. He would indeed never forget Yoshi, or the Buddhist wisdom he had learned from him.

PART III

Attacking Slavery



The Volunteers

Though he was happy that Yoshi had been able to return to his home on Unimak Island, over the following weeks Eddie became terribly lonely. He started having disturbing dreams. In these dreams he was shivering in a cold frigid place. Whether it was Boston or the Aleutian Islands he did not know, but it was extremely cold. In the dream he became so depressed at the coldness that he curled up into a ball.

As his freezing carcass lay curled up it turned white. And then, out of the huddled mass a large white feathered being emerged. Eddie was transformed into a snow goose. The snow goose flapped its wings, and rose into the air. The bird slowly, but then majestically, took off into the sky. Its flight was heading southward—away from the cold and horror of the far northern climes.

Eddie woke with a start, and almost fell out of his bunk. In the dream of the great bird rising into the air, he must have sat up to follow the flight and almost lost his balance.

Yoshi had always told him that dreams were important clues to the state of one's mind, and to analyze them seriously. Eddie understood the message of this dream was for him to fly away. Escape to the south was his only hope.

With increasing depression, Eddie thought back on the high spirits the men had shown at the start of this voyage. Now all that was gone. In this cold climate, no one was in the mood to sing or dance the hornpipe. No one felt like producing another musical theater that had been so enjoyable for everyone in the tropics. The

best singer was dead. And the thought of those good times only reminded everybody how unhappy they were now.

Those who could write spent their time quietly writing long letters to their families, in hopes another ship might pass on the way home and take the mail. Even this faint hope was unfulfilled, for no other ship ever appeared. *The Cape of Good Hope* remained unproductive, isolated, and alone.

Homesickness and boredom set in. There was simply little work to be done, despite the efforts of the First Mate to keep the crew occupied. Eddie found himself wishing for a storm to come up, just to give them something to do. He had hated the non-stop work of the time after the whale hunt. Now he hated the idleness of day after day of inaction. He had already repaired everything on the ship which he was capable of repairing with his carpentry skills. Every spar had been slushed, every frayed rope spliced, every bit of cracked oakum picked.

Though cold, the weather was also uneventful. The water was calm, the sky was calm, and the winds calmly flapped the sails against the masts. A few fish swam calmly around and calmly refused to bite any of the morsels the crew put on fishing lines.

A couple of the Yankees tried to teach Eddie to carve scrimshaw, but he was not much interested in this. They carved things like fancy eggcups, clothespins, medallions, rolling pins, and other doodads Eddie had no need of. He was happy to let the more skilled carvers have his share of the whale's teeth. He wanted no reminder of the cruelty of the whale hunt, and thought them barbarous to carve the bones of the poor whales.

The rude redhead Jesse became especially withdrawn and irritable. He never spoke to Eddie at all or even acknowledged his presence; they had settled into a studied avoidance of each other. That was hard on such a small ship, and it gave Eddie a tension that he otherwise would not have had to worry about. But it was especially noticeable now that the voyage was stalled here in the Bering Sea and they all were just waiting, bored out of their minds, and all easily irritated.

In the late afternoon of one of those boring days near the Bering Strait, Jesse happened to brush up against Steven while walking the poop deck at the stern of the ship.

"Hey, don't you push me..." the sullen redhead suddenly exploded.

"Oh, sorry," Steven responded genuinely.

"I bet you intentionally shoved me," Jesse growled through his teeth.

Steven slinked off without replying. Seeing all this from nearby, Eddie thought that maybe Jesse had taken a dislike to Steven because Steven had become Eddie's friend. Maybe he was jealous. Anyway, Eddie was mystified by Jesse's hostility, and did not know how to handle antagonism like that.

Then, after more days of idleness, Jesse cracked again. Eddie and Steven were sitting on the railing, looking out over the bleak Arctic horizon. It was only September, but already Eddie was shivering as the weather turned colder. Eddie was telling Steven that he felt like he had had no summer at all, because the temperature in the Bering Sea in summertime was as cold as January in South Carolina. Eddie dreaded the thought of the cold winter that he knew from talking with the others would come soon. As Jesse walked by, to distract Eddie from all this depressing talk, Steven whispered a rude but silly joke about the redhead looking like he had a corn cob up his butt. Eddie laughed. Jesse could not have heard the comment, but he did hear the laughter. Without a word, Jesse exploded and, waving his fist, knocked Eddie right off the railing into the sea.

This all happened so fast that Eddie was at a loss to understand what was going on. It felt just like when the whaleboat had overturned. Once again he felt the shock of the cold Arctic water envelop his body. Once again he was surrounded by the frigid death-like calm under the waves.

But his body reacted. With a powerful stroke of his arms, he surfaced in time to hear shouts of "Man Overboard." Steven threw him a rope. He grabbed hold and was pulled safely against the

hull of the ship. Then the First Mate let down a rope ladder and Eddie clambered up to the deck. Steven was there with a blanket, hurrying him down to the forecastle to get him out of his wet clothes. Before Eddie knew what was happening, it was over.

Not so above deck. "Man Overboard" was every sailor's nightmare, and for someone deliberately to push a fellow crewmember into the water was considered a most serious offense. Not only was being left behind or drowning a possibility, but there were sharks in these murky waters. A man overboard could be shark food in a minute.

With the crew already shorthanded, the Captain could not afford to allow even the threat of losing another man. Once Captain Mowbray ascertained what had happened from witnesses, he immediately ordered Jesse stripped and tied to the main mast.

The First Mate came down into the forecastle to check on Eddie. Once he saw that Eddie was all right, he told Steven to bring Eddie back on deck. As they emerged, with Eddie still wrapped in his damp blanket, they saw Jesse with his hands tied over his head to the mast. His back was bare to the whip Captain Mowbray held in his hands. Jesse looked around and shot Eddie a hateful look.

Seeing this, the Captain sharply cracked a whip across Jesse's flesh. He yelled in pain. Again the Captain brought the lash down, making a bright red stripe across the crewman's back. Then for a third time the lash came down, this time drawing blood.

It was just too much for Eddie. Maybe he liked seeing the hateful Jesse punished, but he felt guilty about that. Even though it was his enemy being tormented, just like last time the scene reminded Eddie of punishment on the plantation. He despised Jesse because Jesse seemed to despise him, but he could not let this continue.

"Please, Captain, don't do this on my account."

The Captain turned in surprise. "You could've drowned or been eaten by sharks."

One of the other crew shouted, "The bastard deserves the lashes."

Eddie protested. "But I'm all right now. Whipping him any further won't do anybody any good."

Jesse looked back at Eddie in amazement. Eddie looked away and kept his eyes fixed on the Captain. Though Jesse and everyone else may have thought otherwise, it was not so much charitable concern for Jesse that led Eddie to object. Eddie's protest was selfish, for his own good. His recollections of slavery, when he and the other slaves had to stand by powerlessly and watch one of their fellows being lashed by the overseer, were too vivid for him to endure.

Though he had never discussed his experiences as a slave with the Captain, somehow the older man recognized the importance of this to Eddie. But he also seemed to know he had to make an example out of Jesse, not only to get the hot-tempered redhead to think twice before attacking someone again, but also to intimidate any other crewmember from getting out of line.

"Damn you," Jesse spat toward Eddie. He didn't seem to understand kindness.

With a look of determination the Captain gave another stinging lash across the insolent sailor's bloody back. Jesse let out a sharp cry of pain. Then with a contemptuous glare, the Captain spat a curse in return, stormed into his cabin and slammed the door.

Jesse stayed tied to the mast for the rest of the day. He said not a word, and no one spoke to him. A pall of silence enveloped the ship. Only after nightfall did the First Mate cut him down.

Jesse crept to his quarters silently. The next day he stayed in his bunk all day long, not even coming up to eat or drink. No one said anything to him. It was like he was invisible. The day after that Jesse appeared and tried to act like nothing had happened. At one point his eyes met Eddie's but both of them averted their glance. Neither wanted another confrontation.

Even though he had been the winner in this conflict with Jesse, Eddie did not relish his victory. Instead, this episode made him feel even more strongly that he had to get off *The Cape of Good Hope* as

soon as possible. But without any other ship nearby he did not see how this could be possible.

Sometimes Eddie would look into the sky and see a flock of snow geese flying southward and remember the dreams he'd had of trying to take off into the air with one of those great birds. Over the next few weeks Eddie's recurring nighttime dreams about these snow geese became even more intense and disturbing. He'd dream he was sprouting feathers. Alarmed, he tried to hide these feathers under heavy layers of clothing in fear of the other sailors' reactions. He kept having to patch his tattered clothing, but to no avail. Finally he could contain the feathers no longer, and he literally burst out of his clothing. The other crew starred in astonishment as his arms turned into feathered wings.

Not knowing what to do, Eddie began to wave his arms in a vain attempt to settle them down. But his wings only flapped. As he flapped more rapidly, his body began to rise from the deck. Before he knew what was happening, Eddie fluttered off the edge of the railing and out over the water. He almost crashed into the water, but as he looked down he could see sharks circling below him, waiting for him to fall so they could sink their sharp teeth into his flesh. With desperate determination he flapped his wings more rapidly. Slowly he rose above the waves.

He started soaring upward. In the distance he saw a flock of snow geese. He knew they were on their southward journey to a warmer climate. Some of them were white, but others were blue, and some were bright red. These colors stood out in Eddie's mind. He knew he had to join the geese. As he looked backward he could see *The Cape of Good Hope* receding below him. He flapped his wings more rapidly, and caught up with the multicolored flock. He followed this flock, and made his escape.

The dream of growing feathers and flying off with the snow geese kept recurring. *The Cape of Good Hope* waited off the coast of Alaska in hopes that a whale or two would pass by and allow them at least one more chance to pursue their livelihood as whalers. Only once was a whale spotted, but it had disappeared below the waves

for good by the time one of the longboats could be lowered into the water. That disappointment made the crew even more restless.

Captain Mowbray occasionally came out of his cabin to stand at the helm, but he too seemed to have lost his spirit. Eddie noticed his breath often smelled of stale whiskey.

Were they all just going to dissipate away into the frozen gray overcast that seemed to keep the ship imprisoned here with nothing to do?

Eddie felt as hemmed in and constrained as he had in that secret compartment he'd stowed away in for the escape from Savannah to Boston. It was a year ago that Joey was killed, and Eddie was so discouraged that he was beginning to feel that his escape from slavery was a big mistake. He started to wonder if he were not better off working in the Savannah shipyard for the kindly Captain O'Neill. Even though he had been a slave, at least he did not have to deal with this frigid winter. And carpentry at the shipyard was a hundred times more pleasant work than the hellish tasks involved in whaling. Eddie was determined that he had to escape *The Cape of Good Hope* at the first opportunity. If he did not escape he felt that he was going to die soon.

Only a few days later a potential opportunity presented itself.

"Ship ahoy," the lookout shouted down. Everybody, including the Captain and First Mate, crowded toward the railing and peered out into the bleak distance. There it was, a ship on the horizon.

They could see it sailed straight toward the whaler. The men began to get excited. Mowbray hushed them, but then said he hoped perhaps they'd have news of the whalehunt.

As the ship got closer Eddie could see it was not another whaler at all, but a naval vessel outfitted for war. He had seen such a ship a year before in the Savannah shipyard.

As the naval craft drew alongside, the crews of both ships strained to see if they recognized any familiar face on the other vessel. A boat was put down, and a crew headed by a bearded officer in a blue uniform rowed over to *The Cape of Good Hope*.

The officer reminded Eddie just a little of Captain O'Neill—or maybe of himself in his Southern gentleman disguise. He hoped that was a good omen.

With a look of apprehension, Captain Mowbray ordered the rope ladder lowered. The bearded officer was the first one to mount the deck. He was followed by two gruff-looking sailors carrying long percussion muskets. The officer stiffly shook hands with Mowbray and the First Mate. Then, with the two sailors standing rigidly at attention behind him, he addressed the Captain and crew:

“Men, I speak to you as a representative of the government of the United States of America. Most of you probably know that last December, after the surprise election of Abraham Lincoln as the new president, South Carolina seceded from the Union. In January and February, the other states of the South, from Georgia to Texas, followed suit. They formed a new government that they call the Confederate States of America. Over the last several months all attempts at compromise over the question of slavery in the western territories have broken down. I am sorry to inform you that the rebel forces at Charleston have attacked the federal garrison at Fort Sumter, and other large battles between the rebels and the Army have taken place.”

A gasp went up from the Americans on board. They had heard the news about Southern secession when they were back in Hawai'i, but everyone assumed that some kind of compromise would be worked out. Now the worst that everyone feared had been confirmed. Civil war had broken out across the land.

As the officer spoke, Eddie remembered back to what he had been told about this Abraham Lincoln and the abolitionists. So now South Carolina and Georgia had left the Union over the slavery issue. He wondered how the slaves on the Helms plantation and in the Savannah shipyard had reacted. He didn't care two bits about preserving the Union, which is all the naval officer continued to talk about. Black folks were not citizens, and had no rights in courts

of law. What had the United States government ever done for him, except to enforce the slave laws?

Still, he thought, if Mr. Lincoln was president, and if the abolitionists controlled the government, maybe things could change. He had become convinced of the anti-slavery attitudes of the Yankees by hearing his fellow crewmen talk about how much they disapproved of slavery. They told him that many other nations had already ended the practice, and they were ashamed the United States was one of the last nations in the world to still legally recognize it. They blamed the Southern whites for this, and were not sympathetic at all when Southern slaveholders complained that their rights were being violated. Whether the Southern rebels realized it or not, the Yankees Eddie knew were all strongly committed to keeping the Union together even if it meant war.

They told Eddie about a famous speech that Abraham Lincoln had made, saying a house divided against itself cannot stand; that the United States could not continue being half slave and half free. Not wanting to see it become all slave, they were committed to making it all free.

Maybe, just maybe, Eddie thought, with these kinds of sentiments he might live to see the end of American slavery. That is what his friend Tom had always hoped for, back in Savannah. While he and Joey had wished only to escape slavery themselves, Tom wanted to see the whole system ended. Such a thing seemed but a dream only a year ago, but now it just might be possible. Eddie was glad to be away from America, and he had no desire to return to the States. Still, he hoped he could do something to contribute to the overthrow of slavery and the defeat of this new pro-slavery Southern Confederacy. If for nothing else, he wanted to attack slavery in fulfillment of his promise to Tom, and in memory of his grandparents who were snatched from freedom in Africa.

Eddie's thoughts were interrupted by the next statement by the officer, who after speaking a long time finally got to the point: "Our President Abraham Lincoln has ordered a naval blockade of

the Southern coastline, and has called for volunteers to suppress the rebellion. I have been commanded by the admiral of the United States Navy to recruit volunteers from all American ships in the Pacific."

He then looked at Captain Mowbray and said solemnly, "By proclamation of the President, ship captains are required to allow any of their crewmembers who wish to volunteer to break their contract and join the Navy."

Now it was the Captain who gasped. Eddie and the others knew how shorthanded this ship was; Captain Mowbray knew he could not afford to lose more crew.

The officer ignored the Captain's shock, and appealed directly to the whalers: "Men, now is the time for you to step forward to show your patriotism for your country. The crisis has begun, and skilled sailors are in short supply. Your country is in need."

Captain Mowbray started to speak up, but the officer quieted him with a warning look.

Eddie realized this was his chance to get off the whaling ship. He thought being in the Navy might be better for him than being stuck in the frigid Bering Sea on a whaler.

He felt no ties of loyalty to the United States, but he did want to do what he could to weaken the bondage system from which he had escaped in the South. Perhaps he could contribute to this effort in the Northern navy. Though the officer had only mentioned slavery in passing, Eddie knew from listening to the Yankee boys' conversations during the past six months that this conflict between the North and the South was, at its base, about slavery.

He was just about to speak up, when to his horror Jesse came forward. "I'll volunteer for my country. I hate the South," Jesse proclaimed.

Of course the other crewmen all realized Jesse couldn't wait to get off the whaling vessel where he had been isolated and repeatedly in trouble. As soon as he said this, the officer told him to collect his belongings and get aboard the waiting boat below.

Without eyeing the others, Jesse rushed down the steps to the forecastle.

Eddie was in turmoil. He wanted to volunteer, but the thought of sharing another ship with Jesse was too much for him. He had had to put up with Jesse for almost a year, and the thought of another year with the surly redhead was more than Eddie could stomach.

Eddie suddenly had second thoughts. Maybe *The Cape of Good Hope* would be bearable without Jesse around to torment him. Eddie also now thought about his loyalty to Captain Mowbray. Eddie owed this man a lot. After all, it was this man who had provided him a job and gotten him away from possible recapture by slave patrols in America. The Captain had always treated him fairly, and despite the weatherbeaten seafarer's faults, Eddie respected the man greatly. Eddie had been able to justify his escape from the red-bearded Captain O'Neill in Savannah, but how would he be able to justify this? He had contracted with this Captain to stay the journey, and now he was about to break it. Eddie's mind was racing with indecision.

Eddie glanced at Mowbray, who was looking both worried and relieved. The Captain was obviously relieved that Jesse, the one troublemaker on board, had volunteered, and perhaps that would be enough to satisfy the officer. As a patriotic American the Captain did not want to challenge a proclamation from the President, but he spoke up anyway, saying "With due respect, sir, this ship is already shorthanded due to several deaths on board. That's the only man I can spare."

The officer looked at him intently, but seeing no other prospects come forward, answered, "Very well, if no one else volunteers, then I'll leave you in peace."

The Captain looked relieved. But then the officer turned again to the whalers and, to sweeten the appeal, said slyly, "I just want you all to know we're headed directly to the warm waters of Hawai'i." He said this with a little smile, hoping the whalers who'd been stuck on an isolated ship in the frigid Bering Strait

would jump at the chance to get back to the tropics. If he was not successful in appealing to their patriotism, at least he could try to appeal to their self-interest.

The word "Hawai'i" reverberated through Eddie's mind. His eyes focused on the flag fluttering above the naval ship's stern. This flag had red and white stripes, with a blue square in the corner containing white stars. Eddie had seen such a flag hoisted by the Captain when they entered the harbor at Lahaina, but he had not paid much attention. Now he recognized clearly that the colors of the snow geese in his recurring dream replicated the red, white and blue colors of this flag. He now thought that this red, white and blue flag must be a guidepost leading him south, back to Hawai'i.

This was enough for Eddie. His loyalty to the Captain was overpowered by his overpowering desire to get back to Hawai'i. Indeed, he remembered that Yoshi had no moral qualms about jumping ship in the Aleutian Islands to fulfill his plans. Eddie had met no one with a stronger moral code than the little Japanese; Yoshi had taught him that the highest moral value in life is love and friendship. For Eddie the thought of being able to get back to Aikane in Hawai'i was overpowering. In addition, thoughts about getting a chance to leave the frigid Bering Sea, and about avoiding additional horrible murders of the magnificent innocent whales, ran through his mind.

Once again, as at past turning points of his life, Eddie was presented with a choice where he did not know what he was getting himself into. If he did not speak up, he knew he would lose his chance. It was now or never.

Eddie decided not to let Jesse's presence influence his decision. In every other case, when he had taken a chance for a new situation, it had turned out for the best, just as Yoshi said. Eddie resolved to go on the navy ship, in hopes that he could get back to Hawai'i while also contributing to the struggle against the slave power that had stolen his grandparents from freedom in Africa. For both of these reasons he spoke up resolutely to the officer: "I volunteer."

Captain Mowbray's face turned ashen. He looked at Eddie in disbelief and complete astonishment. He had never even suspected Eddie was dissatisfied on *The Cape of Good Hope*, and he was sure Eddie would not want to follow Jesse. In panic he pleaded with the officer: "I can't lose my ship's carpenter. We won't make it without him!"

Eddie knew that was an exaggeration, especially since he had made every possible repair and refurbishment to the ship in the preceding idle weeks. But Eddie still felt bad to be deserting Mowbray.

The officer then gave the young black man a look Eddie did not understand, but which made him acutely uncomfortable. The officer addressed the Captain, "Well, if anyone else volunteers, I won't take the nigger."

No one said a word. Then the officer turned to Eddie and said, rather dismissively, "Alright, boy, go get on the boat." Eddie was disturbed by the words he had so often heard white men use toward him in the South, but he went ahead to get his things. The sailors with the muskets got on the boat, and the officer stiffly bade farewell to the Captain. With that, he climbed down the ladder.

In the forecabin, Eddie packed his clothes into a sack. He thought about his romantic times with Yoshi in the bunk. But Yoshi was gone now, and there was nothing else to stay for. As Eddie came back to the deck he embraced Steven one last time, wishing him to find love and happiness in the future, as Yoshi had earlier wished him. He waved goodbye to the other crewmembers. All of them had treated him well, and he had only positive feelings about them. He made a special nod of appreciation to the First Mate.

Then he approached the Captain. He felt chagrined about causing difficulty for his employer, but he knew this was the only way. To keep it simple, he said, "Sorry, Cap'n, but I've got to fight against slavery. I appreciate everything you've done for me." Captain Mowbray, an anti-slavery man himself, nodded defeatedly as if to say that, of course, he understood. He was not a man of words, but his bleary eyes betrayed his feelings for the

young escaped slave who had been such a valuable and enjoyable member of his crew.

As Eddie climbed down the rope ladder, he realized he was leaving *The Cape of Good Hope* for the last time. He patted the hull with affection before stretching his legs down into the waiting boat. The whaling ship had not turned out to be his permanent home, as he had originally thought it would be, but he felt gratitude that it had transported him so far away from the South.

As the uniformed oarsmen rowed away, Eddie kept his eyes on his fellow crewmen, waving a little as they receded in the distance. He did not look at the officer, or at Jesse sitting behind him. He had no idea what the future held, as once again in his life he was taking off in a new uncharted direction. He did not know if his decision was right or not, but he had learned from Yoshi not to fear change. Everything that happened, Yoshi said, happened for some larger good purpose.

21

In the Navy

Once Eddie came on board the naval warship *U.S.S. James K. Polk*, the enlistment officer had him sign his signature on official papers. Eddie was proud to be able to sign his full name, but since his reading ability was limited he could not read that the form was for contract laborers for the United States Navy. The officer did not explain to him that only white men were being officially enlisted as recruits. For deck workers there was no formal induction, so without ceremony Eddie was ordered to stow his gear in a bunk below the bow. As he climbed down the steep stairs Eddie knew this was the most undesirable part of the ship, subject to bouncing as the bow hit the waves. But he was relieved that the

officer assigned Jesse to a bunk near the stern—at the other end of the ship.

Good, Eddie thought, at least Jesse would not be sharing the same cabin. When he went below, Eddie was overjoyed to see his three other bunkmates were the same race as himself. This was the first time he had been around black folks since leaving the United States, and he was pleased. How had they happened to put all the blacks together, he wondered.

His new bunkmates welcomed him warmly, but he was disturbed when they clarified what was going on. They were all experienced sailors from New England who had been born in the North. Their families had lived free for generations. When the war began they rushed to volunteer like many other African-Americans in the North, in hopes that they could help end slavery. President Lincoln was trying mightily not to offend the slave states like Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, that still remained in the Union. Facing an outcry of resistance from conservatives, Lincoln did not allow black men to be recruited into the military. For this lack of resolve, Lincoln was castigated by the abolitionists on the other side. However, behind the scenes Lincoln quietly ordered the Navy to use black volunteers on board ships. There they were not formally listed as sailors, but as “deck workers.”

With this second class status, African American workers were ripe for exploitation by racist officers. As Eddie learned from his bunkmates, this was the case with the Captain of this ship. A career naval officer, Captain Carl Jacklin was raised in the state of Maryland, where his father was a slave owner. When Eddie heard this, a chill went through his heart.

While everyone agreed that Jacklin was firmly loyal to the Union, the black sailors offered their opinion that the Captain seemed none too happy about seeing the war for reunion turn into an abolitionist crusade against slavery. They told Eddie he and many other sailors thought black people were the cause of the whole conflict and blamed the colored servicemen among them for their having to go to war.

Needless to say, Eddie was depressed to learn that black volunteers were regularly discriminated against in the Union armed forces. In the Navy, the colored workers were consistently assigned the worst duties aboard ship. Eddie thought he should approach the officer about offering his carpentry skills, but his bunkmates told him it was no use. All of them were more experienced sailors than most of the white volunteers on the ship, yet Jacklin had assigned the white sailors to the best positions.

Each of them felt the only thing they could do is the cleaning work assigned to them, and hope that they could get onto another ship later with a less prejudiced officer. Each of them wanted to do everything they could to fight against slavery, even if it meant only cleaning the decks. Eddie was disgusted at this loss of the skills and talents which he and the other black men could offer.

But even a prejudiced man like Captain Jacklin realized that his was a naval vessel, where every person on board must be trained to help during battle. All the men, including those cleaning the decks and doing the hard labor onboard, were drilled with military precision in how to operate in battle and how to keep the ship battle-ready and how to look like professional sailors.

Occasionally Eddie would catch sight of his nemesis Jesse. Within the military structure of the ship, they had no contact at all. Eddie was grateful. Still, he was afraid of what terrible retribution Jesse might take on him for daring to follow him onto the *U.S.S. Polk*.

One morning, as Eddie and a couple of his bunkmates were swabbing the poopdeck, a squad of white sailors marching in cadence marched right up to where they were cleaning. They were apparently practicing delivering rifle fire to a ship in close range. The men stood in line, then, with an officer calling orders, raised their rifles and aimed straight out behind the ship. They weren't going to be firing their pieces—maybe they weren't even loaded. But they aimed their rifles directly at where Eddie and his crewmates were working.

The three black men fell to the deck with a shout.

"Easy, men" the officer in charge sung out. Then to the black men, "Don't worry, boys, they're not gonna fire!"

Eddie could hear the mean-spirited laugh in the man's voice. But then, as if that were not enough, when he looked up from his humiliated position lying face down on the deck, he saw among the men standing smartly at attention, their rifles now by their sides, none other than Jesse.

As the two recognized one another, Eddie could see derision cloud Jesse's face. Then the redhead winked at him, as if to say "I coulda shot you dead, nigger!"

At least that's what Eddie thought the look communicated. It stayed with him long into the night. He lay in his bunk, sleepless for hours, fuming over his feelings toward Jessie. From the first time they clashed, there had been nothing but animosity between them. Eddie hated Jesse.

Then he thought about all that he'd learned from Yoshi. The Japanese Buddhist would never approve of such hatred.

He could hear Yoshi saying over and over—as his way of dealing with someone who was as negative and hateful as Jesse—"so sorry; so sorry your life so sad in world." He remembered Yoshi telling him that the Japanese Buddhist monk Nichiren said that the best thing to do regarding an enemy is to pray for that person's happiness. Eddie thought this was the most ridiculous thing he had ever heard of.

"Why would I want to pray for somebody as cruel and awful as Jesse?" he argued with his memory of Yoshi.

"If Jesse happy, he no need be cruel and awful."

Eddie rethought his feelings. He decided that since nothing else seemed to work with Jesse, maybe this was the only solution. He fell asleep finally thinking over and over, Buddhist-style, "May Jesse be happy, may Jesse be free."

Starting the next morning then, and every day thereafter, when he did his Buddhist chanting, Eddie said a little prayer for Jesse's happiness.

In the following weeks Eddie settled in and made friends with other crewmembers as rapidly and easily as he had on *The Cape of Good Hope*. Some of his friends were black and some were white. Though there were some Irish and German immigrant sailors on board, the U.S. Navy lacked the ethnic diversity that had existed on the whaler. Though they'd sailed halfway round the world, the sailors had not met anyone other than their shipmates. The ship had left New York and sailed rapidly to its assignment in the north Pacific without making any stops. The crew had been completely sequestered on board the vessel. So Eddie's experiences intrigued them and they asked lots of questions about his adventures.

Eddie told his story of life as a whaler to several of his new friends. He even told them about his run-ins with Jesse and the irony of now being on the same ship with him. One night when he was telling the story of his fearful encounters with sharks he mentioned Jesse knocking him into the ocean and how he could have been eaten by sharks then. Eddie sort of off-handedly added that now he was praying for Jesse's happiness. He thought nothing of his comment and went on to describe how fiercely the sharks had devoured the carcasses of the whales.

Without his knowledge, Eddie later learned, one of the white sailors who was listening to that story had also become friendly with Jesse, and he told Jesse that Eddie was praying for his happiness. He told Jesse this during dinner, and Jesse literally stopped eating in the middle of a bite. After that, this friend told Eddie, Jesse started sobbing and ran from the table.

Clearly there was something beneath the surface of Jesse's hostility. Whenever Eddie saw Jesse, he wondered what that could be. They still avoided each other, but more than once Eddie noticed Jesse staring at him from a distance, not with a hostile glare but with a questioning look.

Over the next two months Eddie noticed that this daily prayer for Jesse's happiness led to a transformation in his own mind. Rather than feeling resentment and anger toward Jesse, feelings that occupied his mind in very negative ways, he was letting go

of his feelings. By praying for Jesse's happiness, he was in fact helping himself most of all. It was similar to what he remembered Yoshi telling him the Buddhists said about a bodhisattva: by helping others the bodhisattva was helping himself even more. By praying for the happiness of someone else, Eddie was becoming a happier person. Eddie often missed Yoshi's daily talks on morality, as well as the wonderful lovemaking they shared. But whenever he felt sad about Yoshi's absence, he reminded himself to be grateful. Rather than resent Yoshi's departure, he felt supreme gratitude for the time they had together.

Eddie used these Buddhist thoughts to survive in the unpleasant conditions facing a black man on a United States Navy ship. The happiness of the men of the *U.S.S. James K. Polk*, was not among the concerns of the strict Captain Jacklin. As far as he was concerned, the duties of his ship involved only two assignments:

First, to patrol the Pacific Ocean to protect Northern shipping from Confederate raiders that were attacking and sinking whalers and merchant ships in these waters. The new Southern navy was small, but intent on inflicting as much damage as possible to unarmed Union merchants. The rebels apparently hoped that money-grubbing Yankee merchants would convince the U.S. government to stop fighting and allow the South to secede from the Union without opposition.

Second, Jacklin's goal was to board as many Northern ships in the Pacific as possible and attract volunteers, just as they had done on *The Cape of Good Hope*.

After sailing southward from the Bering Sea, the warship had approached several other whalers in December. Eddie had watched as the enlistment officer and his sailors set off to board other ships, just as they had done on his ship earlier. They often returned with three or four volunteers.

One time though the officer's boat returned with a full load of six volunteers, as well as that ship's whaleboat in tow packed with an additional ten men. When they got aboard, two black sailors in that group were assigned to the segregated bunks in the bow.

Eddie and the others learned from them that this whaler had been languishing in the Arctic for months, and the whole crew was anxious to leave.

They told how, one evening when they first arrived in the area, they had sighted and harpooned a large whale. Instead of fleeing in panic, in a rage the creature turned on the whaleboat and crushed it between its massive jaws, drowning five crewmen. Eddie shuddered at the thought as they continued to tell the tragic story.

After the men in the other whaleboat threw two other harpoons, they finally succeeded in killing the whale. By that late hour, however, a heavy fog had rolled in, and by the time they managed to locate the ship the carcass had begun to sink. Before they could get the tow rope connected to the windlass, the whale had sunk so deep the men in the whaleboat were forced to cut the rope or be foundered. With their little boat surrounded by circling sharks, they had no choice. After that day's work, all they had to show for their efforts was the loss of two hundred fathoms of rope, three harpoons, and five crewmen.

In the three months following that disaster, they reported, not a single whale was sighted. In his frustration the captain became extremely oppressive to his crew, resulting in a number of fights and beatings. Food and water were running low, yet the captain did not allow them to head for a port. The crew considered the ship cursed, and many sailors felt close to mutiny. When the naval vessel appeared, most of the men were only too ready to jump ship.

The captain was persuaded to keep a skeleton crew and head for the naval yard at the port of San Francisco. Captain Jacklin gave him a signed letter promising that the Navy would purchase the ship for a generous price. He also paid the captain handsomely for the whaleboat he took in tow, figuring that hard cash would mollify the man for the financial loss of the voyage.

The extra boat was needed as a lifeboat on the *U.S.S. James K. Polk*, given the presence of the many additional men on board. In fact, they were now dangerously overcrowded, so much so that

Jacklin decided to head directly for Hawai'i, where another U.S. warship was being sailed from San Francisco with a minimal crew. He now had enough experienced sailors to staff both his ship and the other one. Together they would endeavor to protect American commercial ships in the Pacific by sinking any Confederate raiders they could catch.

That almost happened a few weeks later. Early one morning in March 1862 they saw a ship approaching in the distance, headed directly toward them under full sail. As it got closer, however, it suddenly veered sharply starboard, made a complete U-turn, and headed south. Seeing this maneuver, Captain Jacklin figured it must be a Confederate raider, which had been expecting to attack a merchant ship but changed course when they saw they had come across a U. S. Navy vessel instead. The Southern raider would have wanted to avoid battle with an armed warship, preferring instead to capture or sink unarmed craft. Captain Jacklin, on the other hand, was anxious to confront one of these elusive rebel ships. All hands were called on deck, and the *U.S.S. James K. Polk* sped forward and gave chase.

Eddie and the other black sailors were ordered below decks to bring up powder and shells for the gunners to load and prime the cannons. They had to practically crawl through the crowded hold and then climb up a level onto a cramped floor where the cannons were located.

In his effort to gain speed Captain Jacklin gave so many orders to adjust sails that the crew was exhausted by late afternoon. Eddie and the other deck workers were ordered topdeck to bring around food and water for the crew as they took brief respites from the backbreaking labor. Some of the exhausted white sailors made irritable racial curses against the black workers, but Eddie and the others did not reply. They bit their tongues, wanting nothing to interfere with the efforts to catch the Southerners.

During his service aboard the whaler, where top speed was not so important, Eddie had never seen such extreme measures to catch every twist and turn of the wind. The warship steadily

closed distance between the two craft until the Captain was able to identify the Confederate flag flying from the ship's stern. He was convinced that, if he could just get his ship to move a bit faster, they would soon be within firing range. Despite the best efforts of the crew, however, by the end of the day they had still not caught up with the rebel ship. Afraid that he would lose the fleeing Confederate raider after nightfall, Captain Jacklin ordered the gunners to be ready to fire.

Eddie and his friends crawled back into place below deck in the cramped floor behind the guns, ready to bring more powder and shells. He had never been in, or even seen, a battle before, but he was excited to be able to help attack the slave-owning rebels. Even though he was not pulling the trigger, Eddie felt that at last he was avenging his grandparents' enslavement.

He hoped that by this time the rebel ship was within range, and he waited anxiously for the order to open fire. As he heard Jacklin barking orders to heave the ship to leeward, in order for the cannons to be in position, he heard the creaking of the masts as the ship turned. They would have to fire fast, because it would be their only chance to hit the other ship before it got out of range.

Soon Eddie heard the awaited command, "Fire!" What happened next was something he had not expected. As the first cannon's fuse lit the powder, a noise of such volume convulsed the ship that Eddie thought his eardrums would explode. He had expected a loud bang, but he had never heard a sound so deafening.

Then the next cannon went off, and the sound multiplied. The third cannon's report merged in with that one. Thick black smoke filled the room, causing Eddie and the others to choke. He felt like he had died and gone to the hell that Master Helms had always talked about. But he had not died, and the smoke cleared just enough for him to see the gunner trying to light the fourth cannon. The fuse sparked down into the gun, followed by a blinding flash. Everything stopped.

22

Carnage

When Eddie regained consciousness, he beheld through the smoky room a scene of unbelievable carnage. The fourth cannon had been overloaded with powder by the overexcited gunner, and had blown up. Shrapnel shot everywhere, and a gaping hole was blown in the side of the ship. He saw bodies literally torn into shreds, and as he looked to his left he saw one of his friends with his head sliced open like a fish being readied for pan-frying.

Eddie had no time to mourn this man's death. As he came further to his senses, he looked back and was horrified to discover that he was dangling dangerously over the edge of the ship. In his weakened condition, with burns over several areas of his body, he knew he would not survive a fall into the raging waters below. He looked down in terror.

Just then he looked to his right and saw another man. Eddie thought he must be having some kind of ridiculous nightmare, because it was the surly redhead Jesse, of all people. The first thought in Eddie's mind was that Jesse was there to torment him, but then he realized that Jesse was dragging himself out onto the edge of the ship toward him. Improbable as it seemed to Eddie, he realized that Jesse was trying to rescue him.

The redhead was himself badly wounded; blood was gushing out of his arm as he reached to help Eddie up off the jagged metal edge. Without a word, but with a surprisingly powerful tug Jesse pulled the helpless young black man back onto the flat surface.

But then, in his strain to help Eddie, Jesse himself fell headlong off the edge. He dangled there, holding on with only his wounded arm that was now gushing blood even more openly. Eddie was powerless to help him.

Their eyes met, and a lifetime of communication passed between them. Gone was the hostility. In its place Eddie saw Jesse's longing to explain. Yet, in the instant that all this happened, Jesse only managed to say, "You live, and attack slavery. I do this for my father. Him, and you, are better men than me."

With a look Eddie would never forget, Jesse kept staring at him even as his wounded arm gave way. As he lost his grip and fell, the white sailor's gaze focused entirely on Eddie. He splashed into the water. Not once did he resurface. It was almost like he didn't want to come back up. Eddie looked in vain for Jesse to reappear, but he saw nothing. Then Eddie passed out, and everything went blank.

When Eddie awoke later he was lying in his bunk. His mates hovered over him. "Thank god, we thought you was dead," one exclaimed, as Eddie's eyes came into focus. He had a throbbing headache, and hurt all over his body.

Despite his pain, Eddie wanted to know what happened. Did they sink the Confederate warship?

The others looked disappointed. "No. The rebel ship got away. But we almost sunk ourselves. That cannon exploded. It knocked a big hole in the side of the ship and wounded a whole buncha men. That explosion killed seven gunners. That's what got you. Knocked you clear across the room, and over the edge. If it wasn't for that white boy, you'd have fallen off for sure. Everybody saw how he gave his life to save you. Eddie Freeman, you're lucky you're not dead."

Eddie tried to raise himself up, but just couldn't for the pain. He realized how hurt he was. He tried to ask them about Jesse, but all they said is they never found that white boy's body.

Eddie was in extreme pain, but he was tormented even more by his memory of Jesse's words. What did he mean by saying that Eddie was a better man than he was? What did he mean when he said he was sacrificing himself for his father? Eddie had so many questions, but the pain was so severe he could not think.

In the days that followed Eddie went into a sullen depression. Beyond his questions about Jesse, he wondered again what he had gotten himself into, on this hellish warship living among strangers.

He was in constant pain from the burns, and the white medic on board did not seem to relish helping a black crewman, no matter how bad the injury. Eddie got the feeling that if he died it would not cause a shred of concern from this medic. He totally lost track of time.

Mercifully, he fell asleep. When he woke up groggily he found out it was three days later. Eddie was glad to know that he slept so long, because once he was awake all he could do was lie there in the makeshift infirmary the annoying medic had set up to attend the injured. His body needed to heal and the sleep was good for him though he was often half-awake and a little delirious. His friends told him that Captain Jacklin had ordered the ship to head southwest for Hawai'i as fast as possible, to take care of the wounded men at Lahaina's hospital, and also to have the ship repaired at the Lahaina shipyard. The next closest port with a good shipyard was San Francisco, but that would be nearly twice the distance to Lahaina. Any ship needing repairs in the Central Pacific had no choice but to go to Lahaina. Eddie remembered *The Cape of Good Hope* sailing northwest toward Hawai'i for supplies on its route to the North Pacific whaling grounds. In his feverish sleep he mixed up the two events. He thought he was arriving there for the first time, and meeting Aikane on the beach.

Eddie was suddenly and rudely awakened by the uncaring medic shaking him by the shoulders. "Hey, boy, quiet down. You been shouting 'Aloha to Hawai'i' til the whole damn infirmary's wide awake and fussing. Look, you gotta quiet down."

For just a moment, Eddie was confused and demoralized. Once again it seemed like he'd been torn away from the beautiful island he'd fallen in love with. Then he realized it was just a dream. But it was a dream that had really happened, he was sure... Or was he?

In the following days, as he lay feverish and growing sicker, he sometimes regained enough consciousness to wonder if he were

dying. He longed to return in his dreams to Aikane. But now when he fell asleep, it was not the pleasant times he dreamed of but that sudden shock when he woke up to realize his plans to stay on in Maui had been foiled by that conniving Captain Mowbray. Several times after that he woke up screaming, "Let me off this ship. Let me off this ship!"

When Eddie finally regained total consciousness, it was five days later. The damaged ship had fortunately been able to continue sailing toward the safe neutral harbor at Lahaina. Captain Jacklin wanted to get his ship repaired as soon as possible, partly because he wanted to keep searching for the Confederate ship and partly because he was afraid the rebels might come upon his ship in its state of damage to finish it off. His whole mission, and the lives of the entire crew, were at stake. The battle wasn't over yet. Besides Eddie, thirteen white sailors were wounded from the cannon explosion. All these men needed medical attention.

As the ship moved southward the weather was becoming noticeably warmer and Eddie was sweating. He felt filthy in the same clothes he'd been wearing, and he wanted to get up. But still the pain was unbearable. Since the white medic did not seem to care much for him, some of Eddie's friends helped him out of his clothes and rolled him over. They told him he had some nasty-looking powder burns on his backside.

One of them tried to bathe him with a bucket of seawater, but the salt stung too much to endure. Eddie wished Yoshi were there to help take care of him. After another day of lying in the bunk, Eddie had to eat to regain his strength. They tried to feed him something, but he could hardly swallow. He continued to feel awful.

After several more days Eddie's body was worse. He still could not get up, and the burns became infected. He was beginning to think he would not get better, that he might not make it. Thoughts of death entered his mind. If he died, Eddie thought that Jesse's sacrifice would have been in vain, and he would have no opportunity to do anything to strike a blow against slavery. His would have been a useless life. In addition to the tragedy of an

unfulfilled life, Eddie would meet an inglorious end. It was this determination not to die, at least before he could do something to weaken the pro-slave Confederate forces, that gave Eddie a reason for living.

But in addition to that, if he died at sea, Eddie knew that his body would be thrown into the water. The thought of dying alone among strangers, then having his body eaten by sharks, just like the poor whales had been, was more than Eddie could stand. If the ship could only get to Hawai'i, at least Aikane could give him a proper burial.

Maybe he could even see Aikane again, to explain why he was not able to come back the next day after their meeting, and how much he had thought of him over the many months. If he could only see Aikane again, he would tell him how much he loved him, even from their brief time together. The only thing he could think of to say to himself was the Buddhist prayer that Yoshi had taught him: "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.*"

It was this determination to say the prayer over and over again, to hurt the Confederacy and to talk to Aikane that kept Eddie alive on the remainder of the journey. Every day he mustered the strength to chant as much as possible. The medic looked at him like he was crazy, but Eddie did not care. He believed that chanting this mystic phrase was his only hope.

As he came in and out of disturbing dreams, thinking of Yoshi's advice, he let go of his bad memories and tried to focus on the good, the ones he hoped would be fulfilled. He had become more and more expectant of meeting his future once again on the beach at Lahaina Harbor. If only he could hold on long enough...

After additional days of semiconsciousness, Eddie was jolted awake as the ship rubbed up against the dock. He recognized that peculiar thud as the hull and the posts of the dock came into contact. Weakly, he begged his black bunkmates to search the marketplace for a muscular Hawaiian fruitseller named Aikane.

Captain Jacklin arranged for the injured white sailors to be admitted as patients to the local clinic. But he seemed too

preoccupied to be concerned about a wounded black laborer. When his friends carried Eddie ashore on a stretcher, Jacklin only uttered a stiff "Good luck." No word of hope for recovery, not to mention any provision to pay for Eddie's medical care or to provide monetary compensation. As far as the Captain was concerned, the black deck workers were contract laborers, and if they were no longer fit to provide labor then their contract was expired. The United States Navy owed them nothing. When so many white recruits were dying in bloody battles in Virginia and Tennessee, why should he worry about a wounded laborer? After all, he was only a nigger. Eddie read all of that in the expression of the Captain's dismissive parting glance.

His friends searching the marketplace returned to tell Eddie they had not seen Aikane, but some other Hawaiians had gone in search of him. Eddie felt like he was drifting off to sleep. Fighting the urge, he struggled to keep his eyes open.

Then later, after what seemed like an hour or more, as he looked up, his eyes beheld Aikane. At first he thought he must be dreaming, but Aikane's joyful hug made him realize he was really there. Aikane looked him over, recognizing the seriousness of his condition, and promised, "I'll take care of you."

Eddie tried to speak, but he could not. His eyes felt so heavy. He slipped into unconsciousness.

When Eddie awakened, he found himself being bathed in a clear freshwater pool by several strong Hawaiian men. Aikane held his head, repeating what Eddie took to be Hawaiian chant. The water and soapsuds were so soothing. It felt good to get his skin clean.

After finishing the bath, the men gently placed him on a kind of stretcher with a frame of poles overlaid by banana leaves. On top of these they had spread a kind of creamy poultice. This poultice was smeared over every part of his body from his feet up to his neck, and then he was wrapped completely in the banana leaves.

An elderly woman the others addressed as "Kahuna" chanted in the Hawaiian language. She patted a large gourd with her hand

in alternating beats, creating an hypnotic rhythm. The hollow, echoing sounds reminded Eddie of the African drums that old man Tombo had described to him so many years ago.

The chanting and gourd-beating went on for hours. All the while Aikane lightly supported Eddie's head, and periodically helped him drink a soothing liquid that was unlike anything he had ever tasted. Eddie realized the group was doing all this solely because of their determination to help him get well. Just knowing they were working so hard and so long on his behalf, and seeing Aikane's loving concern, was enough by itself to help Eddie feel better.

But there was also something physically empowering in the drink Aikane was offering him. And he could feel the infections of his burns being drained away by the healing properties of the poultice. All together, these efforts by the Kahuna, Aikane and his friends were having a definite impact.

As the sun set across the horizon, a fire was lit nearby to keep Eddie warm in the night air. The chanting continued. It was different from the Buddhist mantra, but in a strange way it also seemed similar. When Eddie drifted off to sleep this time, it was more genuinely restful.

When he woke up the next morning the Kahuna was still chanting. Was it possible this had been going on all night long? Aikane was still mopping his brow. Eddie felt noticeably better.

Seeing him open his eyes, Aikane and his friends raised the stretcher at an incline, to get Eddie's weight off his back. Being raised up also made it easier for him to drink the soothing liquid. Later Aikane offered something to eat and Eddie managed to chew and swallow it. The Kahuna seemed pleased, taking this as a good sign.

The healing continued, with more bathing, followed by more rubbing with the poultice, and more chanting. It was the combination of the physical medical procedures and the mental chanting procedures which helped Eddie get well in both the flesh and the spirit. He had never experienced such caring by so many

people. And yet, not one of these people besides Aikane knew him in the least. Eddie knew they were all doing this for Aikane, and knowing this made him love Aikane all the more.

After still another bath, Aikane supported Eddie while gently floating him around the pool. He encouraged Eddie to float as much as possible, using some gourd floats under his legs and back, while the Hawaiian held his head.

This gentle healing process went on for three days. By this time Eddie was eating fresh ground-up fish, a tart pudding made from a plant called taro, and tropical fruits. His strength was returning. Even his burns were healing and his skin regained its healthy color. He and Aikane were smiling a lot at each other, and they even managed a little joke sometimes. At last, Eddie was able to stand up and walk around a bit. Only then did the Kahuna leave, thanked by everyone in attendance.

The others carried Eddie to Aikane's family house. The entire family welcomed the African man as a member of the family, Aikane's husband. He had shortly before been near death, languishing aboard a warship among uncaring strangers; now he was cared for generously as a kinsman. Eddie beheld a kind of family love he had never before experienced. He remembered Yoshi returning to his adopted Aleut family. He was glad for his friend. Now, with Aikane's loving support, he too was returning to his own adopted home. He was glad for himself.

23

Recovery

Ever since Eddie had arrived back in Maui, wounded and half-comatose following the cannon explosion, Aikane had taken good care of him. It was like a dream come true. They'd met

so briefly, but so deeply, and then had been torn apart. All those months in the Arctic Seas Eddie had felt the loss. Yet now it was almost as though it had never happened. They seemed to resume their affection just where they left off.

Aikane's family all accepted Eddie as their son's husband. Though Aikane continued to call Eddie by his name, Aikane's father, Kaha'i, said his name as Ek'i as though it were a Hawaiian word. The other relatives started calling him that as well. Eddie soon understood why Aikane was himself such a nice person. Coming from such a loving and happy family, it was easy to comprehend. Every morning Aikane would say a prayer of thankfulness for his family, saying the words: "*E pale aku i na ho'opilikia ana i ko kakou nohona.*"

It would only be later, when Eddie started learning the Hawaiian language, that he would understand the meaning of these words.

Eddie was amazed at the number of relatives living as part of this Hawaiian household. Aikane was the oldest child, followed by a sister named Lilinoe who was just a year older, then four younger brothers, then the youngest two sweet pubescent girls. In addition to the parents, there were one set of elderly grandparents, along with a young son of the oldest daughter, and two nieces who had been informally adopted from the mother's sister. Adoptions were common in Hawaiian families, one of the nieces explained to Eddie, because the ideal family should have an equal number of sons and daughters.

Eddie was out of pain, and feeling much better, but his body was still weak from the ordeal he had suffered. He could not believe how much he slept, but on many days he just floated in and out of consciousness. Aikane did not pressure him in any way, but allowed Eddie simply to stay at the family home and relax for the next three months. Everyone in the family treated Eddie with such great kindness that he felt a new kind of love growing in his heart for all of them.

By June 1862 Eddie was feeling his energy return, and he started helping Aikane in gathering fruit for sale. Eddie still got tired quite quickly, but he was getting impatient to get into a more productive mode. Sometimes Aikane and Eddie went in to Lahaina for a few days at a time to sell fruit in the marketplace. When they would return to the family home on the north shore of Maui, all the relatives welcomed them in grand fashion as if they had been away for months. A feast was laid out on grass mats. A special bed was prepared for the two to sleep in.

This was the fanciest bed Eddie had ever slept in: an enormous four-poster, probably made in England, and even bigger than the one Master Helms slept in. Aikane told him it had been recovered by his grandfather from a shipwreck. The family used it for lounging, and for welcoming special houseguests. When Aikane and Eddie returned from their trip, the family hung shawls from the bedposts, making for total privacy for the two lovers. Wreaths of fragrant berries and sweet-smelling herbs were hung from the posts and many pillows and cushions strewn for their lounging, and beneath a brightly colored cotton spread. Eddie had no doubt he was welcomed into this home.

As they lounged on this enormous bed, Aikane started massaging Eddie's shoulders, as he had often done. But this time it was different. For the first time in months, Eddie felt an erection growing in his penis. He smiled warmly at Aikane, who had been so patient and had not pressed Eddie for sex during all those months when his body was recovering. Aikane noticed the growing penis, but rather than just going for a quick sexual act he rolled Eddie over. In gently turning him facedown, the Hawaiian kneaded the muscles of Eddie's back, slowly working down and down. Aikane spread Eddie's buttocks, massaging the muscles and then moving his fingers into the crack. Eddie had never been penetrated except by Yoshi's fingers, but he trusted Aikane just as much and so he relaxed and allowed his lover's fingers to explore.

Taking a little coconut oil, Aikane pushed one finger into Eddie, then withdrew it just as Eddie felt a small spasm. His hand

stroked the area, relaxing Eddie even more, just touching with the one finger, then pulling away, then touching again. The finger started exploring. In and out it went, each time loosening up Eddie a little more. At first he was feeling apprehensive, but as he became more and more relaxed and excited, his body accommodated first one and then two and finally three fingers. This was a sensation Eddie had never felt before, and for the first time he understood the enjoyment of being fucked he'd always seen in Yoshi.

Aikane, however, wasn't rushing things. He seemed content to stimulate Eddie without moving to intercourse. Next he ran his tongue along Eddie's back from the ass up to the shoulders and then over into the armpits. Then, rolling him over, he sucked vigorously on each tit. Eddie moaned in pleasure; he couldn't help getting a full erection.

Aikane saw this, but seemed to purposefully avoid direct contact except by lightly brushing his muscled arm along the large shaft. Then, when Eddie could stand it no more, Aikane placed the hard cock into his own armpit, flexing his arm muscles and squeezing tightly. Eddie felt like he was having intercourse with the armpit, and it was surprisingly sensuous.

Aikane's purpose was to show that every part of the body is full of potential for enjoyment. He let go of the pressure, and rubbed his arm along the shaft, then over Eddie's thighs and down to his feet. Next Aikane massaged Eddie's feet, kissing them lightly. Eddie had never experienced such total body pleasure, not even with Yoshi's expert and professional ministrations. Aikane licked from the feet, up each leg to the top, then he massaged Eddie's balls with his tongue, and only gradually and slowly moving upward onto the base of the shaft.

By this time Eddie ached with anticipation, and Aikane seemed to know the exact moment at which Eddie could stand it no longer. Suddenly Aikane took the entire length of Eddie's large member into his mouth. The sensation was overpowering. Eddie could not stand it any more. With a sharp thrust he pumped his come deep into Aikane's throat.

Aikane swallowed with pleasure. The sweet liquid seemed to taste so good to the Hawaiian, he savored every drop. He kept Eddie's cock deep in his mouth, not moving for a long time. His pleasure was so intent on pleasuring his lover that Aikane did not even move to come himself. He just luxuriated in the feeling of Eddie inside his mouth, knowing that they had plenty of time to experience all kinds of erotic pleasures in the future.

Eddie still thought of Yoshi, but he was so happy with Aikane that he did not regret losing his Japanese lover. After all, he didn't really lose him. Besides, he was glad to be back in the tropics, away from the cold and the terrible cruelty of killing whales, and relieved that he had escaped from the oppression of the naval ship. He only hoped Yoshi was as happy in the Aleutians as he was in Maui.

24

Maui

Over the next two years, while the women of the family raised the fruits and vegetables, Eddie and Aikane helped the father and brothers on their fishing trips. Every day when the weather was good they spread their net in the sea and pulled in a bountiful haul of fish. Eddie gathered the nutritious seaweed caught in the net, and showed Aikane's mother and sisters how Yoshi had taught him to cook it in a soup.

One of these "sisters," Eddie had learned to his surprise only after living with the family for a few months, was actually a male! This male daughter was about eleven years old, and even more feminine than Yoshi. Aikane's mother explained to him that when the baby was born, they worried that most of their children were boys, and they wanted more girls. But when this one was a small child, they noticed that he had such a sweet and gentle personality

like a girl. They therefore decided to raise this child as a daughter. They gave the name "Mahu," which Eddie figured out was a Hawaiian word similar in meaning to the Two Spirit Person he remembered Mangaq had told him about among the Aleut.

Eddie marveled that such different cultures as the Hawaiians and the Aleuts had a similar respect for feminine males. He wondered how many other peoples whom he had never even heard of held such accepting attitudes. Maybe the condemnatory attitude of the white man was the exception and not the rule.

As Eddie gained more knowledge in his travels he began to perceive the world in a different way. The white man's way was not the only way to live, and to Eddie it was not even the best way. In the last year since leaving the Helms plantation, Eddie had grown in spirit in ways that he never would have imagined.

In Aikane's family, Mahu's femininity was valued. A few years later another female child was born into the family, but they loved their Mahu so much as a daughter that they continued to treat Mahu the same way. Mahu grew up to be quite feminine, so much so that Eddie would not even have ever guessed Mahu was male.

It was assumed by all that, in the future, Mahu would take a male husband rather than marry a woman. It was all accepted rather matter-of-factly, and everyone in the family adored Mahu. From about age six Mahu enthusiastically started doing the women's work under the supervision of the elder sister Lilinoe. Mahu was industrious.

Because Mahu was so graceful, they all liked to watch her dance the sacred hula dance. The family hoped that an older mahu would take her as an apprentice, to learn in detail the arts of the hula. If she mastered that, and became a well-known hula dancer, the family would gain much prestige among their people. Hula was not merely a dance; its movements illustrated the telling of ancient Hawaiian legends and religious stories. It was an integral part of Hawaiian religion, and the Kumahula—hula teachers—were closely associated with the Kahuna priests.

Mahu was off to a good start, because she had such loving support from the family. Her parents felt fortunate because a Mahu was noted as being particularly devoted to her parents, and would care for them lovingly in their old age. When their other adult offspring were busy raising their own children, the parents could be assured that Aikane and Mahu would have the time to provide generously for them. By taking Eddie into the family, they felt they were gaining an additional advantage.

In these large families, it was a benefit for one or two of the children not to reproduce. That way they could care for the elderly members of the family, and could also contribute to the welfare of their sisters' children. Then when they reached their elder years, they would be taken care of by these nieces and nephews. To Eddie it all made perfect sense.

During these two years they spent most of their time by the seashore, but Eddie often looked upward to the tall mountains of the interior of the island. These giant mountains, Aikane explained, were volcanoes that were created by exploding lava from deep within the earth. Even today, he said, there were active volcanoes on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Years ago, Aikane had once traveled to observe the molten lava flowing. The old Hawaiians believed that the volcano was the Goddess Pele expressing her overflowing beneficence in natural terms. It was a comforting thought.

Aikane offered to take him up to the top of this volcano. Eddie was afraid of getting close to the hot liquid lava that had been described as so hot it could melt metal in a second. Aikane laughingly explained that Maui's volcanoes had been dormant for as long as anyone could remember. With that assurance, Eddie, Aikane, and some of his brothers took off on a trek. They walked upward for a long time, climbing so high that the air was noticeably thinner. Eddie had never been at such a high altitude, and he was glad they took frequent breaks because it was more difficult to breathe in the thin air. Eddie marveled at the views as he looked out over the limitless Pacific Ocean from their increasingly higher perspective.

As they climbed, the climate changed from tropical warm to downright cold. It was not frigid as the cold Eddie had experienced in the North Pacific, or even in Boston, but it was enough to make him thankful they all lived down below at the seashore. They brought along heavier clothing that they now needed. Aikane pointed out strange plants in these colder climes that he said grew only in Maui and nowhere else in the world. How he knew that, Eddie did not ask, but he was prepared to believe it.

At last they reached the summit of the volcano, and Eddie looked out on the world as it curved away on the far horizon, farther than he could have ever imagined seeing. From starting his life as an isolated slave on a plantation in the Sea Islands, he had traveled over the range of the world almost from top to bottom, and half way around. The Helms' plantation had seemed huge to him in his youth. Now the whole state of South Carolina seemed small and insignificant. He had experienced so many different and diverse things in the last two years, much more than most people would ever experience even if they lived to an elderly age.

Aikane made a prayer of Hawaiian chants at the summit, for over thirty minutes repeating over and over again the phrase "*E pale aku i na ho'opilikia ana i ko kakou nohona.*" After he finished, Eddie said a prayer of gratitude, chanting "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*" for another thirty minutes. Aikane was fascinated with this strange Buddhist mantra, and after they were finished he asked Eddie many questions about Buddhism.

Though Aikane was thoroughly dedicated to his native Hawaiian religion, he had no reaction against the Buddhist spirituality that Eddie practiced on a daily basis. Aikane said that every way of spiritual exploration was good if it helped a person to reach a higher state of existence. If chanting helped Eddie feel better, then Aikane was all for it.

As they made their way back from the summit, Eddie and Aikane had a deep discussion of Hawaiian nature religion.

Eddie asked Aikane about the healing that had been performed on him. "What was the Kahuna chanting? How does spiritual healing like that work?"

"The Kahuna said many things in her chants. But they all meant we love you. The most important thing for healing is love," Aikane answered. "We believe that loving other people makes good things happen in their lives. After all, we like to be loved ourselves, so we should show love to others.

"Compassion is what Yoshi called this."

"Yes, that sounds like a good word. We sometimes see that bad things happen to people. That is why they need healing. So when we see something bad has happened in our world we feel involved. The bad isn't happening just to the other, it is happening to us too because it is happening in our world.

"Even the bad people who do bad things, we should be sorry for them too. They don't really mean to be bad, they're suffering too. They suffer from being bad. So we say 'I'm sorry your life is so unhappy you hurt other people.'

"We say, 'I am so sorry this has happened to you.' And we love the other and we love ourselves. That helps make bad things go away."

Eddie was struck by how sensible and how good and generous that attitude sounded. It reminded him of Yoshi's explanations of Buddhism. He thought that was probably what that Jesus whom the white preacher talked to the plantation slaves about on Sunday mornings had meant with that rule about doing unto others as you would have them do to you.

With all that good advice, Eddie wondered, why is the world in such a shape as it is? Why are the white men fighting with each other? Doesn't anybody listen? He felt such affection for Aikane at that moment. What a magical world he'd discovered in these islands far to the west of the United States, the North and the South and all that fighting and suffering. He felt himself a recipient somehow of that Hawaiian good will.

"That sounds like what Yoshi said about bodhisattvas, people who give out gift waves. Maybe you are bodhisattva, Aikane," Eddie whispered and then kissed his lover on the cheek sweetly. "You make good things happen around you. You healed me."

"Maybe you are bodhisattva," Aikane answered, then laughed. He ran on ahead, so Eddie had to chase him all the rest of the way down the mountain. It was exhilarating.

The young man from South Carolina was proud that over the past two yearss his increasing knowledge of the Hawaiian language was now enough for him to be fairly fluent and to engage in serious discussions. The intelligence and wisdom expressed by Aikane and Yoshi was more than Eddie had ever heard from a white man, and he did not understand why the white men felt they were so superior to everyone else. Opening himself to learning from people in different parts of the world was the real education of life.

By now he felt that he was more educated than probably any white man in South Carolina, and he looked down on them with a sense of superiority that surprised even himself. He reminded himself that all of this had happened by the accident of his being purchased by the red-bearded Irish Captain O'Neill in Savannah. Without that lucky accident, Eddie most likely would have been stuck as a fieldhand on a rice plantation for the rest of his life. He reminded himself that Yoshi would say there are no accidents in life, that everything happening occurs for a larger cosmic purpose. So, Eddie was thankful that Captain O'Neill made his appearance that day at the Savannah slave market.

He was also thankful that working for Captain O'Neill gave him experience working as a ship's carpenter, which helped him get a job working for a shipbuilder in Lahaina harbor. This provided actual cash payments that Eddie could turn over to Aikane's family. Eddie, like Aikane, had never had a need for money, and he gladly turned over his salary. As a result of his contributions to the family, he was treated with great respect and kindness. They pampered him with a luxury that he imagined few ex-slaves had

ever encountered. Eddie felt on top of the world. Maui was indeed his heaven.

Eddie's talents helped Aikane's family as well. Kaha'i and his sons had located a large boat on an offshore submerged reef that had been damaged in a storm and abandoned. They'd managed to drag it ashore, but they did not have the tools or knowledge to repair it. Eddie could repair hull damage like that boat had with his eyes closed.

Eddie fit into the family in every way. With his light skin color, he did not look much different from the Native Hawaiians. Now that he dressed like the local people, and was learning the Hawaiian language, many Americans in Lahaina assumed he was a Native.

In his time off, Eddie brought his tools from the shipyard and worked on the wrecked boat at Aikane's home. To help him in the project he trained Aikane and his brothers in ship repair skills. This meant they too could get cash-paying jobs at the harbor. Over the next several months, after much work, the boat was finished.

Aikane liked learning these new skills, but he reminded Eddie of his dream of moving to Molokai. However, his parents were so fond of him that they persuaded their son to stay in Maui and live with them. Aikane then got the idea that, once the boat was repaired, he and Eddie could begin their own transport service between Maui and Molokai. Dependable regular transportation between the two islands was difficult to find, and much needed. If they did this job, Eddie would not have to work for a white man any longer, and they would be owners of their own shipping service. That way, he and Aikane could go back and forth between Maui and Molokai. They could live in both worlds.

Eddie was excited about this idea. He liked the possibility of being his own boss. Repairing this abandoned boat was going to be his steppingstone to a new life. And, indeed, that was going to be so. What started as a simple boat repair job with his husband's brothers was going to offer Eddie a way to fulfill another of his personal goals, in a way that he could never have predicted.

25

Sailing Pig Saloon

By November 1864, two years after he had returned to Maui, they had the boat completely refurbished. Aikane's sisters Lilinoe and Mahu cleverly wove a matted sail from coconut leaves, and they took the boat out on the calm waters between Maui and the neighboring island of Lanai. The one-masthead little skiff danced across the water in fine fashion. Over the next three months they built a fine business, and the whole family was grateful to Eddie.

Still, Eddie wanted a canvas sail. Then they could gain more speed and do greater business. The family agreed this was a good plan, but they would need money to buy such a thing. The men decided they would go into Lahaina and get jobs in the shipyard along with Eddie. All this time they had been living happily, getting their food from fishing in the sea and raising plantfoods on their land. But the vegetables and fruits Aikane was able to sell in the market did not bring in enough cash for them to make major purchases. Aikane's father Kaha'i suggested that with his greater experience Eddie should be the crew boss and they'd work as a team under his direction doing ship repair.

Eddie had made friends with the Harbormaster in Lahaina, that Englishman Mr. Spencer, who admired Eddie's attention to detail. Eddie hoped that Mr. Spencer would help him find jobs for all the men. Everything was falling into place.

When Eddie went to Lahaina the next day, he saw four new ships had arrived in the harbor. That seemed like a good turn of events. Those ships would likely need repairs. Maybe these arrivals would give him the chance to get his little carpenter crew employment, and to gain some valuable experience in working together as a team. All of them had agreed to offer a low price on

their first job, so that they could get something quickly and start making a name for themselves.

Eddie saw three of the ships were lined up along the wharf. But instead of docking at the wharf, he thought it strange that the fourth ship remained anchored further out in the bay. Eddie had the feeling that this was an important ship. But it flew a strange flag which he did not recognize. He asked for his friend the Harbormaster and was told that Mr. Spencer was taking a break at the tavern near the end of the harbor.

As Eddie walked to the far side of the harbor, he noticed a new signboard on top of the little wood plank building. With his rudimentary reading skills he could make out the name "The Sailing Pig Saloon." The name struck him, because it reminded him of the little tailless pig Sharkey.

As soon as Eddie walked inside the tavern he understood the reason for the name. The new saloonkeeper was none other than his Portuguese friend Giorgio from *The Cape of Good Hope*. Giorgio recognized Eddie immediately, and welcomed him wholeheartedly: "Eddie Freeman, I'll never forget you, m'boy!"

"I'm sure you won't! Sawing off your legbone was one of most terrible things I've ever had to do in my life," Eddie replied truthfully.

"No, no, no. Don't think of it like that. I know I 'twas screaming bloody murder, and it musta chilled you to bone, but what you did was a lifesaving act of graciousness. If it warn't for your skill with that sawblade, I'd be a'mouldering in my grave for these last couple of years. Or, more than likely, a long-digested meal in the belly of a big shark swimming off the coast somewhere."

Though Eddie winched at the thought, Giorgio just laughed. Then he said, seriously, "You know, for a while after that, I have to admit, I laid around feeling sorry for myself. But after a while that got to be pretty tiring. 'Twas a pretty Hawaiian nurse at the clinic who took a shining to this ole broken-down Portuguese hombre. Don't know why, but she took mighty good care of me. Cheered me up amightly, that's for sure. She said she'd rather me lost my

foot than lost my life! Such a sweet one, that she is. And guess what, she even agreed to marry me. So out of the deal I got me a pretty new wife to boot.

"After I got all healed up, and my leg was able to stand the pressure, the doctor fitted me with this fine peg-leg I got. Took me abits to get used to hobbling around on it, but really, nowabouts I'm good as new these days. No complaints from my honey about that, or my other two legs, neither!

Giorgio laughed heartily at his own joke, which brought a smile to Eddie's face because it reminded him of Yoshi always laughing at his own corny jokes. But Giorgio again turned serious when he said, "I'm mighty grateful that the Captain left me enough money to cover all the doctor bills, and amazing to me, there was enough left over for me to buy this little bar. Former owner wanted to sell cause he said he'd got island fever, and wanted to go back to his home in Massachusetts. Can't imagine him wanting to leave a paradise like Maui, but 'twas my good fortune. So I just recently opened for business and named The Sailing Pig Saloon in honor of our little tailless mascot Sharkey. Don't know whatever happened to him, but I hope he has a long and happy pig's life.

"So now I have me a pretty wife and a nice little income to support me and the missus, so I am indeed grateful to ole Captain Mowbray, cause I know he used most of his reserve fund to take care of me. He had a basic decency that most men lack. But most of all, I'm mighty grateful to you and the First Mate for saving my life. Whenever you're in Lahaina, you're always welcome here for whatever you want to drink or eat, on the house. And if you ever need any medical attention, me and my nursemaid wife will promise to take care of you as fine as can be."

Eddie was touched by this offer of gratitude and said, "Well, these days I am healthy as can be, thanks to my Hawaiian husband. He nursed me when I got hurt, I bet as good as your wife took care of you."

Giorgio replied, "So you got yourself a Hawaiian too! Ain't they the sweetest people in God's green earth! I'm happy for

you, Eddie Freeman, that I am. But, you know, I'm surprised to hear about that cause I always thought you and Yoshi would be together. Whatever happened to him?"

"Oh, whenever I think of Yoshi, I still miss him so. But he wanted to go back to the Aleutian Islands. I thought about going there, just to be with him, but that place is too damned cold for me. Guess I got too much tropical blood in my veins to live in such a climate. Besides, I love Hawaii."

"Me too! Well, that's nice that you're happy with your husband here. But what do you mean about he nursed you when you got hurt."

"Oh, it's a long story, but I joined the Union Navy and got injured when a cannon exploded. Almost died."

"That so? Sorry to hear that. What 'twas the name of your ship?"

"U.S.S. *James K. Polk*."

"Do tell! Why I didn't even know you were in the damn navy. There was a bunch of wounded men in the clinic from that very same ship, what my wife took care of after I got to feeling better. I became friends with some of them and they come in here to share a drink sometimes. Why, as a matter of fact, one of them, a nice fella named George, lives in a little room back of the whaling supply house across the way. I can go get him if you'd like to talk to him. If you'll watch the bar for me for a few minutes, I'll be right back."

Eddie thought this might be a chance for him to learn more about the accident that injured him. Maybe this man would know something about what happened to the *Polk* after it left Maui. He also thought if Giorgio left, it would give him an opportunity to talk to the Harbormaster Mr. Spencer, who Eddie had noticed was sitting by himself and looking out the window at the far corner of the bar. As soon as Giorgio left, Eddie walked over to the window and asked the Englishman about the ship out in the harbor with the strange flag.

Mr. Spencer told him it was the flag of the Southern Confederacy. "This ship," he said, "is the infamous C.S.S. *Shenandoah*. She and

the *C.S.S. Alabama* are the most technologically advanced, and the most fearsome of the Confederate raiding destroyers."

Of course, Eddie remembered, this was similar to the raider that the *U.S.S. James K. Polk* was chasing over two years ago when he was injured so badly.

He asked the Harbormaster about news of the war back home. The Englishman told him that no ships had arrived from the States recently, so he did not know the most recent news, but as of the summer of 1864 the Confederate armies were winning battle after battle against the more numerous Northern forces, and even on the sea their victories were impressive.

Mr. Spencer went on speaking in a tone of disapproval tinged with awe. "I hear the *Shenandoah* by itself has captured over forty Northern merchant ships in the Pacific. The United States Navy has never been able to catch it."

Eddie wished fervently that the *U.S.S. James K. Polk* was here now that that ship was at dock, but the *Polk* and Captain Jacklin had not returned to Maui since they abandoned Eddie. If that cannon had not exploded, he thought, then maybe the *Shenandoah* wouldn't be wreaking havoc this year.

Eddie certainly had no love lost for the U.S. Navy after the way he had been treated on board their ship, but his one regret is that he had not been successful in fighting against the Southern rebels. Now that the Confederate raider was right here in Lahaina harbor, no United States warships were anywhere to be seen.

"What is the *Shenandoah* doing in Maui?"

"Selling their ill-gotten cargoes to Lahaina merchants," Spencer said bitterly.

The Englishman explained that he'd learned the raider had captured seven Yankee merchant ships in the South Pacific, along the Cape Horn-to-Hawai'i route. They forced the crews to load all their cargo onto three of the ships, the ones that were now docked at the wharf, then asked for mercenary volunteers. All who refused to help deliver the ships to Lahaina were set adrift aboard their lifeboats. They probably died at sea, unless a Union warship

managed to find them. The *Shenandoah* then sunk the other four ships, and brought the three remaining here to Hawai'i to be refurbished in the Lahaina shipyard.

"Which side is Hawai'i on?" Eddie asked.

"Neither," Spencer said. He went on to say that King Kamehameha had declared strict neutrality toward both sides in the American Civil War. If the Southerners wanted to try to sell cargo in Hawai'i, he ruled, they had as much right as any Northern trader. He did not want to be drawn into the American conflict by taking sides.

Secretly, though, Mr. Spencer speculated, Kamehameha probably hoped the Confederate rebels would successfully break up the United States. He was fearful a powerful, united America might one day try to annex Hawai'i and end his people's independence. At the same time, he couldn't offend the Northerners in case they did win.

But even though most of the merchants in Lahaina were Yankees, the captain of the *Shenandoah* was offering such good deals that some money-strapped merchants couldn't afford to be picky.

The *Shenandoah* would use the money from selling the cargo to refurbish the three captured merchant ships and to hire crews for them. There were many sailors in Hawai'i who were unemployed these days. Ever since the war broke out, and the Confederate raiders started roaming the seas, the whaling industry had gone into sharp decline.

The slow-moving whaling ships were no match for a military cutter, and after many were sunk their skippers retreated back home to New England. Insurance for a whaler had become prohibitively expensive for the owners. Many whalers had been bought by the United States Navy to serve as transport vessels, and the Yankee crewmen joined the Navy to aid the war effort. Therefore, for those sailors in Hawai'i from other countries, who were desperate for cash, becoming a mercenary on a Confederate ship was not unthinkable.

Even though Mr. Spencer personally was against slavery, like King Kamehameha, he also worried that in the future a powerful and united America might become so strong that it could replace the British Empire as the world's biggest international power. Both as an Englishman and a loyal subject of the King of Hawai'i, he had decided to remain neutral, and to try to take advantage of economic opportunities offered by either side.

"The Confederate captain is offering high pay, for both mercenaries and for skilled repairmen," the Englishman suggested to Eddie. "Why don't you get some easy money by working on refurbishing those merchantmen for the Confederates? A skilled carpenter like you could make a pile of money fast."

"Doesn't this man realize what he is saying," Eddie thought. "Why would a person with skin color like mine work to help the Confederacy in any way?" Eddie was just getting ready to make a vehement denunciation of the Southern slaveholding rebels, when in walked Giorgio with another man.

"Hey, Eddie," Giorgio yelled across the room, "This here is George Pulliam, who served on the *Polk* same as you."

Perhaps afraid that he had offended Eddie, and needing to get back to work at the harbor, Mr. Spencer took the opportunity to excuse himself and left.

As Eddie walked over to the bar, he was disappointed that he did not recognize this man. But the man remembered Eddie: "Oh, I'm so glad to see you're still alive. I thought maybe you died in obscurity after the *U.S.S. Polk* arrived here. Nobody seemed to know what happened to you."

George insisted that they should go sit in the corner, so Eddie retraced his steps to sit once again on the barstool where he had just been talking to the Harbormaster. As they crossed the room, Eddie noticed that the former shipmate walked with a limp. George sat down and looked out the window for a while before he spoke. It was like he was thinking seriously about what to say. Eddie sat quietly.

Still looking out the window, George began: "I was wounded pretty bad in that cannon explosion. Ain't worth a tinker's damn any more. All I can do is sit here and enjoy a drink every so often. I just find myself sitting somewhere and staring out the window, wondering what I could have done with my life if I hadn't joined the damn Navy. Thought I'd be helping my country. Don't think I did one damn thing that actually helped the country. But I sure did hurt myself, a whole lot."

George talked like he already knew Eddie, or at least knew a lot about him. Then he confided: "Eddie Freeman, Eddie Freeman. It's been a burden on me these past two years, thinking that I'd never get a chance to tell you this. But now you're here, I got some information that's important for you to know."

"You see, me and that upstart redhead whaler named Jesse shared quarters back in the stern. He was a mighty unhappy fella, you know. Told me a lot about his life before he signed on to the goddamn *Polk*. And he talked about you a lot, too."

Eddie was shocked to learn from Pulliam that Jesse's father was an abolitionist who'd devoted his life to ending slavery. Eddie had always assumed that Jesse must have come from some terribly prejudiced family, and was just reflecting the prejudices he had learned as a child. On the contrary, George said, Jesse's father was such a zealous anti-slavery man that he left his wife and young son Jesse to follow the fanatical abolitionist leader John Brown. Jesse's father served with John Brown in the fighting of Bloody Kansas.

"When he was just a little tyke, he was abandoned by his father, you know. That's what he told me. He hated the abolitionists for taking his daddy away.

"Yeah, Jesse's pa ended up one of the leaders of John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry. He was one of the abolitionists that was killed in the fighting there."

Eddie knew nothing of John Brown and the abolitionists' 1859 raid on the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry in Virginia that was meant to distribute arms to the slaves. When the State of Virginia executed Brown and his surviving followers, for promoting

“servile insurrection” (a capital crime in all of the Southern States), John Brown’s raid became one of the signal events leading to the conflict between North and South.

Eddie could understand why Jesse had hard feelings about his father’s life—and death.

Jesse had revealed to Pulliam he was so angry about his father’s abandonment of him and his mother, and then about his father’s death, that he’d gone into a long period of depression. It was to get out of this depression that he decided to leave the United States, and all its racial turmoil, for good. That is why he signed on to the whaler *The Cape of Good Hope*.

“That’s why he was so resentful of you. He blamed black folk for causing all the problems in his family. Then, just when he thought he was leaving all that race stuff behind, he was upset to find a black man among the crew on that little whaler of yours. I know he hated you, Eddie Freeman, but I’m telling you it weren’t nothing to do with you, fella.

“Jesse was so tormented about you. Why, he even told me he knew he was being unfair to you, but his feeling was so strong he couldn’t control himself. To his disturbed way of thinking, you represented the reason why his pa left, and why he died.

“But, look, Jesse wasn’t really a bad sort. Once the war broke out he saw that his father was right all along. And, after he read some newspaper reports extolling the soldiers killed in the early battles of the war, he realized his father was just as brave as any of the other heroes dying for the Union right now. Indeed, he said the reason he volunteered when that there *U.S.S. Polk* enlistment officer came aboard that whaler of yours was because he’d finely seen that he had to carry on his father’s mission.”

Eddie could not move. He sat glued to the bar stool and let this surprising turn of events sink in. He never expected any of this.

“Our other bunkmate heard you talking about your experiences one day, and heard you say that you was praying for Jesse’s happiness. When he told this to Jesse, let me tell you when that tough redhead heard about this, that you was praying for his

happiness, he cried for a whole day. The whole entire damn day, right up 'til he fell asleep exhausted from all that crying. He was sure disturbed, more than any a man I think I've ever seen. He knew just how unfair he'd been to torment you. I bet he knew his father's spirit would be forever ashamed of him unless he redeemed himself.

"Ain't that why he tried to rescue you? And why he gave his miserable life for you? That's what I think, as God is my witness. And that's why I've been looking around for you all this time, and asking everybody how I can find you. I just thought you'd want to know this stuff."

The two men sat there in silence, as Eddie took in everything he had just heard. Tears formed in Eddie's eyes as George continued, "'Tis been a terrible burden on my shoulders these past two years that I couldn't never find you 'til now. That's why I'm mighty glad to see you alive and kicking."

Eddie was in so much shock after George Pulliam told him all this that he could hardly speak. As his eyes welled up he could only manage a strained "Thank you." George nodded that he understood.

At this point Giorgio hobbled over on his peg leg to offer the two wounded veterans another round of drinks. When he looked into Eddie's eyes he exclaimed, "Why, Eddie, you look like you done seen a ghost."

Eddie looked back at the Portuguese man and said with all seriousness, "I think I have, indeed."

Eddie had always thought Jesse was simply a racist, a bad man who was the embodiment of evil. Only now did he come to understand Jesse's anger was the result of personal tragedy having nothing to do with Eddie himself.

Now, instead of feeling resentment toward Jesse, Eddie's heart went out to the thought of the young boy Jesse who suffered so much when his father left. Eddie knew what it was like to live without a father's love.

In a way, Eddie felt that he was in exactly the same situation as Jesse. It was the evilness of slavery that prevented Master Helms from giving him the fatherly love that his son needed. It was the evilness of slavery that caused Jesse's father to rise up against it in revolt. It was the evilness of slavery that caused both of them to suffer.

Now, after two years of unanswered questions that Eddie had about Jesse's words before he died, at last he understood. As Eddie, Giorgio and George sat next to each other, each one staring out the window to avoid having to confront each others' eyes, but each one knowing first-hand about the tragedy of life, Eddie came to a new resolve. He knew he had to do something, anything he could, to weaken the rebel cause and end this evil institution. And he knew there could be no further delay. The time to take action was now.

As he sat there on that bar stool, Eddie swore to George and Giorgio, on Jesse's life, and on Jesse's father's life, as well as in renewal of the promise he had made to Tom back in Savannah four years ago, that he'd vow to take action, right now, to weaken the slave power. There was no possibility of delay. Eddie knew that the time had come for him to carry on the fight for all those who had sacrificed their lives in the fight against slavery.

As he realized that, far from being enemies, he and Jesse were on the same side, a new awareness came upon Eddie. His tears dried up, and a new countenance came over his face. It was a feeling that permeated his soul, a sense of both the tragedy of life and the spiritual power that comes from a strong determination to do something to relieve that tragedy. Eddie knew intuitively that he had reached a kind of personal enlightenment. It was a transformation, a step that he could take to accomplish what Yoshi had referred to as "changing poison into medicine."

With this new sense of determination Eddie felt a strong light descend upon his body. For the first time in his life he felt the presence of what Yoshi had tried to explain to him when he said that every person has a Buddha nature inside himself. Neither

of the other men sitting with him understood exactly what was happening, but they could tell something significant was occurring. They sat quietly without disturbing Eddie's silent meditation.

As he retreated deep into his own thoughts, Eddie remembered Yoshi telling him about the young prince Siddhartha struggling for years to gain spiritual insight, giving up all his royal privileges and engaging in every kind of activity including almost starving himself, before finally gaining enlightenment while sitting under a Bodhi tree. Only after reaching his Buddha nature could the Buddha help the world. Now Eddie felt that he was able to perceive his own kind of enlightenment after years of struggle.

His life passed by in front of his closed eyes, as he thought about his young mother sacrificing her own life in giving him birth, and the loving nurturing he received from his African grandparents. In this moment of clarity Eddie at long last remembered that the name of the noble people from whom he was descended, that old Tombo told him about, is the Ashanti.

Somehow, he forgot about all the awful things that had happened in his life, and focused on only the good. He remembered Master Helms' parting wish that he would reach a better situation in life, and Joey's parting wish that they could escape slavery. He thought about Captain O'Neill saving him from an early death as a fieldhand, about the saintly self-sacrificing Tom who risked his life to help Eddie escape, about the tormented Captain Mowbray always treating him respectfully and giving him the opportunity to reach this part of the world, and about his friends Steven and Michael for giving him the gift of literacy.

But most of all Eddie thought about the incredible lessons in love and spiritual insight that he had received from his teachers Yoshi and Aikane.

He felt as if he were floating upward, not externally, but upward in his mind. To a new level of consciousness, into a different part of his brain that he had never previously entered.

And now, as Eddie delved into this new way of thinking, even someone whom he previously considered an enemy, the redhead

Jesse, had turned out to be an inspiration for him. He knew now why all of these things had happened to him, and how each part of the puzzle of his life over the last few years had prepared him for what he now must do. In all their names, and in memory of Jesse's abolitionist father, Eddie became determined to take the action that each of those life experiences now had prepared him to take.

As this enlightenment enveloped him, Eddie felt a bright light radiate out from his heart. The light went in a bright thread and encircled him, and the thin thread of light wound around and around him. The thread of light encircled him so many times, with such breathtaking speed, that it formed a bond of light. The thread became a solid cloth, a cloth of light. Now he felt like he was entirely within a new universe, a universe of light. Everywhere he looked he saw the light, and the light was so bright that it was like a mirror. But the mirror did not reflect back on Eddie's face. Instead, the mirror reflected directly into his soul. He realized that this light was not something outside of himself, but was a reflection of his soul. Just as Yoshi said, salvation does not come from a god outside of our self, but from enlightenment from within. Now, at last, Eddie understood. Everything was clear. All resentments, all regrets, all negativity left his mind. Everything that had happened to him was exactly as it should be. Every single thing that had happened to him had made him the person he was, and for all of that Eddie expressed supreme gratitude.

"Nam Myoho" I give devotion to *"Renge Kyo"* the mystic law of the universe. The mystic law of karma is what permeated every part of his spirit. Suspended within the bubble of self-reflective light, he assumed the lotus position and drew out his Buddha nature. In that instant Eddie Freeman achieved Buddhahood.

26

Lahaina Harbor

Excited by an idea that suddenly entered his mind as he meditated in the Sailing Pig Saloon, Eddie came up with a scheme to destroy the *Shenandoah* and to do his part in weakening the Confederacy, Eddie ran all the way to the Harbormaster's office. "Mr. Spencer," he said earnestly, "I'm sorry we were interrupted earlier today. I thought about what you said and decided I really do need the money. I've gotten a group of workers together who can do all the repairs for those Southern ships. You tell that Confederate captain there's a whole crew of Hawaiians who'll refurbish those vessels, and we're dedicated to making a first-rate effort." He certainly was not lying about that last part.

A little surprised, but maybe thinking of a finder's fee he might receive, Mr. Spencer agreed to communicate this message to the captain of the *Shenandoah*. Eddie promised to have the crew ready to start as soon as the captain had the money.

Eddie ran all the way home after that. His mind was racing equally fast, thinking about what they could do to sabotage the Confederate ships. Here was his chance to strike that blow against slavery he'd hoped to do someday. And to get a job in the meantime that would allow him and Aikane to fulfill their dream together—and at the Confederates' expense!

Maybe they could drill holes in the hulls of the ships, so that the vessels would slowly sink. Or maybe they could do something to weaken the hull or superstructure of the ships so they'd break up when they got on the high seas. However, on further thought Eddie rejected those ideas because he did not want to cause the death of so many men on those ships. Except for the Confederate officers, most of them were mercenaries anyway. They were on the crew solely because they were so desperate for money. Eddie did

not want to do anything that would result in their deaths. After all, as Yoshi had reminded him, one of the most important Buddhist precepts is to avoid killing. Eddie knew, though, that he had to figure out some way to prevent those four Confederate ships from leaving Lahaina Harbor intact.

As he ran, Eddie had an idea. It was perfect. When he reached home, he gathered Aikane's family together and revealed his plan. They discussed and plotted their strategy late into the night.

The next day Aikane's father Kaha'i acted as leader of the group of workers, consisting of Aikane and his four brothers, plus some of their friends. Eddie stayed unobtrusively at the back of the group, even though he would have to be the one giving the others direction once they began the work. As they reached the harbor they saw the Confederate captain and two of his adjutants standing on the beach in their gray uniforms.

Kaha'i played his role as foreman well, even though he knew little about ship repair. The captain, a man from North Carolina named James Waddell, evidenced all the haughtiness that Eddie remembered white Southerners showing toward anyone whose skin was darker than their own. The captain walked around the little group of Hawaiians, doing his own inspection.

When he noticed Eddie, his eyes squinted. "You, boy, you look like one of our Southern niggers."

Eddie was paralyzed in fright. He looked to Kaha'i for help. The older man told him in Hawaiian to get down on the ground. Eddie understood the native language pretty well by this time, and he did as he was told.

"What did you say?" the captain demanded.

"I told him, in our language, to show you what land he comes from by touching it. I don't think any of your Southerners would understand our language."

From farther down on the ground, the captain could not see Eddie's features so clearly. "You understand Hay-wa-yan, boy?" the captain quizzed. Eddie instinctively resisted the idea of ever again saying "Yessir" to a white man, the way the slaves were

always expected to do. Instead, he silently nodded yes without looking up. "Then say something to me in Hay-wa-yan," the Confederate imperiously commanded.

The first thing that Eddie thought of was the Native prayer Aikane said every morning when he awoke. Eddie had heard it so often and he had memorized part of it. He carefully mouthed the words: "*E pale aku i na ho'opilikia ana i ko kakou nohona.*"

"What the hell does that mean?" Captain Waddell asked Kaha'i.

"It means, he hopes to ward off anything that may trouble our life here in Hawai'i. It is one of our most sacred chants. No one except a member of our Native Hawaiian families, who understands our religion, would know these words."

The captain gave one more disbelieving look at Eddie crouched on the ground below him. Eddie was not sure what to do, so in the trusting way that he had learned from Yoshi, he deliberately intoned the words "*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.*"

As he did this, a smirk appeared on the Confederate officer's face. He looked at his adjutants with a confident gaze showing he was now convinced the man crouching below him was a Native Hawaiian. "I guess all savages look alike, don't they. I could have sworn he looked just like one of our high-yella niggers at home. I guess he is a Hay-wa-yan after all."

Even though Waddell's ignorance in not recognizing the difference between Hawaiian words and the Japanese Buddhist chant was responsible for this conclusion, Eddie had put his trust in the power of the chant to protect him, and it had worked.

With the Confederate officer's white supremacist ideals justified, he apparently forgot about Eddie and went back to discussing the terms of the agreement with Kaha'i. Eddie silently heaved a sigh of relief.

Soon Captain Waddell and Kaha'i had come to terms. The Captain presented a bag of gold as half-payment for their labor. Then he announced their work would have to be overseen by his

own ship repair specialist. He told one of his men to go onboard and get the engineer so he could meet the Native crew.

Drats, thought Eddie. He'd hoped the Confederates would leave them to their own work so they would not be under continuous observation.

Then, as this "specialist" arrived and the Captain introduced him to Kaha'i, Eddie almost fell backward in surprise. The specialist working for the Confederate Navy was none other than the red-bearded Irishman, Captain O'Neill from the Savannah shipyard. It was Eddie's former master!

Eddie ducked behind the others, trembling at the thought of what would happen if O'Neill recognized him. As his escaped slave, the captain would probably feel justified in capturing Eddie on the spot and returning him to chains. Fortunately, O'Neill concentrated on Kaha'i.

The first question O'Neill asked was if there were any danger of his personal slave escaping if he brought him ashore. Kaha'i replied truthfully that the Hawaiian police would capture anyone who did not live on Maui. The Confederate officer joked to O'Neill, "Just tell them the Hay-wa-yan savages are cannibals, and they love to eat dark meat. That'll keep them from escaping for sure."

O'Neill did not share the laughter of Waddell and his two adjutants, but instead led Aikane's father and the others onto the captured merchant ship that Captain Waddell had christened the *C.S.S. Beauregard* to explain what work needed to be done. Eddie got the distinct impression that O'Neill did not like the Confederate officers and was just as happy to conduct his work without them looking on. Aikane and the other workers followed.

As they walked across deck, with Eddie staying carefully at the rear, he noticed a black man working down in the hold scrubbing the floorboards. It was the first black person he had seen since leaving the Navy, and his eyes were drawn to him.

Could this be Tom, his friend from Savannah who helped him escape? If Captain O'Neill, his master from the Savannah shipyard was there, then he must have brought Tom with him as his slave

assistant. Not wanting this opportunity to pass, Eddie motioned to Aikane to move the group along to the other two ships docked nearby. Then he scurried down into the hold without being seen.

Tom did not at first recognize Eddie in his Hawaiian attire, but when Eddie spoke Tom's face lit up like a Christmas tree.

"What in tarnation are you doing here?"

"No time to explain. Hide me, and we'll talk."

Eddie looked for cover. A big piece of canvas was piled in the corner, and he pulled it over himself. Tom moved over, continuing to scrub the floorboards below deck of the captured merchant ship.

Eddie and Tom talked in the hushed tones which slaves were used to. Eddie told about his successful escape to Boston and how he had joined the crew of a ship going to Hawaii. He proudly declared he was now working in this shipyard as a free man. There was no time to tell Tom about all the other things that had happened.

Tom was mighty pleased to hear about Eddie's escape, and could hardly believe they had ended up together again on the other side of the world from Savannah. But then he asked, "Aren't you afraid of living out here with the savages?"

"Hawaiians are the nicest people I've ever met. I live with a Hawaiian family now. The stuff you hear about them being savages is a bunch of malarkey. I know now the white folks fed us a lot of that kind of crap, in order to keep us in line. I'm going to help you escape here, and pay back that debt I owe you."

Tom was overjoyed. Then he added, "Well, there's somebody else here who you're going to want to help."

"Who?"

"Your friend Joey."

Eddie's mind did not register what Tom had just said. "Joey's dead," he replied dumbfounded. He stuck his head out of the canvas cover.

Tom gave him a kindly look, then realizing the danger, pushed Eddie's face back under the canvas. "You just thought Joey was dead. When you thought he was shot, he actually swam under

water to safety. But then later he was caught and thrown in jail. The Confederate Navy grabbed up all the slaves in jail, and put them on the *Shenandoah* to do the labor.

"I was on Captain O'Neill's ship when we got taken over by the *Shenandoah*. Captain sure was upset when the Confederates commandeered his ship. He'd just managed to get a position sailing again. He'd taken me with him as his personal slave, you know.

"Well, he decided to go along with the Rebs because he thought maybe he'd find a way to get his ship back. So he pretended to be sympathetic. You know, he's the head engineer now for the *Shenandoah*. But I know for a fact that he was opposed to secession, has never supported the Confederacy, and is loyal to the Union.

"So after we was captured, I ended up bunking with the other colored boys. Your friend Joey and me got to talking one day and realized we both knowed you. Yessir, we sure have talked a lot about Mr. Eddie, wondering if you made it to the North. Won't Joey be surprised when I tell him tonight that you're here and a free man.? Un-uh-uh. He sure will!" Tom smiled broadly.

Eddie wanted to hear more, but he needed to enlist Tom and Joey in his plot. "I've got a group of Hawaiians here, and we're trying to get a chance to sink these ships. I never forgot my oath to you, and we're ready to take this action to weaken the South."

Tom gave a look of excitement that indicated he had not forgotten Eddie's oath as well. "Well, now's the time to do it, 'cause Captain Waddell's planning to arm these three new ships with cannons. I overheard the officers discussing their plan. They're going to attack a port. Has a strange name, like Sand Pan Sis Go, or something like that. Then they said they are going to steal a whole bunch of gold from something they call the U.S. Treasury.

"Captain O'Neill told me the Rebs is already got their Southern spies working there as guards. When these three ships come into the harbor, exploding cannons and creating a big ruckus, the spies will steal the gold and bring it on a boat out to the *Shenandoah* that will be waiting outside the bay.

"Before anyone knows what's happening, they'll load it on and be gone. These three ships will probably be sunk or captured, but the Confederates don't care cause the crews are all mercenaries anyway. We'll be the sacrifice. Once they got all that gold on the *Shenandoah*, they'll use it to buy more guns for the Southern armies."

Gee, Eddie realized, these ships are even more important than he thought. If he can pull off his plan and prevent the *Shenandoah* from amassing a supporting fleet, it would force the Confederates to cancel their plan to attack San Francisco.

Eddie tried to think of a way to destroy the *Shenandoah* as well, but since that battleship was anchored so far out in the harbor and there was a full crew aboard as well as a complement of slaves and captive sailors from the merchant ships, he didn't have a plan in mind. Tom could not think of a method to sink the *Shenandoah* either. Anything they did to cripple the ship would threaten the lives of all those captured men. Eddie thought about Yoshi. He knew Yoshi would not approve if he risked any lives. But destroying the three merchant ships would sure stop that nefarious plan to garner gold to continue the Confederacy's rebellion.

"Listen, I bet you and Joey can help. I've got to come up with a complete plan. But, Tom, you and me, we're going to finally get a chance to strike that blow against slavery, that we always talked about."

Eddie then climbed out a porthole and lowered himself into the water and swam under the wharf. From there he took a deep breath and swam underwater as far away from the ships as he could get before surfacing to swim to the beach.

Eddie caught up with Aikane and his relatives outside of the shipyard. They had just left the dock, as planned, promising to come back early in the morning to start work on the captured merchant vessels.

27

Lahaina Harbor

Eddie and his crew worked for several days on the three ships. The first order of business had been to clean up after the ransacking of the cargo by the Confederate sailors. Each of these ships had apparently been stocked with the spoils of the other four merchant ships which the *Shenandoah* then sank. The crews that had “volunteered” had not been particularly careful about the purloined booty. Most of them were, in fact, now locked in the brig back on the battleship.

The *Shenandoah* captain could certainly see why they shouldn’t be trusted. That’s partly why the Hawaiian repair crew had been hired.

So while Kaha’i and his sons went about the clean up and small repairs, including some under Eddie’s supervision, Eddie himself looked for ways to sabotage the vessels so they couldn’t be used in the Confederates’ military scheme.

Drilling holes in the hull seemed destructive enough, but not manageable. With just the first hole, any one of the ships would start taking on water. There weren’t any sailors onboard, but there were guards, loyal to the *Shenandoah*, who’d certainly call for help.

Eddie’s old master Captain O’Neill was, in fact, overseeing the work. He was onboard one or the other of the captured merchant ships every day. Eddie stayed clear of him.

One day Eddie was helping Aikane’s brothers clean out the cargo hold on one of the ships and repair a set of broken stairs down into the lower levels of the ship. After he’d gotten the Hawaiians started on the job, he went exploring. He needed to know if the Confederates had moved any arms onto the ship. He was eager to see if any black powder kegs were onboard. Maybe they could blow up the ships right here in the harbor.

As he was looking through the officers' quarters, Eddie heard a familiar voice call out, "Hey, boy, what you working on in there?"

It was Captain O'Neill. "I don't think you should be up here. You got work to do back in the cargo hold." There was tension in the white man's voice. Eddie worried he'd guess that he was up to something.

Eddie tried to hide his face as he sidled down the narrow hallway, hoping to get out of this area without being seen straight on. Just as he got to the door where the redheaded man was waiting, the boat rocked and Eddie was thrown backward—and right into O'Neill's arms.

As the captain-demoted-to-engineer clumsily caught him to keep from being thrown off balance himself, Eddie tried to turn away. But that only roused suspicion and O'Neill grasped him by the shoulders and turned him around to face him.

"What's your name, boy?" he said, as though it would mean something to him and as though a Hawaiian worker would understand him.

Eddie didn't want to speak, but couldn't help himself look up into O'Neill's eyes.

"Well, I'll be damned, look who you are." He grinned broadly. "They said you'd gone and fallen off the wharf and drowned. Say, what was your name again?"

"Ek'i," he answered, using the nickname Aikane's father had given him.

"Oh no, you're not," the Captain replied. "You've grown up a little, but I can see perfectly well you're that carpenter slave I bought at the auction house in Savannah. What was your name?"

Eddie repeated the successful act from the other day with the Shenandoah captain, and tried to carry off his Hawaiian imitation. *"E pale aku i na ho'opilikia ana i ko kakou nohona."*

The man wasn't going to be fooled.

"C'mon. Don't worry; I'm not going to report you... Now I remember. It was Eddie. That was your name, wasn't it?"

"Yes, Captain," Eddie at last admitted.

"Well, Eddie me boy, I'm certainly glad to see you're not drowned after all. I never believed that story Tom told me anyway. I was sure you'd done run off from me for a better life. If I was you, in all honesty, that's exactly what I'd have done."

"Hey, Eddie, it's ok. Maybe you did me a favor running off. I'd been making a little money working you and Tom there in that damn shipyard. So I was just rotting there myself, missing the sea. After they said you'd fallen off the wharf and drowned, that seemed to be the end of that business of contracting the slaves out.

"Actually, by going you did me a favor, boy. Thanks to your disappearance I went out and got myself a commission and went back to the sea. Brought Tom with me. He's here now. Bet you'd like to see him, wouldn't you."

"Yessir," Eddie said. "Tom's a mighty fine soul." He allowed himself to be recognized—what choice did he have?—though he didn't reveal to the captain that he'd already reconnected with Tom the previous day.

"You know, I always liked you, Eddie. I was angry for a while cause you cost me money, but then I got to thinking you'd actually made a lot more money for me than you cost. So as far as I'm concerned you repaid your debt. I don't like slavery myself, you know, though to run a business in the South you have to have slaves to make a profit."

"I'm a free man now," Eddie wanted to make sure there was no misunderstanding. "That's my name now, Eddie Freeman."

"And good for you," O'Neill clapped him on the shoulder. "I've got no sympathies with the Confederates."

Eddie asked the obvious question: "Then how come you're an officer on a Southern battleship?"

"I wouldn't be if I didn't have to. When Georgia left the Union I was so angry I took this ship and went to Norfolk to start over in the shipyard there. The ship owner, who was a horse's ass as well as a firebrand secessionist, owed me a lot of back salary so I felt justified in taking his ship. I didn't want it to fall into Confederate hands.

"But then it was my damned luck that, later on, Virginia seceded as well. President Lincoln declared a blockade, so I decided to sail out to the U.S. naval ship that came to Norfolk. I told them I was a loyal Unionist, and what do you know they let me keep the ship and hired me on the spot to be a United States transport vessel. I'd been doing that ever since, transporting manufactured goods from New York, and bringing back gold from San Francisco to help pay for the expenses of the war, so I figure I'm doing my part to preserve the Union. More than my part, actually, considering the fact that I have to go round that damned Cape Horn every time. Never seen nothing like that horrible place.

"This here was my ship. *The Golden Eagle*, she be. But on my last trip, right after surviving Cape Horn, the Rebs caught up with me. That ass Waddell took over my ship and renamed her the goddamned *Beauregard*. The *Shenandoah* stole my ship right out from under me. They required the men to join the Confederate Navy or else be set adrift.

"Sometimes I think I should have gone with the men who went adrift, but I was captain, you know. I felt a responsibility to try to save this ship that'd been through so much with me. It was Tom that saved me. Waddell believed me when I volunteered to become one of his rebel officers. 'Cause I had Tom with me, he figured I was a slave owner and I'd be happy to serve on his side. I've been pretending to be pro-Confederate ever since then."

Eddie spoke up, asking "So what're you gonna do now? What's your plan?"

O'Neill shook his head in disgust. "Truthfully, I don't know. I couldn't do anything to prevent Waddell from capturing two more ships, the whalers that're tied up next to this ship. At this point, I'd do anything to prevent these three ships from being used to further the rebel cause. I've even been thinking about scuttling it on purpose, just to prevent them from arming it with cannons. Waddell's got all sorts of plans to build a Confederate fleet. Wants to bring the war to California. There's a whole lot of Southerners in

California, you know. No telling what kind of damage they could do if Waddell supplied them with guns and explosives."

This gave Eddie an idea that he wanted to pursue. Maybe Captain O'Neill could become an integral part of Eddie's plan. But he wanted to check everything with Tom first, before he revealed anything to O'Neill.

Eddie was glad that O'Neill changed the subject, when he asked, "So, Eddie Freeman, how the hell did you get to Maui? And how in God's name did you turn yourself into a Hawaiian?"

28

The Return of Hope

Eddie had to persuade Aikane's relatives to support his plan. Aikane and his brothers didn't have feelings one way or the other about what was happening in the United States. It was so far from their tropical paradise. But they were all quite willing to believe him when he said they needed to strike a blow against slavery, and that stopping the *Shenandoah* from assembling this fleet in Maui would have an impact on the lives of real people in that far away and strange land that was called America. Aikane trusted Eddie implicitly, and was ready to do whatever Eddie said.

Eddie wanted to do everything he could to weaken the Southern cause, so that hopefully slavery would die with the end of the Southern rebellion. But he remembered what Yoshi had taught him about the Buddha's precept not to kill. Eddie believed what Yoshi said about the need to respect life and about karma. He figured that if Yoshi had been right that his misfortune of being carried away on the whaler and having to endure all those months in the frigid Arctic was karma for having stolen a few nails, he did

not want to incur the karma that would come with taking even one human life.

Besides, he'd thought enough about this idea of compassion and respect for other beings that was part of both Hawaiian and Buddhist religions. Eddie knew this was the right thing to do.

"The first rule of this plan," Eddie told his co-conspirators from Aikane's family, "is that we don't want to kill anyone. We're just after those ships. So I want a plan that won't get anybody killed, even the Confederate soldiers. They're human beings too," he reiterated.

"Blowing up dynamite or black powder's out then," Aikane agreed. "An explosion might kill somebody."

"And anyway, as far as I can tell, there's no black powder on any of the three merchant ships," Eddie answered.

"We want to allow any sailors onboard to get away," Kaha'i inserted. "So light a fire. They'd see that and could jump off. The ships are tied up there right at the wharf. Nobody'd even have to swim to safety."

"What if they just put the fire out?"

"Make bigger fire then," the older man replied.

"But how do we make a fire that would spread so rapidly it would be impossible for them to put out?" Eddie questioned.

The next evening as the ship repair crew was going home from the harbor, they saw a damaged ship sailing slowly into the harbor.

"Let us get a job on that ship," one of Aikane's brothers commented. "I'm bored with pretending to work on the *Beauregard*. I want to do real ship repair, like you taught us, Ek'i."

Dismayed that his whole plan might collapse because the Hawaiian crew wanted real work instead of political espionage, on the following morning Eddie watched as the team of six changed directions and headed toward the wharf where the crippled ship was in port.

"Look, the main mast is broken," another of the Hawaiians shouted. "We know how to fix that from doing Makua's boat."

“Let’s go say *aloha* to the captain and tell him we can fix his broken mast and repair whatever he needs on his ship.”

Eddie had no choice but to follow along with them. He resolved himself to the situation by calculating that they could work on both projects at once. There really was enough work for them all. His little crew, Eddie figured, could become quiet successful at this hiring out business. Eddie had become his own boss! He laughed to himself

As they walked toward the harbor Eddie took a closer look at the damaged ship that had now furled all its sails as it rested at the wharf. He could see immediately that it was a whaler. He knew those kinds of ships.

Then with almost the same look of dawning realization that he’d seen on Captain O’Neill’s face the other day passing across his own visage, he recognized the ship. That damaged yardarm, the broken mast, the shredded sails—this was the very ship on which he’d honed his own carpentry talents. As he came closer, Eddie could see the name emblazoned on the bow. It was his old ship *The Cape of Good Hope*.

And there, calling down to the wharfhand, was poor old Captain Thomas Mowbray yelling out some instruction. When Mowbray saw him, he recognized Eddie right away. A smile lit up both their faces. Eddie couldn’t help seeing King Neptune himself! As Eddie came on deck, Sharkey the tailless pig definitely recognized him, and came running over to greet him.

Several hours later, Eddie and his old captain were still talking, catching up with what had happened to each of them in the time since Eddie left whaling to join the navy. Taking Sharkey along with them, they had retired to the Sailing Pig Saloon while Aikane and the others began to remove the damaged parts of the ship. They could do that part without Eddie’s supervision.

Giorgio was happy to welcome both Sharkey and his old captain. Sharkey oinked happily upon entering the saloon, and was soon doing a detailed inspection of the place. It was almost like he knew the establishment was named after him. Giorgio supplied all

three of the men with several mugs of ale. Trying to keep up with the way Mowbray could put it away, Eddie drank more than he ever had in his life. Sharkey lapped up his beer from a bowl on the floor, and soon was tipsy.

Eddie was feeling pretty drunk himself, and he sat patiently as Giorgio retold his whole story about recovering in the clinic, getting fitted with his peg leg, marrying the pretty Hawaiian nurse, and investing his remaining money in this tavern. He was making himself a pretty good living now, he boasted. "And I'm a hell of a lot better off than working on that stinking boat of yours, sir." He joked with Captain Mowbray as though the accident that severed his foot and severed his service with the whaling ship had now made them equals.

Captain Mowbray seemed quite happy to accept the several rounds of ale Giorgio served him in thanks for having given him the start with the saloon business.

While Eddie and Captain Mowbray talked, Giorgio pulled out his violin and played for the patrons of The Sailing Pig. Just as he used to do when Giorgio played on the ship, Sharkey oinked along. Eddie marveled at the intelligence and perky personality of the animal. Though it is true that pigs like to wallow in mud when they are hot, Eddie observed that when given a chance to live cleanly pigs will do so. Sharkey was always quite clean. Before urinating or defecating on board *The Cape of Good Hope*, Sharkey always backed up to the railing. With the open doorway in the saloon, Sharkey let himself out when he wanted to relieve himself. He seemed to settle into the saloon immediately, and soon was stretched out comfortably under the table as the humans talked. After Giorgio promised to treat him well, and never to have ole Sharkey for dinner, Captain Mowbray allowed Sharkey to stay with Giorgio, and to become the resident namesake mascot for The Sailing Pig Saloon. Sharkey oinked enthusiastically.

"The ocean's no place for a pig. He needs more space to roam around, and to waller in the sand. You know, methinks he don't like killing of all those whales. I got the feeling he'd like it if these

last whales was the final ones that I killed. You know, in regard to whaling, our luck changed after you and that Jesse guy left us," Mowbray told Eddie. "Not two days later we spied the first of several whales and started making headway on fulfilling my quota with the shipowners.

"Me thinks it was your little friend's chanting that was jinxing the hunt. Many a time that little Yoshi told me he didn't like us whaling, that it was violating the rules of that Buddha god he worshiped."

"Buddha's not really a god," Eddie said.. "And Yoshi wasn't worshipping any god. He was meditating on karma."

The Captain was intoxicated by this time and just laughed.

"I liked the little guy, you know. Good sailor, but wrong attitude. You'd think he was as concerned the whales out there was happy and frolicking around like flying fish, as he was about the happiness of his own self. In all seriousness, I think those prayers of his was scaring the whales off. As God is my witness, I say there weren't never a whale in sight when he was up there at the bow chanting his sing-song."

Eddie thought the Captain was right that Yoshi didn't want the whales hurt and that maybe his prayers really were keeping them away.

"Turned out good we was rid of him. But then you started in on it, and our bad luck continued. If I'd been able to figure that out when you was there, I might have been pretty mad, but these ideas only occurred to me after you was gone. And it weren't worth a tinker's damn for me to be mad with you then, especially after always having good relations with you from the time I signed you up.

"You know, Mr. Eddie Freeman, I can't say I didn't have a soft place in my heart for you. Knowing you was a runaway slave, which me friend Blacky in Boston figured out before I even met you, brought back a lot of memories for this old man. In fact, that Blacky fella hisself was a runaway too. I know that for a fact cause I was the one who helped him escape. In gratitude, he helped me

find many a crewman over the years. Don't know if I'd been able to sail if it hadn't been for old Blacky. You was just the latest."

"How did you know?" Eddie asked.

"Well, if you're asking about the runaway part, it was especially when you insisted that your last name was Freeman. I seen so many runaways wanting to choose that for their family name. It was then I felt sure for certain that you was a runaway. And the reason I'm so convinced that your chanting was driving the whales away is cause when you left to go with Jesse into the Union Navy, why suddenly our luck changed.

"That bull whale we was chasing came back and practically surrendered itself to my harpoon. Like it wanted to die."

"We'd killed its mate and baby, sir," Eddie rejoined.

The Captain did not respond to Eddie's challenge. Eddie was not sure whether that was because Mowbray was drunk, or because he didn't wish to acknowledge the immorality of his murder of so many of these intelligent creatures. Mowbray continued on like Eddie had not said a word. "It was so big we got enough whale oil practically to meet all our quota.

"Then two more whales... It was a godsend."

Eddie asked, "So, if that was the case, why aren't you in Boston now?"

"Well, cause we had to lay over in the Aleutians. Winter had come on something fierce. We had that scout aboard..."

"Mangaq," Eddie remembered his name and thought affectionately of that strange Arctic dweller he'd befriended in his effort to keep some sense of connection with Yoshi.

"So we headed back to Unimak and decided to stay on land. Too many damned icebergs to navigate safely. And we had so much whale blubber, I didn't want to risk losing it all in a shipwreck."

Suddenly, the Captain sat up in his chair. "Hey, you know, that reminds me that I forgot to tell you about your little friend Yoshi. He weren't dead, as we thought, after all. When we had to lay over during the winter on Unimak, after a few weeks, I 'twas totally shocked when that little Japanese showed up. Turned out to

be pretty helpful to us. Said he was sorry about running off, and offered to help us out. Said he had to repay his karma or somthin' like that. He had a connection with a rich man there. They really showed the crew and me a good time. Treated me like a king. So we decided to stay on Unimak, and we stayed there for all this time until now. I think Yoshi would've supported twice our number if he thought it would keep us from hunting those whales he loves so much. Ain't you surprised? You thought he'd fallen in the ocean and froze."

Eddie remembered his grief when Yoshi left the whaler, leaving him alone on that ship. No need to mention to the Captain anything about his complicity in his buddy's disappearance.

"That's great to learn that Yoshi has a good life there in Unimak. But, sir, in all truth, nothing about Yoshi would ever surprise me." Eddie did not want the Captain to start asking questions about this subject, and it was best to let sleeping dogs lie, as they say. To get the Captain's attention off Yoshi, Eddie asked: "So how did *The Hope* get so wrecked up?"

"Well sir, after the ship sat through all those harsh winters it just started deteriorating, and I knew eventually I needed to get our whale oil back to Boston. I figured if I didn't come now, that the ship would be so deteriorated that it could not make the journey. Yoshi and his rich husband was a godsend for us, and after all my years of hard work I was mighty grateful just to take a long vacation away from the stresses and strains of being a captain. But I got tired of the frigid weather up there. You know how it can get to a soul. Still, half of the boys decided to stay there, so we only had a tiny crew to get us to Maui. We was doing fine, sailing south heading this way, truth be told, 'til three days north of Hawai'i we got hit by the biggest storm me eyes ev'r seen outside of Cape Horn. All them repairs you made, they just gave way. The yardarm snapped. The damn main mast broke. It's a miracle we even made it into port here. And, I have to add, it's also a miracle I got me best ship's carpenter back here with me."

"I am living here now, Captain. Not a chance in hell I'd be going back to whaling."

"Well, I didn't mean it that way, son. In fact, I'm not going back to whaling neither," Mowbray answered and slapped himself on the knee to emphasize his point.

"I ain't never going back to all that snow and sleet, neither in Boston nor the Bering Sea. Yes sir, I decided I'm gonna stay right here where it's warm. You know, son, I gotta admit it was seeing how happy you was with Yoshi made me realize I been too lonesome—and how happy we all been when we saw the islands in our sights yesterday and knew we was reaching land. That's what made me decide it's time to retire from whaling.

"I've been thinking maybe to get me a little cabana, or whatever they call them here in Maui, and move me and Steven here. You know, young Steven and me, we been getting sweet with one another for over a year now. Maybe I can convince him to stay in the islands with me. You remember what a sweetie Steven is, don't you?"

"Steven's one of the finest souls in the Pacific, as far as I'm concerned," Eddie was delighted to recall. "How come he didn't come with you to Giorgio's here. I'd love to see him."

"Steven was asleep in my cabin when you arrived today. He got seasick with all that tossing and turning in the storm. He hasn't been feeling too well these last couple days. Besides, he don't so much approve of me drinkin', you know. Even if he was feeling chipper he wouldn't want to come here cause there'd be liquor flowing. Maybe he'll be good for me. You know, sober me up." The Captain laughed heartily at that idea, even as Eddie thought that could be a very good thing for this man.

"Just hope the boy's willin' to spend his future with an old man like me..."

Eddie remembered Yoshi's praise for relationships between older and younger men. He was happy to hear Steven had a new relationship awaiting him, even after having lost Michael. As Eddie himself had learned twice, life goes on after losing a lover, and it is

best to try to locate another person to love rather than wallowing in misery over the last relationship that, for whatever reason, is gone.

"Mighty glad to hear that, sir. I hope you both are happy together. So, what will happen to *The Hope* if you're not gonna sail the ship back to Boston?"

"Well, Eddie me boy, if you and your crew is as good as you was as a carpenter on my ship, then I'm happy to pay you to repair her. I'm gonna send her back to Boston with the First Mate.

"First Mate's a good man, good sailor. I been working with him for many a year, and can trust him to send me remittance for the cargo and my damn commission. I'm gonna stay in Maui. I seen enough death and all the other problems a captain has to face.

"Hey, maybe you know an out-of-work officer out here who'd sign on to help him managing the crew..."

"Maybe I do," Eddie thought of Captain O'Neill. "Anyway, I think I owe you something for abandoning you and going with the Union Navy."

"No you don't, son, no you don't."

Eddie wanted to make sure he was handling this the best way for everybody concerned.

"I've got a carpentry crew. We'd be happy to help with your repairs. The men like the work. That's what matters to them. They do it well. Look, we'll do the job for a very low price to make it up to you."

Captain Mowbray took a deep draught of his ale. "You're a damn good man, Eddie Freeman. And so I'll take you up on that offer. But I'll give you a mighty fine tip just to show my gratitude."

Eddie smiled. "Well, nothing would make me happier than if you took the money you would have spent on repairing the ship, and instead use that money to build a nice cabana for you and Steven to live in. In fact, my crew could build that house for you, in the way the Hawaiians know so it won't get swept away by a strong wind. I bet if you offer Steven a nice house on the beach somewhere, he'd jump at the chance to stay here in Maui with you. My husband Aikane and I would love to visit the two of you

regularly." Eddie was doubly pleased if he could do something to help Steven and the Captain to have a nice future. Everything was working out perfectly.

"Captain Mowbray," he said, "I've been thinking for myself about another business here on Maui. I think there's money to be made in selling lamp oil to the islanders. If you're willing to give us a little gratuity for the work, I'd be happy to take that in some of that case oil you've got aboard *The Cape of Good Hope*."

Mowbray had the biggest haul he had had in years, and more than enough whale oil for the ship's owners to reap a handsome profit. They would never miss a few barrels. "You got yourself a deal," he replied with another toast of ale.

Eddie figured he wasn't really lying to his own skipper. There *was* money to be made in selling lamp oil on the island. But Eddie had moral qualms about making money off the killing of innocent whales. For the moment, he really had another use for that high quality volatile fuel. The whales it came from were already dead, so there was no sense in wasting their valuable oil. Besides, Eddie figured, if the whales had any wish at all about what might be done with their oil, it would be to rid the seas of the boats that had hunted them. But, he wasn't going to say anything to Captain Mowbray about that, no matter how friendly they seemed as they quaffed the last of the ale.

Just at that point, Steven entered the bar. When he saw Mowbray he got a perturbed look on his face, knowing that Mowbray was probably drinking too much again. But when he recognized Eddie his eyes lit up. The two friends hugged warmly. They talked for a while between themselves, and Eddie found that Steven was indeed happy to be with the Captain. Eddie did not tell him about his discussion with the Captain, but he did tell Steven how happy he and Aikane were living here. He said a vague, "Oh, it would be so nice if you and the Captain could be here too."

Steven replied, "Yes, Thomas has been talking about that. I think a little house on the beach would be quite romantic. Ever

since we went to that waterfall on our first day here, I've always felt like I could make Maui my permanent home."

"Another round, mateys?" Giorgio called out from behind the bar.

Looking over his shoulder at Steven, who he knew would disapprove, the Captain answered, "Thanks, my man, but I'm calling it a night. What do I owe you?"

"Drinks on the house, for you, sir." Giorgio mimicked a military snap to attention and saluted the old Captain as the man staggered to his feet and headed toward the door. He called to Steven, who helped him lovingly back to his ship.

"How about you, my man?" Giorgio asked Eddie after the others left. "As I told you the other day, I think I owe you my life—you and that saw of yours. If it hadn't been for you I'd probably have bled to death. Or, worse, still be a sailor on that damn whaling ship." He laughed.

"Glad I could help. And so glad to see you've found yourself a good life here."

Giorgio produced another mug of ale and beckoned to Eddie to come over to the bar. "I was really worried about you when you was talking to George the other day. I hope you resolved all that stuff from the past about Jesse. What I wanna know now is what you been up to more recently. I heard you started a ship's carpentry shop..."

Eddie had drunk too much, and he wanted to go home. He imagined Aikane was waiting for him. But it also occurred to him that maybe he could kill two birds with one stone, as it were, and complete another task in preparation for his attack on the Confederate ships. He decided to stay and talk with Giorgio. He sauntered over to the bar, staggering just a little himself.

The effects of the several mugs of ale he'd already consumed had given him an idea. Perhaps he could use a saloonkeeper on his side. He remembered Yoshi had said Buddha's precepts had discouraged drunkenness, but this was a much less serious karmic

violation than killing. He wanted Giorgio's help, and he needed more information that would help him accomplish his objectives.

"So what've you heard about the Confederates' plan with those ships?" he asked Giorgio as he took another swallow.

29

The Plan

Eddie was suffering a hangover the next morning as half his crew went back to work on the *Beauregard* and the two other merchant ships, while the other half went over to the damaged *The Cape of Good Hope* to start the repair of the mast and yardarm.

He now had a plan worked out.

When he found Captain O'Neill onboard the former *Golden Eagle*, he said, "I know of a job for you, sir, that you just might like, on *The Cape of Good Hope*, that whaler that showed up in the harbor yesterday. The captain's decided to stay here. The First Mate's gonna need some help getting it back to Boston. I bet they'd be grateful for your help and experience. If you do a good job, and get the First Mate to put in a good word for you, I'll bet the ship owners will give you a permanent job. With the war taking so many experienced captains into the Navy, I hear there's a high demand for good skippers. I'll bet they'll be willing to offer you a fine salary indeed."

"Thank you, my boy. I'm touched. All this is mighty nice of you. But I know from experience that such a good turn usually comes with it a request. So, tell me please, just what might you want in return."

"Well sir, you're right that I'm gonna ask you a favor. In fact, I want to ask for two favors. First, and this is the one that's gonna cost you. I want your blessing to set Tom free. You see, when I escaped

I gave my oath to Tom that I'd do everything I could to help him gain his freedom as well. I'm bound and determined to hide him here in Hawai'i. But because of what you told me yesterday, about your feelings on slavery, I'm asking your blessing rather than just stealing Tom from you without your knowledge."

"Well, Mr. Eddie, that's mighty noble of you to ask me like that. I appreciate it. Yes, I will grant you that request. But in all truthfulness, this is really no loss to me. First, just as was the case with you, I've earned a lot more money from hiring out Tom than the amount I paid when I bought him at the Savannah Auction House. As far as I am concerned, Tom has repaid all my investment. Second, if I take this job working for those Boston shipowners, I highly doubt that they'd want to have a slave owner working for them. So, if I have that job I'd want to free Tom anyway.

"But third, and most importantly, I feel sure that slavery will be ending soon. Here's something that you don't know. Just over a year ago President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. He ordered all the slaves in those rebellious States to be forever free. This proclamation means nothing if the South wins the war, but if the North wins that will be the end of slavery. I know those firebrand secessionists, and I am one hundred percent sure that they will never give up their slaves willingly, especially due to a threat by Abraham Lincoln. At this point the South considers him as worse than the devil.

"The President surely knows for himself, just as much as I do, that the South will never agree to come back into the Union voluntarily. Don't you see he's using this as his justification to end slavery. That's what he's wanted to do all along, but he couldn't say that for fear of alienating Kentucky, Maryland and Missouri, the slave States that did not secede. But now the Confederacy doesn't look like such a sure thing to the leaders of these border States, and they aren't about to join a lost cause."

Eddie listened to all this with great interest, responding, "But I've heard the Confederates are winning lots of battles. Aren't they

going to win their independence? And if they do, slavery will be around for a long time."

"Well, that's what all the alarmist headlines in the newspapers are saying, for sure," O'Neill responded. "But I don't care how many flashy battles Robert E. Lee is winning in Virginia. In every one of those attacks he makes, thousands of Southern men are dying. His aggressive strategy is rapidly bleeding the South to death. The North has twice as many people, and can keep replacing its troops while the South has already committed most of its resources.

"The main hope the South had at the beginning was that Britain or France would step in to assist them, just as the French assisted the patriots in the American Revolution. But if Britain and France have not moved by now, they're not going to. Especially since General Lee was forced to abandon his planned invasions of the North after his defeats at the Battles of Antietam and Gettysburg, there's little chance nowadays of any foreign intervention to rescue the Confederacy. Without that, I don't see how they can win.

"Everybody keeps their attention focused on the battles in Virginia, but the crucial action took place in the Mississippi Valley. Whoever controls the Mississippi River will win the war, no doubt about it. The Union Navy captured New Orleans, the River's port and the South's largest city. The Northern army under General Ulysses Grant got control of the rest of the Mississippi Valley. Now the Confederacy is split into two. That was a terrible defeat for the South. At this point the Confederacy is critically weakened. The only way they can win their independence now is if they continue to have so many of those flashy victories that Northern public opinion gets discouraged, and allows them to leave the Union. If President Lincoln can just prevent a few Confederate victories, the rebels will most likely get discouraged and give up. The sooner the Confederacy dies, the sooner slavery will end."

"Well, I'm greatly heartened by all this that you're telling me. I didn't know about any of this. If what you say is true, then it's really important to prevent the South from having more victories that will sustain their mood to fight," Eddie said.

"Yes, that's exactly right. It is all those battle victories that are keeping the rebellion alive. If there are no flashy victories, the Confederacy will fold like a house of cards. If the South can just be deprived of more successes, then there will be no chance that Britain or France would step in to offer massive aid to the South. The leaders of the border states realize this, which is why they haven't seceded. The President realizes this, which is why he doesn't have to worry about those states so much, and why he felt free to issue his Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln will never go back on his promise to free the slaves of the rebel states.

"Once slavery is abolished in Virginia, Tennessee and the deep South, how much chance in hell do you think slavery has of surviving in border states like Maryland and Kentucky? Slave owners in those States already had a hard enough time keeping their slaves from running away even before Lincoln was President. Without a pro-slavery national government to step up enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, and surrounded on all sides by free states, the slaves of Maryland and Kentucky would simply flee across a nearby border to be free.

"So, what I'm trying to tell you is that, unless the Confederates have so many victories that the North gets discouraged and gives up, slavery will be ending soon. That is why I am not hesitant to go ahead and emancipate Tom now, on condition that I can get this job you offered. As soon as I get that job, Tom will be a free man."

Oh, on hearing these words Eddie felt like he was in heaven. Not only because of what this means for Tom personally, but also because his and Tom's most daring wish, that they thought was so unrealistic and nigh impossible just four years ago, is now a Proclamation by the President of the United States. "The Emancipation Proclamation," Eddie repeated the words to himself. Even the name sounds grand. This man Abraham Lincoln had really followed through, in ways that Tom, Eddie and millions of slaves across the South could only dare to hope might happen.

"I'm mighty, mighty grateful for that, Captain. Not only about you freeing Tom, but for what you just told me about the war

and the end of slavery. Now I would never reveal this except for what you already said about your own feelings, but I want you to know that I have a plan to keep these ships here in Lahaina from contributing to the South's war effort. I want to do everything in my power to prevent them from making another victory for the rebels.

"So, for the second favor I'm asking, if you can bear with me I don't want to explain it to you. I just want to ask you to let Tom stay onboard the *Shenandoah* tomorrow instead of bringing him to work. If you do these two things I can guarantee to get you that job skippering the whaler going to Boston. After you're back there, you're on your own in your negotiations with the ship's owners."

"Fair enough. I'll just be happy to get out of my servitude in the Confederate Navy. So, on your second request I shouldn't ask what for?"

"That's right. Don't ask."

"Well, then I'll trust in your word and do as you ask. I believe you're a good man, Eddie Freeman. I'll let Tom know tonight that he should stay on the *Shenandoah* tomorrow. I'll also write him a letter stating, as his legal owner, I declare that from now on and forever more he is a free man.

"Like you," he added, and slapped Eddie on the back.

Eddie felt a surge of pride; he grinned.

While Eddie was talking with O'Neill, Aikane and the crew had started work on *The Cape of Good Hope*. They accepted Captain Mowbray's gift of three barrels of the precious case oil the crew had harvested.

Now, coming up to the deck after making the deal with Captain O'Neill, Eddie scanned the harbor. Captain Waddell was nowhere to be seen. With this good fortune, Eddie and O'Neill were transported in a Hawaiian outrigger canoe, paddled by Aikane's brothers, across the harbor to *The Cape of Good Hope*. Eddie introduced O'Neill to Mowbray and the First Mate. While they talked, the crew loaded the first barrel into the canoe.

The First Mate and O'Neill took an immediate liking to each other. Each was happy to have the other to share the responsibilities of the return voyage to Boston.

Thomas Mowbray revealed that after talking over the idea of living in Hawai'i with his friend Steven, they had definitely decided to stay together in Maui. Eddie was happy about that, for several reasons. After they negotiated the specifics of O'Neill's contract for the return voyage, and had come to an agreement, Captain Mowbray proposed a toast.

He declared he was going down into the ship's stores for the very last bottle of whiskey. When he came back up on deck with the bottle and a couple of glasses clutched in one hand, he handed Eddie a big box of matches. "You'll need these if you're gonna demonstrate the burning quality of this fine oil." It was clear he'd taken a swig from the bottle before coming topside. Eddie smiled to himself at the thought that he'd better not light a match now; it might set fire to the Captain's breath.

"Oh, yessir," Eddie agreed. Every detail of the plan was working out smoothly.

Because Eddie declined the offer of a glass, still slightly dizzy from last night, and the First Mate did not drink and O'Neill was a light drinker, Mowbray was going to end up drinking the lion's share anyway. Steven was quite happy to see it gone. So, for once, he did not complain as the Captain downed one glass after another. He had gotten Mowbray to promise not to buy any more liquor after the ship's store was depleted. He also got the Captain to agree to turn over the last three remaining kegs of rum to Eddie, for Eddie to use in his plan. With that last bottle of whiskey, Mowbray was intent on enjoying this last drunk to the fullest. As the alcohol loosened his tongue Mowbray admitted that Steven was right and he needed to stop drinking if he wanted to preserve his health. With Steven as his support, that is what he intended to do.

Previously, two of the main reasons Mowbray drank so much was the stress of being a captain and the loneliness of being unpartnered on a small ship; he was drowning his sorrows in

alcohol. Now that he was retiring, he looked forward to being free of all the stress he had previously been under. Plus, now he had a happy relationship with Steven.

Mowbray felt incredibly lucky to have an attractive young man as his devoted partner, and finally to have enough financial resources that they would be able to live, albeit frugally, in Maui. Mowbray knew that if he stopped drinking he would have enough money for them both to live comfortably, but he was acutely aware that if he wasted money on liquor then he and Steven would not have enough money to live. Steven had a care-giving personality, and he enjoyed cooking and cleaning, and keeping a nice home. He considered the potential they had together to be his dream life, especially in terms of living on the idyllic island of Maui. Steven was genuinely committed to taking care of Mowbray for the rest of his life. But he let the Captain know—in no uncertain terms—that if Mowbray wasted his retirement funds on liquor and there was not enough money to support them both he would leave in a heartbeat. That was additional reason for the Captain to want to become a teetotaler.

Seeing that this part of his plan was working to perfection, both with O'Neill and with Mowbray, Eddie excused himself and left the four seafarers to their celebration.

By this time, the crew of the whaler had loaded the third barrel onto the outrigger canoe. Eddie rode back to the *Beauregard* with Aikane's brothers and they carefully moved the barrel onto the deck. One barrel was now on the deck of each of the three Confederate ships. They told the guards that the barrel contained a special wood preservative that would make the deck last longer. None of the guards appeared to be suspicious in the least.

Eddie next went over to The Sailing Pig Saloon. He had carefully checked out the saloon owner's attitudes during their previous conversation. After making sure that Giorgio was strongly anti-slavery and anti-Confederate, Eddie told him and George Pulliam about his plan. Both of them enthusiastically joined the conspiracy. George was particularly happy to participate because, as with

Eddie, he felt that his time in the U.S. Navy had not contributed one iota to the war effort. Now, at last, he felt that he might be able to do something that could actually have an impact on the outcome of the struggle. In Eddie's plan, all they had to do was throw a party.

Later, when Eddie arrived, he saw that Giorgio and George had decorated the tavern, inside and out, with festive signs saying "Sharkey's Birthday Party. Free drinks to all comers." Sharkey himself was wearing a large pink bow above his ears; in big block letters "Happy Birthday Sharkey" was written on each of his sides. The pig oinked happily when he saw Eddie. Even Sharkey seemed to be excited to contribute to the Union war effort.

Eddie reminded Giorgio of his offer of free food and drinks to Eddie at any time in the future. Eddie pledged that he would not hold Giorgio to account on this offer, if Giorgio would offer free beer to the general population today. Eddie felt no personal loss by giving up this offer, because with his bad hangover he had decided that he did not like alcohol anyway. Eddie offered to pay for the cost of the beer, but Giorgio refused, saying that he would be happy to make this as his contribution to the Union war effort. Plus, he said, the whole idea would be great publicity for his recently-opened tavern.

"There'll be some fellas who'll be attracted to a big party, and who'll want to drink hard liquor. If you can get a big crowd to come for the free beer, I'll bet I can make up the cost of the kegs of beer, just from the profits of selling my most select fine liquors. That's where the real money's to be made in the tavern business. Nope, Mr. Freeman, you don't have to pay me anything at all. I'm happy to contribute me entire stock of all the barrels of beer and ale plus I'll throw in all the kegs of rum I have on hand.

"If this plan works to attract a large crowd to my business, I might do this idea as a regular bash. If you can bring in some more Confederate schooners to Lahaina, we can help the Union win the war, and make ole Sharkey a big birthday party every month. Why, if your plan works, we might be able to cripple the whole damn

Confederate Navy in the Pacific, just by throwing birthday parties for a pig! Then in the future, when they write the history of this war, they can list all the important generals what won the war for the Union, plus Sharkey The Sailing Pig! "

Sharkey oinked enthusiastically at the mention of his name. It was as though the pig understood the importance of his participation in the plan. Sharkey cooperated totally as George placed a rope around his neck. George then led Sharkey all around Lahaina, spreading the word about the offer of free beer, rum and ale to everyone. The little town of Lahaina had certainly never seen such a sight as the pink-ribboned birthday pig as George led Sharkey around. A buzz about the big party was soon created.

Aikane's brothers went around the harbor to every part of the town. To every sailor they met, they told about the free beer, ale, and rum at The Sailing Pig Saloon. For the Confederate sailors, and any recent visitor who was in Maui for the first time, they embellished the original story, telling them today was a Hawaiian holiday, and that they always celebrated by giving free rum and beer to everyone.

Aikane brought the three kegs of rum, donated by Captain Mowbray, and presented one keg to each group of three Confederate Marines who were left to guard each of the three captured merchant ships. The Marines were overjoyed at their good fortune, and by the evening they were dead drunk. So was practically every other sailor in town.

George's tour of the town with Sharkey proved to be effective. The gimmick of the pig with the big pink bow had gotten everyone talking, and a big crowd showed up at The Sailing Pig Saloon. While George and Giorgio's wife served up all the free drinks, Giorgio played rousing Portuguese music on his violin. A great time was had by all, and it was the most raucous party the little town had ever seen.

By ten o'clock Giorgio had exhausted all his barrels of beer, ale, and rum. But just as he suspected, he was able to sell enough hard liquor to cover the costs of the complimentary potables, and

he even made a little profit to boot. Giorgio was quite happy with the result, especially because of all the good publicity that was generated for his new business.

As midnight approached, the area around the harbor was totally quiet. The majority of the population lay asleep in a drunken stupor. At that point Eddie and his team made their move. Following the plan, Aikane's young male-sister Mahu, the Two-Spirit who'd proved to be as competent with manly skills as with womanly, dragged the outrigger canoe into the surf and paddled out toward the *Shenandoah*. Eddie, Aikane and Makalapua headed to the wharf. Walking right past the sleeping Confederate guards, each of them boarded one of the three docked ships.

Working simultaneously on each ship, Eddie, Aikane and Makalapua pried open the barrel of whale oil that was sitting in the middle of each ship's deck, and with a bucket they had earlier left beside each barrel, they quickly splashed the highly flammable case oil around the deck. Then when finished they lit one of the matches Mowbray had given them as a signal to each other. When all three saw the others' matches burning, they tossed the little flames into the case oil. As the fire began to spread, the three conspirators then raced toward their agreed rendezvous back on the beach. Suddenly, behind them, the decks of the doomed ships were dancing with flames.

As Eddie arrived, breathing hard from running, with the other two catching up with him, the first thing he noticed—to his satisfaction—was that no one was ringing the fire alarm bell at the Lahaina customhouse. Normally, whenever a ship caught on fire in Lahaina harbor, the townsfolk would have rushed to put it out. But most of the townsfolk were totally inebriated. The only ones who were not drunk were the teetotaling missionaries. Eddie trusted that when they saw it was the Confederate ships ablaze, they'd let their New England sympathies predominate over their duties as volunteer firemen. The ships' fires were going to blaze unchecked. Even if they awoke, those six inebriated guards would be unable to do anything to stop the conflagration.

As the fires spread out across the decks accelerated by the flammable case oil, the Confederate lookout on the *Shenandoah* saw the flames and called the alarm. In the glare, he didn't see the little native canoe moving across the dark water in their direction.

"All hands on deck! All hands on deck!" The sailors leapt into action. Confederate Captain Waddell, seeing his three prized vessels starting to go up in flames, ordered the *Shenandoah* into action. The Confederate Navy was coming to the rescue. Maybe they'd arrive in time to start a bucket brigade to douse the fires with seawater. Waddell called for the crew to unfurl the sails.

As the crew followed their orders, the canvases dropped limply to the deck. The ropes that should have pulled the sails up into place all just slid free out of their pulleys and fell uselessly. Earlier in the day, Joey and Tom, left aboard the battleship with a mission assigned them by Eddie and unwittingly facilitated by Captain O'Neill, had surreptitiously cut the riggings where they attached to the sails.

As soon as the alarm sounded, and the Confederate command on the ship was in chaos, Tom and Joey, wearing only dark-colored shorts, calmly walked topdeck. They took some large nails and quietly rushed to the ten cannons on the seaward-facing side of the ship. While all eyes were looking at the blazing ships on the harbor side, the two slaves placed one nail into the fuse hole of each of those large cannons.

Joey and Tom both had hammers; they started at opposite ends of the ship. As soon as they hammered the first nail, they quickly ran to the next cannon and drove the nail solidly into the fuse hole. With everyone's attention focused on the fires, and in the confusion of the alarm noise, no one heard as the two black men struck the nails.

Once the fuse hole was sealed in one of these muzzle-loaded cannons, there was no way to get the fuse and the ignition spark to the powder inside the barrel. Since Captain Waddell did not have the technological equipment on board his ship to repair such damage, those cannons were rendered totally useless. Eddie had

learned this simple technique of sabotaging an enemy's cannon, by spiking it with a nail, from the training he had received when he was a deck worker on the *U.S.S. James K. Polk*.

Joey and Tom managed to get eight nails solidly hammered into the ship's cannons before a guard noticed them and started shooting. The two immediately jumped overboard and swam underwater, trying to get as far as they could from the ship. Following instructions, they swam in the direction of the open sea. Confederate guards were firing at them, but in the darkness they could not be seen. Their dark skin and dark clothing protected them.

As they swam further away from the ship, in the water they caught sight of Mahu's outrigger canoe, which was waiting for them right where they'd been told it would be. Everything was working according to plan.

Though Joey and Tom were disappointed that they had not been able to spike all ten of the cannons, they were happy to get away without being shot. They rested in the canoe as Mahu paddled toward the shore. As a result of the spiking of eight of the twenty cannons aboard the *C.S.S. Shenandoah*, it would be a much less dangerous foe when facing a fully armed United States warship. Captain Waddell would never be as confident in his attacks as he was previously when he had a fully functioning warship. Eddie's plan was going to make Confederate strategy in the Pacific much less aggressive.

In just a few minutes the three of them were heading back to the shore, all laughing and whooping victoriously.

When the outrigger reached the beach at the rendezvous point, Eddie and the two Hawaiians were there waiting for them. Eddie ran into the water and excitedly embraced Joey. Though he and Joey had communicated through Tom, this was the first time they'd actually seen each other. Eddie could hardly believe that his friend, whom he had thought to be dead, was now here joyously clasped in his arms. They stood there together for a couple of minutes, looking at each other in the light from the fires.

The six of them literally jumped up and down as they watched the three Confederate ships burning, while the *Shenandoah* remained stuck far out in the water. By now the flames were beginning to spread up into the riggings. They laughed and laughed, thinking about the imperious Confederate Captain Waddell on his immobilized battleship, watching his well-laid plans literally go up in smoke.

Just as Eddie was feeling giddy with pride at their success, he looked back at the nearest ship, the *Beauregard*, that had once been the merchant ship *The Golden Eagle* under Jonathan J. O'Neill's command. He hoped Captain O'Neill wouldn't be too angry at him for destroying his ship. After all, since it had been commandeered by the Confederates, it was as good as gone anyway. He recollected that the plan to invade San Francisco would have seen this ship scuttled in the escape.

As Eddie watched, suddenly, he saw a man rush onto the deck from downbelow. He had not counted on anyone being down in the hold; why wasn't he ashore with the other drunken sailors? Eddie could see the man silhouetted in the flickering light as the whale oil volatilized and ignited in little wisps of blue and golden flame that danced about the deck. He seemed to be safe for the moment, but was surrounded by the fires. Why didn't he just run to the side and jump over into the water?

For a moment, Eddie thought to himself that, for whatever reason this man was on the ship, he was a Confederate, slavery-defending rebel who deserved to die. Eddie started to turn his eyes away. But then he remembered his promise to Yoshi that he would not cause any deaths if at all possible. No killing was the Buddha's first precept.

He hesitated. Eddie just could not bear to leave the man to die a painful death. Up to now everything had been going entirely according to plan. But now this unknown man was throwing a wrench into the plot. Eddie knew that if he rushed back onto the burning deck himself to save him, he risked his own life. He might easily slip and fall in the whale oil and be severely burned, even

die. Nevertheless, he felt the obligation to protect life. He thought he heard the man scream for help.

Just at that moment, a strand of rigging flashed into flame and a cross-arm high above broke free and swung down toward the deck. It struck the screaming man right in the face and knocked him over. He needed help.

Though it seemed like everything was moving in slow motion, within mere seconds Eddie was running back to the ship. He was on automatic. The priority to honor and protect the life of a fellow human being took him over. He bounded up the gangplank. He could see the man had fallen and was lying still, but his clothes weren't burning, though there were sprites of flame flashing around him. Then suddenly the man's hair seemed to ignite. Not taking any time to think, Eddie jumped down and slid across the slippery deck. "*Nam Myoho*," he shouted and ran right into the fire.

He grabbed the man up in his arms and, with that kind of full awareness that happens when time slows down in such a crisis, Eddie had the good sense to pull the man's jacket up over his head to smother the flames around his hair and beard. He could smell the characteristic scent of burning hair. Then with a quick shove, he pushed the man over to the edge of the deck. And then threw himself over into the dark water, pulling the man with him.

Eddie was not sure if the man was dead or alive, but he grabbed hold of the man's jacket and began laboriously swimming back toward shore. He worried this Confederate might attack him if he regained consciousness, but still Eddie pulled the body up onto the sand when he reached the beach. The man's hair was singed and he must have had a beard before 'cause there was singed hair around his chin and jaw. Though Eddie could see his clothes were scorched and blackened, his face wasn't burned. It looked as if he'd been injured more by the falling crossarm than by the fire itself. Eddie shook him by the shoulders to try to revive him.

Only then did he realize in the incandescence from the burning ships that the person he had just saved was none other than Captain O'Neill!

Eddie collapsed in tears when he realized that, if he had hesitated just a few more seconds, the kind red-bearded former master might have burned to death. He was greatly relieved to see that only the Captain's distinctive red hair and beard had burned. Their plunge into the dark seawater had extinguished the fire and protected his face.

At last he had truly repaid the debt he owed to the Captain. He did not feel guilty about escaping from the Savannah shipyard, but he had always felt a desire to repay the Captain in some way. After all, running away was like stealing himself from the Captain. Now that karma had been repaid. By buying him at the slave auction house, the Captain had saved Eddie from a terrible fate as a field slave and probably an early death. By rescuing the Captain from the fire, Eddie had saved his life in return. He was amazed at how the seemingly random circumstances of life allowed him to tie up so many loose ends from his past.

"What happened?" O'Neill muttered as he regained consciousness. "How did I get here?" Then his eyes popped wide open to see a familiar face. "Eddie, my man, thank God, it's you! But how did I get here? Wasn't there a fire?"

"You're safe now," Eddie reassured him.

"Oh, my head hurts."

"You got struck by a falling beam; I'm afraid your beard is gone." The Captain felt his chin and another expression of surprise passed over his countenance. "Your hair's burnt off. And your captain's suit's ruined."

"Did you save me?"

"I think we saved each other. Now, why don't you just lay here a little while till you feel okay? Your head's gonna take a little healing." Eddie felt his forehead. "You got a bad bump coming up."

Aikane, Mahu and Makalapua arrived at that moment. "Look, it's my friend, Cap't O'Neill," Eddie announced. "He's safe, I think."

Makalapua said he'd get help and make sure the Captain was taken to the hospital to be treated with salve to soothe any burns he might have sustained.

"Just let me lie here a few minutes," O'Neill asked, "till my head stops pounding."

Once he felt the Captain was safe, and knowing Makalapua would see to his welfare, Eddie left him on the beach and headed back to the wharf to assess the success of their blow against slavery.

There was still another stage in this plan.

30

The Swindle

Yes, Eddie was not finished in his effort to weaken the Confederacy. He had one other idea up his sleeve. He not only wanted to destroy Captain Waddell's ships, but he also wanted to deplete Waddell's money so that he could not do further mischief. To do that, Eddie would have to have the cooperation of the Harbormaster, Mr. Spencer.

First, he had to learn if he could trust Mr. Spencer. So on the morning after the fire, Eddie went to the Harbormaster's quarters and asked his advice. Eddie acted innocently, like he had no idea how the ships had been burned. He asked, "Mr. Spencer, I frankly don't know what to do. Captain Waddell paid us half of the fee that we asked for to repair his three ships. I already used that money to buy supplies, and distributed most of it to each member of my work crew. If I didn't pay them up front, they would have left and taken another job. They did a lot of work in the last few days on those ships, and now all that work has gone up in smoke. So now that the ships are destroyed, should I ask them to give back their cut of the pay? And what about the supplies I already bought?"

The Englishman replied, "Well, don't tell anybody I advised you this, because as Harbormaster I have to appear strictly neutral. But if I were in your shoes I wouldn't give back one ounce of that gold he paid you. The first reason you should not is because if you ask your crew to return the money you already paid them, how much chance do you think they will ever agree to work for you in the future? It's much better to give them credit for their work, and then expect them to work a comparable number of days on another project later. If they won't do that, then you really do not want them as employees.

"Second, remember that every ounce of that gold that Waddell paid you was stolen from the safes of the Northern ships he captured. If you give back any of that gold, it would be just like giving it back to a bank robber who had stolen the money from a bank."

Eddie agreed with the Englishman. He did not see how retaining the money could create bad karma, because the bags of gold that Waddell possessed were all stolen from the safes of the vessels he had captured. Is it immoral, Eddie wondered, to steal from a thief? While he wished Yoshi was here to give his sage advice, Eddie felt that if he took the money from Waddell and then used it for good purposes, maybe that would not create bad karma.

"Third," the Harbormaster continued, "remember what the Southern Confederacy stands for: slavery. They can talk about States Rights all they want to, but when push comes to shove the only right they seem really concerned about is the right to own other human beings as slaves. Now you have to understand where I am coming from on this issue. I am an Englishman. I am not proud of the role of the British merchants who took slaves from Africa and sold them to plantations in the Americas. But three decades ago the British government did the right thing and made slavery illegal throughout the British Empire. Most Englishmen today feel the same way that I do, that slavery is a barbaric and uncivilized holdover from the past. So I have no sympathy for the Southern Confederacy.

"Fourth, when the United States government began this horrid war, they disavowed any relation between their policy on the South and on slavery. In that context, I thought that the Northerners ought to simply let the Southerners go their own way if that's what they wanted. But now that Abraham Lincoln has issued his Emancipation Proclamation, the whole character of the Northern war effort has changed. Since Lincoln has made it into a war to end slavery, my sympathies have switched. Now I think it best if the North wins, and ends slavery. If the South wins, slavery will only continue.

"So for all these reasons, I think everything possible should be done to weaken the Confederacy. I want this war to end soon, so that slavery will be abolished."

"Does that include doing dishonest things to accomplish that goal?" Eddie asked.

"Well, what's that phrase? 'All's fair in love and war.' Since Captain Waddell used trickery to attack and capture those merchant ships, then why not use the same means he has used?"

"Well, if I wanted to engage in a bit of dishonesty to get Captain Waddell to turn over his money, would you support that?"

"The way Waddell has been throwing around money since he arrived here, tells me that he is not the kind of man who is careful with his pennies. I believe it was the American Benjamin Franklin who said, 'A fool and his money are soon parted.' If you have a plan to relieve our good captain of more of his money, I would be most interested in helping that along. The less money the Confederacy has, the sooner they will have to give up and close shop."

"Exactly. Thank you Mr. Spencer. I will be talking with you later."

After leaving the Harbormaster's office, Eddie fairly ran over to The Sailing Pig Saloon. When he entered Sharkey oinked a welcome as always, and Giorgio was even more enthusiastic. "Oh my, Eddie boy, you must be very proud to have pulled off that blazing finale last night. It was quite a scene. And I want to thank you for that idea of yours about Sharkey's Birthday Bash. Why,

believe it or not, but I actually made a profit off the partiers. And the amount of goodwill created is terrific. So I may make that a regular event at the Pig. Let's see, I can have a special event for the birthday of King Kamehameha, for me pretty wife's birthday, for me own birthday, for our wedding day, for the day we met, oh the list of potential holidays is endless!"

"And don't forget about your idea to have a monthly event for Sharkey. I think a 'Pig Appreciation Day' would be a fine tradition to begin."

"Ha, I'll bet you're right on that one as well. So how do you feel after your great victory last night? Everybody's talking about you, and how brilliant your plan was."

"Well, I'll feel a lot better if I can pull off one more plot against good old Captain Waddell. But I need you to keep all this under your hat. And I may be asking you to participate."

"Of course, I'll be sure to keep me mouth shut. If there's anything you want me to do, just ask. I'll be happy to throw another drunk for everybody."

"No, that's not want I want. This time, what I need is your accent."

"Ha. That's a first! What do you want with a Portuguese accent?"

"I know you spoke Portuguese all the time with the Brazilians on our crew of *The Cape of Good Hope*. So tell me, have you ever been to Brazil."

"Why, honey child, I grew up in Brazil! Hadn't been back there for many'a year, but me little bride wanted t' see th' place where I was a little one, so we went there for our honeymoon trip last year. First time I was walking around on me peg leg, but that's where I learned I could do just fine on it"

"So is it true what I heard, that slavery exists in Brazil today?"

"Yes, unfortunately, that is true. The American South and Brazil are the two biggest countries in the world today that still allow slavery. Should have been abolished years ago, in me way of thinking."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say that. How would you like to engage in my plan to get our friend Captain Waddell to turn over his remaining money for the benefit of our little island home? Based on what you told me, I think the best use for that money would be to expand the clinic that you speak so highly of. You think they would use the money wisely?"

"Oh, that would be the absolute best thing to do with it. Yes, by all means, me matey, count me in. What do you want me to do?"

"Well, I want you to pose as a diplomat from Brazil who wants to make a pro-slavery alliance with the Confederacy, and of course you will need some money to get that project started."

"Great idea. What do you want me to say?"

"Say anything you want, just say it in Portuguese."

"Easy enough. Should I play me violin as well?"

"I don't think that will be necessary. But, oh, do you have a formal suit, like a diplomat would wear?"

"You're in luck on that one. Me wife insisted I buy the most formal suit you can imagine, for me wedding. And it's been sitting there in me closet and ain't been used once since the damn wedding. So I'd be happy to wear it just so it don't go to waste."

"Perfect. Now all I need is someone who speaks French. Do you happen to know anyone who speaks French in these parts?"

"Why, you're in luck again. George speaks better French than he does English. You see, before he came back to America to join the Union Navy, he was working in French Polynesia, in the Tahitian Islands south of here. I know a little French myself, and I tell you he speaks like a native."

"Great. So does he have a nice suit?"

"'Fraid you're outta luck on that one, baby. George is poorer than a churchmouse."

"So, where can we find something nice to dress him up in?"

"Got me on that one. I only have my one wedding suit."

Eddie searched his brain. And then the thought suddenly popped into his head about the gentleman's suit that he had stolen when he worked in Savannah. It had been a lifesaver for him

when he escaped to Boston, but he had never once worn it since then. He had kept it neatly folded in a footlocker all the time he was on the whaler and in the Navy, and it was among his meager possessions that his friends turned over to Aikane when he was wounded. Aikane had put it in an old footlocker, and Eddie had almost forgotten about it. Now he thought it would come in handy as part of his plan. He said to Giorgio, "Now that I think about it, George is about the same size and height as me. I may have just the clothes for him."

Giorgio promised to fill George in on the details of Eddie's plan, and Eddie ran back to the Harbormaster quarters. When he got there the office was closed, but Mr. Spencer kindly agreed to receive him in his private parlor. From the outside it was nothing out of the ordinary for a house in Lahaina. But Eddie was pleasantly surprised to find that Mr. Spencer had fixed up the interior of his parlor most impressively. Eddie had no idea what an upper class English gentleman's house would actually look like, but in his imagination this is exactly what he would have thought. It seemed the perfect spot for Eddie's plan.

Eddie laid out his ideas for how to fleece the Confederate captain of his ill gotten bags of gold. Mr. Spencer laughed when he heard the plan, and he was glad to coordinate the effort. As an added benefit, Mr. Spencer spoke French and even a bit of Portuguese. Plus, he thought Eddie's idea of donating the money to the Lahaina clinic was a great idea. There was a strong need for an expanded and updated hospital in Lahaina, and this gold would be the perfect way to pay for that expansion. They both pledged that any money they could persuade Waddell to part with would be donated in its entirety to the hospital.

Mr. Spencer had an educated upper class London accent, and so Eddie trusted him to be able to carry off the ruse. But he knew that if Captain Waddell heard either Giorgio or George speak their rustic forms of English he would become suspicious. The only way the plan could succeed is if Giorgio spoke only in Portuguese and George spoke only in French. Eddie was taking a big chance in

hoping that Captain Waddell spoke neither of those languages. It was unlikely that the career naval officer would speak Portuguese, but sometimes naval officers knew French. Eddie hoped their luck would hold.

Eddie and the English Harbormaster brainstormed into the night. They each came up with more ideas as the night wore on and then agreed on their plan. They had to move fast, in fear that Waddell might leave Maui quickly after last night's disaster.

Eddie went home, carefully pulled the gentleman's suit out of the footlocker, brushed it, and with the help of Aikane's sister Mahu ironed it so it would be ready to use for the next day's plot. Then he shined his shoes that Captain O'Neill had bought for him. He prayed that the clothes and shoes would fit George.

Bright and early the next morning Eddie came back to The Sailing Pig. Both Giorgio and George were there, practicing their accents to sound as high class and refined as possible. That was not easy for old salts like the two of them. But Giorgio looked quite the official in his wedding suit, and fortunately both Eddie's shoes and the gentleman's suit fit George fairly well. Together with Mr. Spencer, they might be able to pull this charade off.

"Now, this is what I have to emphasize most of all. You speak the entire time in French or Portuguese. Remember, you are government officials who do not speak *any* English, so if someone cracks a joke you do not laugh. Look like you do not understand if they laugh."

Giorgio offered to bring his finest liquors to loosen the good captain's wallet and convince him to put up his money. Eddie said that was very generous of Giorgio, but only if neither of them drank anything. Eddie could imagine the disasters that might occur if George or Giorgio got drunk and started speaking in English. "Remember, your characters do not speak or even understand English. Never say a word in English! You just say whatever comes into your mind, in your language, and let Mr. Spencer do all the negotiating. He knows the plan, and what to do. We have to work fast, so get ready to go soon.

Eddie next ran over to Mr. Spencer's house. The Harbormaster had already posted a big sign saying the harbor office was closed for the day, and he'd ransacked his office a bit, leaving the door to the office safe open and with nothing inside the safe.

Spencer read Eddie the letter he had composed to send to Captain Waddell:

Sir:

I cannot begin to convey my shock and sadness at the disaster which befell your ships and our town last night. Not only were your vessels destroyed, but my office was ransacked and my entire treasury stolen. I can assure you, for my own reasons as well as your interests, that I will do everything to locate the perpetrators of these infamous acts and bring them to justice. I want to help you, and need whatever information you have that may help us catch these evil men.

But before we can get to those matters, I would also like to invite you to a meeting. As luck would have it, today I am scheduled to receive two important diplomatic officials who have recently been involved in important negotiations with King Kamehameha. If you would consent to be present during this meeting at one o'clock in the afternoon, as a representative for the Confederate States of America, I think you will find the discussion to be of potentially great assistance to your government and your cause.

I remain, sir, your most humble and obedient servant,

Most sincerely yours,

H. J. Tazewell Spencer

Her Royal Majesty's Diplomatic Corps

Eddie agreed the letter was perfect. "If that doesn't get him to grab the bait," Mr. Spencer declared, "I don't know what will." Eddie trusted that Mr. Spencer would follow through effectively with the ideas that they discussed the previous evening.

The Harbormaster dispatched the letter with one of his employees, telling the man to take it directly to Captain Waddell and to wait for an answer.

Eddie and Mr. Spencer sat down together to wait too.

Promptly at one o'clock, Spencer was pleased to hear a knock on the door. Eddie sequestered himself in the closet in Mr. Spencer's parlor. The door was partially louvered and allowed Eddie to hear what was going on. He'd placed a chair inside the closet so he could sit comfortably and quietly and hear the upcoming encounter.

Mr. Spencer opened the door. Waddell had come, but with two adjutants. When he saw the others, Spencer welcomed the captain profusely but positioned himself at the door in such a way that the adjutants could not enter. Turning to Waddell, he said, "Excuse me, Captain, for not making this clear, but the nature of these diplomatic negotiations make the presence of anyone other than yourself impossible. These matters are for you and you alone to be informed about.

"I want to meet with you later so that we can begin the search for the perpetrators of yesterday's heinous crimes. Perhaps your men will need to be present for that discussion, but right now more important matters are before us—and for your ears only."

"Yes, I understand," the Captain said, seeming a little baffled but cowed by the Englishman's authoritarian demeanor. Spencer was an official of the British government, after all: Harbormaster of Lahaina. Waddell told his assistants to go back to the ship. Spencer then ushered him into the parlor.

Eddie smiled to himself. Mr. Spencer was obviously good at manipulating people.

Once Spencer had closed the door in the face of the two adjutants, he officiously introduced the Captain to Giorgio Dominica, Right Minister of International Affairs to His Majesty the King of Brazil, and to Georges Chartres, Minister to French Polynesia from Emperor Napoleon V of France.

In his hiding place Eddie thought about how handsome and imposing his friends were in their fine suits.

After speaking in French to Waddell, who did not respond, Spencer made sure the Confederate commander did not in fact understand French by saying some very ridiculous things to George. When Waddell did not react to the nonsense, Spencer was satisfied he could continue the ruse. Then in his rudimentary Portuguese he spoke to Giorgio.

After that he turned to Waddell and said: "Both of these officials have agreed to reveal their purpose in being here to you, on the condition that you will keep this information in the strictest confidence. This is not even to be conveyed by telegraph or written message. Is that clear?"

"Yes," said Waddell with increasing interest.

"Very well. Here is the situation. In his public stance, King Kamehameha is strictly neutral in the present hostilities between the Northern and the Southern States. He does not wish to get His Independent Royal Kingdom of Hawai'i embroiled in foreign entanglements. But privately, I will tell you, he is alarmed at the rapid geographic and economic expansion of the United States. He is fearful of American expansion in the Pacific, and that there may come a time when a powerful and united America might try to annex Hawai'i. He feels that if the Confederate States were to establish their independence, a more comfortable balance of power would emerge, and Hawai'i would not be in danger. In short, he wants your cause to succeed. He is also looking to Britain and France as counterpoints to American dominance. That is why he has assigned me, a British consular official, as the Harbormaster for the Island of Maui.

"He is now inviting Monsieur Chartres to establish a similarly close relationship with France. As you may know, two years ago Emperor Napoleon V made a major initiative into Southeast Asia with a French directorate in Indochina and a special arrangement with King Norodom of the Khmer Empire. He is also the chief sponsor of Archduke Maximilian in his establishment of a royal government in Mexico."

"Yes, I am familiar with that," Waddell offered. "My government looks with favor on an alliance with the French sponsored government in Mexico. I am sure that my government would be similarly favorable toward an alliance with the French and the British concerning the Pacific. The Confederate States has no ambitions over the Kingdom of Hawai'i or any other Pacific state or colony."

"Yes, we understand that. That is why you have been invited to this meeting. All of us, Great Britain, France, and Hawai'i, are united in opposition to United States expansionism. We see an independent Confederate States of America as a bulwark keeping the United States from expanding southward into the Caribbean and Latin America. That is why the representative of Brazil is here."

Spencer then poured a glass of fine liqueur for the Captain, and invited him to drink while he spoke in Portuguese to Giorgio, who responded at length in Portuguese. Giorgio talked about how much he loved his wife, and his plans for the future of his tavern. Spencer then turned to Waddell and said: "As you know, like your country, slavery is established in Brazil. The Minister has told me that the government of Brazil is potentially interested in an alliance with the Confederate States, for the purpose of preserving slavery in both countries. Now this is where the question becomes quite delicate..."

With these words, Spencer leaned in closely to Waddell to practically whisper: "All of this must be kept in the strictest, I repeat strictest, confidence. You see, there are certain influential groups with whom I am connected, in both Great Britain and France, who feel that abolishing slavery was a huge mistake for our nations. It is not wise to try to establish slavery in England or France, but we may have the strength, if your war against the Lincoln abolitionists is successful, to reestablish slavery in the Caribbean colonies. If we can construct an alliance of the Confederacy, the French in Mexico, French, British and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, British and French Guiana, and Brazil, then it is possible to turn the entire Caribbean region into a vast multi-national confederacy

with slavery as the basis of its economy. This region could become a strong counterbalance to the United States, and a major player on the world stage."

By this time, Captain Waddell was salivating at the thought. He realized he could be a central official in introducing this grand world scheme to his government, and perhaps to President Jefferson Davis himself.

Eddie remembered Mr. Spencer saying they had to play to the man's vanity and self-interest. That's how you get people to fall for a swindle.

"There is one immediate problem, however. These ministers and I were supposed to travel to Brazil, and from there to the Caribbean, to meet with Spanish officials in Cuba. If we can get the Spaniards involved, since slavery is also established in their colonies of Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico, then the potential for a great slave confederacy increases dramatically. If negotiations are successful in Cuba, it will be possible for Confederate agents to run the blockade and come to Cuba for an international conference to establish such a confederacy. Each of us alone against the United States might fail, but all of us united will surely succeed!"

By this time Captain Waddell, who had been served a second glass of liqueur by Mr. Spencer, was fairly bulging with thoughts of the possibilities for the Confederacy. Eddie had learned from Captain O'Neill that the reason Waddell had volunteered to be transferred to England, and then to commission the British-built C.S.S. *Shenandoah* in the first place, was because of his plans to promote Confederate interests worldwide. Now, in this meeting, it seemed that his wildest desires were being presented to him on a silver platter. He fairly salivated at the thought that he could be the official who spearheaded such a diplomatic initiative. This could change the whole future of the war, and of the future of the Confederate States as a nation.

"The immediate problem," Spencer continued, "is that a secretive alliance within my government had managed to send me the funds to make this journey of the three of us to Brazil, and to

collect other officials to accompany us on our way to Cuba. But, as you know, in the attacks of last night, my safe was broken into and all of these funds were stolen. The officials who are sponsoring me will not soon be able to collect such funds and hide them again within the budgets of several departments. It looks like our trip will have to be canceled."

"No, don't cancel it," Waddell said, "I would be honored to have the *Shenandoah* transport all of you to Brazil, and even from there to Cuba. My government has given me the authority to make such decisions about the use of my vessel."

At first Spencer thought that this actually might be something to pursue, in getting the feared Confederate warship to spend its time over the next several months engaged in a wild goose chase instead of attacking American shipping. He started talking in French with George, thinking aloud about the pluses and minuses of this course of action. He told George to ramble on for a while in French so that he could have time to think about what to do. Then after George finished, he told Giorgio to do the same in Portuguese. All the while this long discussion was going on, Spencer was careful to refill the Captain's glass of liqueur whenever he took another drink.

But after thinking it through, Spencer decided that he did not want to devote months of his time to deceiving this stupid captain, and he was fearful that eventually George or Giorgio would slip up and say something in English. It was too big a risk to take. After long talks, Spencer turned to Waddell and said: "Both Messieurs Chartres and Dominica are extremely grateful for your generous offer, but they feel it is not a good idea. First, your ship needs to remain in Hawai'i in order to develop a presence of your government with King Kamehameha. They feel that you are a man with obvious diplomatic abilities, and you can be more valuable to your cause in negotiating with the King rather than chasing whaling ships across the Pacific.

"Second, if this idea is going to take shape successfully, it is extremely important that it be perceived as an international

movement. If it is seen as merely a cover for the Confederate States to gain foreign recognition, it will fail. Both the distinguished ministers and I are afraid that, much as we might personally like to be guests on your ship for the journey, if word ever got out that we were being transported around the high seas by a Confederate warship, we are afraid that this would become a huge scandal and a death knell for the movement.

"I am afraid that we will have no choice but to delay our trip until I can raise the funds for the three of us to travel by public transport to Brazil. It is such a pity that diplomats of the importance of these two gentlemen will be stranded here in Maui because of the malfeasance of those who burned your ships and stole my funds."

Waddell chimed in, "I am so sorry to learn of your loss as well. Whoever did this are just common criminals."

"I am loathe to disagree with you sir," said Mr. Spencer, "but it is increasingly clear that they are anything but that!"

"What do you mean?"

"I am as convinced of this as I can be, that the organization behind the coordinated burning of your ships and the theft of my funds is quite well aware of both our campaigns. It is a pity that you and I did not connect the dots before last night."

"What dots? This was obviously the work of some local abolitionist sympathizers. I suspect those Haw-ya-wans I hired to do the repairs."

Uh-oh, Eddie thought. He hadn't realized it would have been so obvious.

Without skipping a beat, Spencer said: "Oh, kind sir, I wish it were that simple. Don't you see, here let me refill your glass, that this may be a vast conspiracy. First, they burned your ships. Think about this: how did they manage not to have even a single one of your guards to alert you and sound the alarm. No, sir, there was either high level bribery going on, or I am sorry to say that I suspect some of your guards are themselves anti-Confederate agents. I respectfully recommend that you should conduct a severe purge of your entire crew. Do not trust anyone! Even if your ship

is shorthanded, that would be preferable to a crew that will be prepared to betray you in the thick of battle."

Waddell was alarmed, "Oh my god, I never thought about a conspiracy! I thought it was just incompetence on the part of those guards."

Spencer leaded over and looked Waddell straight in the eye, saying: "There is a way, sir, to know for sure if a conspiracy is going on. This is the crucial question, and the question that I have most wanted to ask of you. My question is simple: was any other action undertaken last night on your ship, other than the burning of the three ships at the dock?"

From his hiding place, Eddie strained to hear Waddell's answer. As part of his plan Eddie had told Mr. Spencer all about the action that he had directed Tom and Joey to do on Waddell's ship to cut the sails and render the cannons useless. Now Spencer had set it up perfectly. Eddie wished he could see the Confederate captain's expression, but he heard Waddell reply:

"Why yes, now that you mention it, as a matter of fact, a couple of slaves cut the mainsails and spiked several of my cannon."

"Have you ever had any slaves take such actions in the past?"

"No sir."

"Now, I have to ask you this. Captain, you are a thinking man. Do you think Southern slaves know that they can render a large cannon completely useless by driving a nail into the fuse hole?"

"No, of course not. In fact, I've never had even one remotely disloyal act by a slave since the ship came under my command."

"Precisely! See, what I am trying to tell you is that there are nefarious forces at work here. Do you think they just happened to pick that particular time to cut your sails and spike your cannons, or were they alerted to the planned burning of your ships by a larger conspiracy? Pray tell, did you catch those slaves and question them?"

"No, they just disappeared."

"Just disappeared, eh? Far out from the harbor where your ship was the only vessel in the area? If your theory is correct, and it was

those Hawaiian laborers, how in heaven's name do you suppose that a bunch of Hawaiians could have coordinated an attack with those slaves aboard your warship?

"In addition—and this is what convinces me it could not have been those laborers—whoever did this obviously must have known about my planned trip with these diplomats who were scheduled to arrive today. Because when they broke into my office they went straight for the safe. They knew if they stole my travel funds they could produce a stillbirth for the movement. Sir, it is quite obvious to me that a very well organized force is in our midst if they could carry off this three-prong attack within a matter of minutes! Do you really think a small band of Hawaiian repairmen could or would even want to do these things?"

"Well, I hadn't really thought about it that way, but now that you say this of course it all seems obvious," the captain mumbled. "Oh, I need another drink."

Well done, thank you, Mr. Spencer, Eddie thought to himself in his hiding spot. You've managed to get Waddell to think there is a whole conspiracy while exonerating us all at the same time!

As Spencer refilled the Captain's glass, he led the duped man into his office: "I apologize for the mess, sir, but you can see with your own eyes what they did to me. All my personal savings, as well as the funds sent to me for this project, were in that safe which now stands open. How they managed to break into it, or even know that I had recently received the money for this project, is something I do not yet understand. But what this all suggests is a very sophisticated operation by some very smart people. I have been wiped out financially, sir."

Spencer continued in his most serious voice, "Sir, I think both you and I need to think this way, if we want to defeat this enemy. I ask you to consider this possibility: that the attacks on your ships were just a cover for their real purpose, which is to delay our meetings in Brazil and Cuba. I cannot stress to you how important those meetings could be for the future of your young nation."

Spencer grabbed Waddell's arm and confided to him in a low voice, "Unfortunately, I have to conclude that even the personal safety of the two gentlemen sitting here is in grave danger. You see, and I am loathe even to reveal this to you in fear that you might slip up one time and reveal the fact, these two gentlemen you see before you are the crucial persons in the entire international movement for a Brazil-Caribbean-North America slave confederacy. If those people could break into my office, they could murder each or both of these gentlemen. I say this in English to you, since they cannot understand, so please do not show your shock. If this plan is going to continue, I feel a moral responsibility to save these two officials. But now all my funds have been stolen."

"Wait," the Captain replied, "I have an idea. I have some bags of gold left that I did not give to the laborers. I can provide that to you to finance your trip to Brazil."

"Oh thank you so much for your generous offer. But I will have to decline it. You see, the trip to Brazil alone is not the only objective. The whole idea of the trip is to coordinate an international movement from Brazil, to the Guianas, many islands in the Caribbean, Mexico, and the Southern States of North America. One part alone will not do it."

As Waddell sat thinking, Spencer continued, "I am so sorry to be causing you worry. Here, please have another drink to relax yourself. You look too tense."

"Well, perhaps I could add to that some more from my reserve fund. There's not too much of that left."

"Sir, please don't worry yourself about all this. I know that this is not your issue. You just need to go back to doing what you do best, which is attacking whaling ships. That should be your focus. Please forget I ever mentioned all this to you. In fact, perhaps it is best if we call this meeting to a close. Obviously the gentlemen and I need to reassess what the loss of our travel funds means for the future of this international movement. Sometimes I wonder why I put myself out like this for what might be an impossible task. You see, I am quite discouraged by the loss of our travel funds. I do not

see how we can continue. I have a coded way to inform the people in London and Paris who are behind this. I can simply tell them to cancel all planning, that it just is not possible."

"Wait, please," the now panicking captain implored, "I can be the solution for you. Please do not cancel your travel plans. It will take everything I have beyond bare necessities, but I can give you what I have. You can still leave on the next transport."

With that, Waddell burst out of the room, and headed for his ship. After he left, Eddie came out of the closet and joined George and Giorgio in congratulating Spencer on a job well done. "Looks like he fell for it..." They all smiled.

Spencer warned, "Yes, but there's another problem. We've got to convince him to move his warship out of Lahaina harbor. Otherwise, if he ever recognizes either of you two gentlemen," he said to George and Giorgio, "my arse will definitely be on the line. Remember, I am an official of Her Majesty's Royal Diplomatic Corps, and in this conflict between the North and the South we are supposed to be totally neutral. So we've got to convince him to turn over the money and then move his ship. Now I don't want him going out there attacking more merchant ships on the high seas. So what to do?"

Giorgio replied, "Well, you had him going pretty good about all that diplomatic stuff. Why don't you convince him to abandon his raiding and turn to diplomacy instead?"

"Good idea. Let me see what I can get him to do. First, though, I want to squeeze as much money out of him as possible."

They sat in silence for a while, thinking about all the things they had accomplished. Both George and Giorgio performed perfectly, talking only in French or Portuguese, and looking stately and elite in their fine clothing. Spencer told Eddie that he couldn't have pulled this off without those nice clothes to make these two old salts look like professional diplomats.

"Yes," Eddie acknowledged, "George looks great in that suit of mine. And, while I was sitting in there in the closet, I had a great

idea for what to do with the suit when we're finished here." Eddie grinned at the appropriateness of his new idea.

Spencer acknowledged also that he felt a high degree of satisfaction with himself for his own performance. Here he was a lowly harbor officer in an isolated port at the ends of the earth, and yet with his speaking skills of persuasion he was having an impact on the future effectiveness of a nation's leading warship. Even with the destruction of the three other ships, the C.S.S. *Shenandoah* alone was a major threat to Northern commerce. He had to think of a way to neutralize that ship, which was the most technologically advanced ship in the entire Confederate navy. He did not want Waddell to continue attacking American shipping.

They waited a while longer, sitting in silence. Then at last they heard a knock on the door. Eddie sequestered himself again, then Spencer admitted the beleaguered Confederate captain.

"Well, it took some doing, but I've gathered practically all the funds I have on board. I hope this will be enough to finance your trip. He handed a sack to the English Harbormaster."

Spencer looked inside the sack, and was shocked at how much gold and money was inside. He had not expected the gullible captain to turn over this much. He looked the captain in the eye and said:

"Well, sir, this should just about be enough to cover the losses that I sustained last night. Maybe I can raise some additional funds, and it will not delay us too much longer. But in all honesty, sir, I cannot take all this money. I know you need to retain some for the operation of your ship. Captain Waddell, you are too kind. I don't want to take all your money. Please keep aside enough for you to move your ship.

"While you were gone I was thinking, and I really do think the most effective thing that you could do, would be to move your ship to Oahu. If you will put your presence before the palace in Honolulu, I feel sure that King Kamehameha will accept your invitation for a tour of your warship. If you will offer that the Confederacy will guard and defend the independence of the

Kingdom of Hawai'i from the aggressions of the United States, signified by the continued presence of your fine ship, I think you could become the crucial diplomatic official of your government in the entire Pacific region."

"You really think I could make a difference with the King?"

"Absolutely. I can see, sir, just from this one meeting, your true mental abilities. With your obvious diplomatic skills, I'll bet the King will soon have you as one of his trusted advisors. So, please, take some of this money back to cover your move to Oahu."

Eddie had to stifle his laughter.

Waddell pushed the bag back, saying: "Oh, don't worry about that, Mr. Spencer. Once I relocate to Honolulu I will contact my government for more funds. When I tell them about the obvious strategic advantages for an alliance with the Kingdom of Hawai'i, I'm sure they will forward me with enough additional funds to accomplish those objectives. After talking with you, I am thinking that my most valuable contribution to my country might be in the area of diplomacy rather than in capturing a bunch of broken down whaling vessels."

"Your skills are obvious," said the Englishman with a smile, "I look forward to hearing of your glorious accomplishments when you make this alliance with the King. A grateful nation will bow at your feet for the historic opportunity you have provided for your homeland. Let's make a toast to the new Caribbean Confederacy! And would I be too bold to offer that its future President might be none other than a gentleman presently standing in my presence? Please, gracious sir, though you are honored to hold the rank of Captain, think what your future holds in terms of other titles for your esteemed self. In anticipation of your rise, let me pour you another drink. I am honored to say, I knew you when."

On the very next day the *C.S.S. Shenandoah* pulled anchor and left Lahaina Harbor. Both Eddie and the Harbormaster were dumbfounded that the trusting captain left before even making sure that the three "diplomats" left for their trip to Brazil. So they did not even have to waste any time or money on arranging a sham

trip to the Big Island of Hawai'i and hiding out there for a while, which is what Spencer feared might be required. He had been so convincing that the gullible naval officer had been "taken in hook, line and sinker," as the old salts said.

They got a big laugh in recalling all the ways that Spencer manipulated the Southern captain, who had been so haughty and self-assured in his conversation with Eddie. Joey wondered what Master Helms, Eddie's and Joey's former master, would think if he knew it was Eddie who had masterminded this plot to destroy an entire Confederate fleet.

Their biggest joy, however, was in turning over the large amount of money to the little clinic in Lahaina. They let Giorgio and George present the donation, in gratitude to the role of the clinic in saving their lives. The amount of money was so much larger than any donation the clinic had ever received in the past, that they changed the name to the Lahaina Hospital. The donation allowed them to plan a large modern sanitary building with up to date equipment. In addition, the director assured Eddie that if he had known Eddie was among the wounded from the *U.S.S. James K. Polk*, he would have insisted that Captain Jacklin provide funds for Eddie's care as well. He pledged to Eddie that the Lahaina Hospital would publicize an established policy never to discriminate against people on the basis of their race.

While Giorgio and George were speaking with the Head of the Lahaina Hospital, Eddie went to see Captain O'Neill who was recuperating somewhere in the building. He had one more errand to run.

Remembering what Yoshi had told him about the possible karmic consequences of stealing, Eddie had brought with him that set of fine clothes George had worn to impersonate Monsieur Georges Chartres and that he'd used to disguise himself as a red-headed white man to disembark the ship in Boston harbor, along with the gentleman's shoes Captain O'Neill had been tricked into buying for him.

"G'day, sir," he said when he found Captain O'Neill relaxing in a hammock on a veranda at the back of the clinic; he had a bandage around his head and his face was shiny with salve, but he was smiling and seemed in fine spirits. "You look so different without hair and beard."

"I think I must look like a half-plucked chicken," O'Neill joked. Then said very seriously, "Well, Eddie, thank you. You saved my life."

"Just did the right thing, sir. But, Captain, what were you doing in the ship's hold anyway. I thought I'd warned you something was happening when I asked you to let Tom stay onboard the *Shenandoah*."

"Oh, you did. But I misunderstood. I thought your request meant something was going to happen on the battleship. So I stayed on *The Golden Eagle*, uh, the damn *Beauregard*, to avoid getting caught in the action. Fell asleep in the little office I had in the cargo hold. Guess I made a mistake."

"Guess I didn't, when I ran to rescue you," Eddie replied, proud of himself. "Well, sir, I'm giving these back to you," he said and held out the pair of leather shoes. "I don't have much use for them here. I think maybe you do now."

"And, look, here's a nice linen suit. It'll look good on you, sir." He let the jacket fall open so he could show it off.

"I guess I do need a new suit," O'Neill answered. He smiled and put out his hand to Eddie. "Thank you." And then he added, with a tremor of emotion in his voice, "Eddie, you do me proud."



Over the next month Captain Waddell kept the C.S.S. *Shenandoah* moored in Honolulu Bay, desperately hoping for an audience with King Kamehameha. The King did not give an answer, but kept Waddell waiting. Strapped for funds, the Confederate Naval Office

in Richmond refused Waddell's many requests for more funds. Having an alliance with the tiny Kingdom of Hawai'i was hardly a top priority for the Confederate government. As it happened, Kamehameha never even took the Captain up on his invitation to tour the warship. At last, realizing he had wasted a month with no military results, Waddell took his ship out into the Pacific again.

With the destruction of his supporting vessels and the weakening of his flagship, Captain Waddell never was able to mount an invasion of San Francisco, and the Civil War never reached California. Though this fact is hardly ever mentioned in the history books of the Civil War, the lack of major Confederate victories on the high seas was a factor that led to the surrender of Confederate armies in April and May of 1865. The Union blockade of the Southern coastline held, and the South was starved into submission.

Wars are won not only by having battle victories, but also by depriving the opposing forces from having their victories. If Waddell's attack on San Francisco had succeeded, perhaps the United States Navy would have had to transfer so many of its ships to the Pacific, to protect California and its shipping lanes, that the Navy's blockade on the east coast might not have been successful.

Knowing this gave Eddie much satisfaction in his later years. Few people understood that Eddie Freeman had contributed as much to Northern victory as many Union generals, but Eddie was not concerned. He did not care two whits about fame. He had learned from Yoshi that fame, like wealth and power, was fleeting and uncertain. It was best not to put one's personal faith in such impermanent figments. Eddie was just happy in his own mind that he was able to fulfill his oath to Tom and to the memory of Jesse and Jesse's father. Because his plan was effective in thwarting Confederate strategy for the Pacific, Eddie knew that Jesse had not died in vain.

Most of all, though, Eddie was happy that he had been able to strike a blow against the slave power that had stolen his grandparents from Africa, and deprived him and millions of other

Africans of their freedom. Prompted by the example of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, both King Dom Pedro of Brazil and King Chulalongkorn of Thailand issued their own emancipations. Within a few years, the scourge of slavery, that had existed for thousands of years, had been abolished in all the major nations of the world. Eddie Freeman was part of the reason for this historic change.

PART IV

Finding Home



Molokai

After the burning of the ships, Aikane had taken Joey and Tom to a safe hiding place deep inside the jungle. There they remained for four days, while Eddie went back to Lahaina to oversee the last part of his plan. Aikane reminded Eddie that it was risky to keep them anywhere on the island. If the Hawaiian government police caught the two escaped slaves, they could still be returned to the captain. It would be impossible to hide Joey and Tom; their distinctive African features would make them stand out on Maui. This reminded Eddie of the urgency they now were all under. He knew if the police or the Southerners caught him now he would most likely be executed for engaging in servile insurrection and encouraging other slaves to escape.

Once Eddie and the others turned over the money to the Lahaina Hospital, Aikane led Eddie, Joey and Tom through fields of tall sugarcane to hide their movements in the dark night. It was almost dawn as the four conspirators wearily arrived at Aikane's house.

Aikane's mother and his younger "sister" Mahu were there to greet them with a hearty meal of taro and fruits. The black men gobbled down the unfamiliar foods hungrily, having no time to ask questions, while Aikane spoke with his parents and brothers.

Aikane told Eddie it was not safe to stay even here. Anywhere in Maui might be subject to search by the police. This fire was sure to be an international incident, of potential embarrassment to the government of Hawai'i. The King might use the recapture of escaped slaves as a face-saving gesture. It would be easy for

the police to trace them to Aikane's family. The only hope, Aikane suggested, would be for them all to escape to Molokai.

Eddie agreed, and soon the brothers were launching their newly repaired boat from the beach. The boat's initial voyage, with its coconut mat sail, would be to transport Aikane's entire family plus the three former slaves to Molokai. They piled on as many of their possessions as they could grab, along with five pigs, a dog, and two wood cages of squawking chickens. Everything else would have to be left.

Eddie was sad to be departing this house where he had spent so many months of happiness. Aikane, on the other hand, seemed glad to use this crisis as an excuse to get the family to Molokai. He had been wanting to go there for quite some time, and had remained in Maui only in deference to his parents' reluctance to move.

As the boat sailed along in the early morning silence with sunrise tinting the eastern sky orangey-pink, Joey and Tom both seemed bewildered by the rapid events. Eddie could see they wondered why these people had given up their home and were risking their lives for them. As they talked quietly, they asked him about this. Eddie decided he should be truthful right away, so he told them: "They are doing all this because Aikane is my husband. You see, we're married to each other by Hawaiian custom."

Joey seemed to think about that for a moment, then beamed in happiness. He was not only excited to see Eddie free, and to have gained his own escape from slavery, but also overjoyed to discover these people accepted such love between men. He remembered with pleasure the many times he and Eddie had made love on the plantation.

Forgetting his caution, he asked Eddie, "Can you find me a husband? I like young and delicate like you used to be."

Eddie realized Joey was right that he had matured considerably over the last four years. Aikane's constant feeding had caused him to gain weight. He was no longer the thin delicate teenager Joey had known, but a strong solid-muscled man like Aikane.

Hearing Joey say this, Aikane spoke up: "Maybe you would like my younger sister, Mahu." Mahu smiled sweetly at Joey.

Eddie explained, "Mahu is really a male, even though she acts like a girl."

Joey looked again at Mahu, whom he previously must have assumed to be female. A big smile crossed his full lips.

"Wow, I like a feminine boy. You're beautiful," he said. He then caught himself, and looked at the parents in worry that they might be offended. But he saw only their smiles.

Joey looked back at Eddie, who nodded his approval, and then back at Mahu, who blushed innocently.

"I think this has definite possibilities!" Joey said excitedly. He moved over to sit next to the youth and they began talking.

All this was too much for Tom. His mind was still swirling with the momentousness that he had at last escaped slavery, and with the help of the close friend whom he helped escape four years previously. Now to learn that this close friend was married to another man was a total surprise. Eddie had never divulged to Tom that his erotic interests lay with males. And Joey had never mentioned it during their time together either. Now to learn that these two close friends preferred male lovers was a shock to him. He sat in silence for a while.

"Well, I'm not like that myself," he finally declared, "but I don't care if that's the way you fellas want to be. Life's too short not to spend it with someone you love." Thinking a bit more, he looked at Aikane and asked, "Where we're going, are all the men married to each other?" He was so befuddled that he was not sure of anything about this place.

Aikane laughed loudly. "Of course not! We value our man-woman marriages, because they are the ones who produce more handsome young men for us to love. We help them and they help us. It is all in balance. Whichever person somebody loves is the one they should be free to mate. Most men prefer to marry women, and most women prefer to marry men. Would you like me to introduce you to some nice Hawaiian ladies on Molokai?"

"They would love your dark skin. Too many of our Hawaiian girls are getting pregnant from the white men who are overrunning Hawai'i, and the new generation of our people is becoming too pale. Children sired by you would help to restore some color to our people. There are many beautiful women on Molokai."

"Oh, what about me?" Aikane's sister, Lilinoe, asked. "Save the Molokai girls for my brothers." She then smiled sweetly at Tom.

Tom's eyes lighted up. Maybe it was love at first sight for the two of them. Eddie had no doubt the parents were pleased at the possibility that both of these fine young men might end up marrying into their family. The labor contributed by these new husbands would help the family prosper in their new home on Molokai. They had been hoping their elder daughter would soon marry again, and were anxious to have more grandchildren to grace their household.

Eddie thought about all these things as they made their way to their new home. As the boat sailed through a break in the reef, into the calm waters of the lagoon south of Molokai, he saw that everyone seemed hopeful for this new start in their life. Aikane assured them they would find refuge among the traditionalists, and be protected from any disturbance by the police. Perhaps the family, especially with its new additions, could still accomplish Aikane's idea to use the boat as a transport business, but based in Molokai instead of Maui. Whatever happened, Aikane was happy that the family was together and united.

Once Kaha'i's family arrived in Molokai the local people welcomed them warmly. A suitable house site was found, and with the assistance of Eddie, Joey and Tom, Aikane and his brothers quickly erected a large wood frame structure. The whole family pitched in, from the grandparents to the young children, plating the coconut leaves into layered fronds that were placed on the frame to serve as a roof.

The house was open sided, allowing the ocean breezes to cool it even during the heat of midday. From inside they had fantastic views of the beach on one side, with the waves crashing on the

shore, and on the other a lush jungle valley. At the top of the valley was a beautiful waterfall, which reminded Eddie of the place on Maui where he and Aikane had first made love. Joey and Tom had never beheld a place of such beauty. Everyone felt quite satisfied with their new home.

In exploring the island a week later, Eddie and Aikane saw a small two-masted schooner anchored in the lagoon. It needed maintenance and some repairs, and Eddie thought they could get jobs doing ship repair here. The owner, however, told them he had no money to pay them. In fact, he was anxious to sell the vessel. When Eddie and Aikane inspected it, they found there were good quality tools in the schooner's toolroom. Eddie could easily make the needed repairs.

Aikane suggested they buy the schooner, refurbish it, and use it to establish a commercial transport service between Molokai and the island of Oahu to the north. The new town of Honolulu was going to grow much faster than Lahaina, Aikane predicted, and this would be an opportunity to get in on a prosperous growth area. The deepwater ocean and longer distance between Molokai and Oahu required a bigger boat than the one they had. Then they could use the smaller boat to go back and forth between Molokai and Maui.

When they returned home Aikane presented his idea. His mother asked Eddie if he and the others could keep both vessels in repair and maintained. With Tom's skilled experience combined with his own, Eddie was confident it would be a good investment. There was even an extra canvas on the schooner which could be used for the smaller boat. Drawing on his experience on the whaler, Eddie knew he could train the others to sail the larger schooner. They could do the repair, maintenance, and crewing all themselves.

Aikane's mother and father discussed it among themselves, and decided this would be the best course of action. They gave the owner of the schooner what was left of the gold they been paid for repairing the now-sunken ships, courtesy of Captain Waddell of the *C.S.S. Shenandoah*, and the boys were soon hard at work getting

it ready for action. They decided that Eddie and Aikane would captain the schooner, with Joey and the younger brothers serving as crew, to go back and forth to Honolulu. Makalapua would operate the smaller boat on its runs to Lahaina. They coordinated the schedules of the two vessels for the convenience of passengers who wished to travel from Honolulu to Lahaina via Molokai.

Aikane's idea soon proved to be successful. Once merchants realized there was now dependable regular service between the islands, they gave plenty of business to the new shipping company. Eddie and Aikane still did not care for the money part of the business, but they did not have to worry about it.

As the operation grew, one of the younger brothers met a young Chinese woman in Honolulu, and they fell in love. She knew how to read and write, and was experienced in helping to do the accounting for her grandfather's company. She soon became part of the family operation. She remained living in Honolulu, expertly handling the books from that side, and the brother would stay with her whenever they were in port. She took a particular liking to little Mahu, and taught her to do arithmetic.

To everyone's surprise, the effeminate boy turned out to have an excellent grasp of numbers. Mahu was soon helping handle all the financial aspects. Sharp as a whip, she quickly picked up more advanced accounting procedures from merchants in Honolulu. Her natural intelligence helped the business grow. The Chinese woman also taught reading and writing to her dedicated student. Mahu even began teaching her new boyfriend Joey how to read and write.

Sometimes the whole family would travel on the schooner, just to have the opportunity to be together. The mother, father, and grandparents now had plenty of leisure time at home, as their children and their multi-racial spouses ran the business. They spent their time playing with their youngest daughters and their young grandson. Their eldest daughter and Tom were very happy together. After a few months she became pregnant, and the family was overjoyed at the impending birth of another grandchild.

Whenever they were in Molokai, Aikane and Mahu began spending much of their time with the traditional Kahuna priests. The priests saw that both the man and the boy had extraordinary spiritual qualities. They trained both of them in the sacred traditional rituals of the ancient Hawaiian people. Determined to preserve their native traditions, Aikane and Mahu studied diligently to become Kahunas themselves. People throughout the islands started consulting them on religious details and for healing purposes. Any person who was ill, or who wished to consult on spiritual matters, got free passage to Molokai on the schooners. While these duties kept Aikane and Mahu busy, they still had time to devote to their husbands and to the family.

For their part, Eddie, Tom and Joey could not believe their good fortune. Having grown up as slaves, they were now living as free men on a beautiful island. They loved being on the sea, not as semi-enslaved workers on a white man's ship, but as captains of their own vessels. Having no relatives of their own, they now shared a wonderful large family, plus their own intense friendship. And most of all, they each had their spouses whom they loved dearly. They all worked well together, and relaxed at home together at night.

Eddie continued to feel his love for Aikane growing as more months passed. The cultural differences between them proved not to be an irritation, but instead became a source of endless fascination. They loved to experience the different ways each reacted to something, to discuss their differences between themselves and then to resolve those differences. Eddie found himself more and more physically attracted to Aikane. He was attracted not only to Aikane's body, but also to the sense of spirituality that was evident in everything the brown-skinned Hawaiian did.

They both enjoyed swimming together and gathering fish in the coastal ponds which the ancient Hawaiians had laboriously built with rocks for harvesting the bounty of the sea. Eddie always let the colorful fish go free. The two lovers held intimate beachside cookout dinners of fish with taro and taro leaves. After watching

the sun go down on the western horizon, Eddie and Aikane often made love to the sound of the waves splashing against the shore.

Eddie wanted to be with Aikane always, but he respected his lover's devotion to the Hawaiian religion. Whenever Aikane was gone to the Kahuna ceremonies, Eddie would take off for a swim. Eddie's love for the sea continued to grow over time, and he was not happier in life as when he was swimming in the lagoon near their home on Molokai's southern shore. He did not dare swim off the schooner in the deepwater ocean, because of his fear of sharks. But he was told that sharks would not come into the lagoon.

The first time he opened his eyes below the water's surface in this lagoon, he felt as if a whole other world had been revealed to him. He would take a piece of breadfruit with him, and keep it in a float as he broke off handfuls to feed to the fish. Like a child he experienced spasms of joy as the beautiful tropical fish swirled around him in swaths of color. It was like watching an artist in motion, painting the backdrop of the sea.

Gradually Eddie built up his lung capacity so he could stay underwater for a long time. Though the seawater stung his eyes, making them red and swollen, he preferred to swim with his eyes open. He loved to look eyeball to eyeball with the tropical fish swimming all around him, as they waited for handouts of breadfruit. He swam without any clothing to separate him from the naturalness of the ocean. He did not want anything to violate the pristine environment in which he had surrounded himself.

Aikane had taught him to respect the sea, including its dangers. Eddie was careful not to step on the prickly sea urchin, and to swim away from the innocent-looking jellyfish. Though its tentacles could give a nasty sting, Eddie still admired it from afar. He felt quite differently, however, about sharks. Aikane had educated him to the fact that, of more than thirty species of sharks, only three were dangerous to humans. Yet for those three species, especially the great white shark, the threat was real.

Eddie could not understand why Aikane held such a respectful attitude toward the great white. The ancient Hawaiians even

considered this shark to be a god. To Eddie the great white was simply detestable. It violated his comfort when he was swimming, and seemed to conflict with the wondrous enjoyment he otherwise got from the sea. He was willing to forego his fear of the harmless species of sharks, but no matter what Aikane said about its sacredness, Eddie simply abhorred the great white shark.

One day, after saying aloha to Aikane, he went out to the lagoon for his regular swim. Aikane, strangely, had tried to dissuade him from leaving, but he went anyway. He took a fishnet with his float, hoping to net some fish for dinner.

As he swam far out near the reef, suddenly Eddie looked down and was shocked to see a huge great white. Eddie said to himself this was not possible; such a large fish would not be in this area. Yet his eyes could not deny the reality of what he saw. The distinctive shark fin was clearly visible through the clear sunny water.

The monster saw Eddie also, and started circling upward. Ever closer the shark swam. Instead of being the hunter, Eddie had suddenly become the prey. He dropped the net, grabbed hold of his float, took a big breath, and hung limply below the water. If he were going to be attacked, he wanted to see what was coming. The fishnet drifted slowly away as the twenty-foot shark swam closer and closer. Eddie froze in fear.

The shark was now near the surface, approaching Eddie straight on. Eddie could see the rows of gleaming white teeth in the shark's mouth. Instead of panicking Eddie remained perfectly still. The shark came right up to him and stopped. Eddie's lungs were near to bursting, but he dared not go to the surface for air.

The shark remained there for what seemed to Eddie like a long time. Finally Eddie knew he could not hold his breath any longer. He exhaled, letting out some bubbles. As his lungs contracted, he knew he would have to paddle upward to get air. That would be when the shark would attack. Still motionless, Eddie knew he must move, or be eaten by the shark, or drown.

Just as Eddie's lungs felt like they were going to collapse, the shark turned and swam away. With one strong kick of his legs

Eddie pushed himself above water and grabbed onto the float. Air rushed into his empty lungs. He coughed, and floated, wheezing and bringing in new air. He was feeling faint; his only thought was to get fresh air into his chest.

He floated motionlessly. Just as his breathing was returning to normal, he saw in the distance the shark fin piercing the surface of the water like a knife being drawn through a stick of warm butter. Eddie gulped, took a deep breath, and again went below water to see what was coming. The shark was headed straight for him.

At this point something strange happened to Eddie's mind. He knew for certain that he was going to die. The shark had seen him paddle, and surely had no doubt now that Eddie was alive and edible. Even though Eddie felt this certainty, it was not fear for his life that he now experienced.

Before this time he had always feared sharks as evil personified. As far as Eddie was concerned, the great white was the devil itself, in the form of a monstrous fish. Now, however, as he looked at the shark approaching him, he did not see evil. The shark was simply experiencing hunger, and had no more evil intent against Eddie, as Eddie himself had toward the fish he caught for his own consumption. It suddenly dawned to Eddie that everything was going full circle. Just as he had benefited from the bounty of the sea, in sustaining his years on earth, now it was time to return the favor to another creature.

Previously he had regarded with horror the idea of his body being consumed by sharks and other fish if he had died at sea. Now he realized that this practice on ships of burial in the sea was the most sensible and nature-loving custom of American culture. Of course human bodies should be used to nourish other living things. It occurred to Eddie that if a person died on land, a similar mindset would suggest that their body should be lovingly laid to rest in the soil, and a young tree should be planted above their grave. As the tree roots spread to draw nourishment from the decaying body, the last benefit of this person to the future would be to allow their body to become fertilizer for a lovely tree. Whenever

a loved one passed that tree, they could behold the beauty that resulted from this deceased person's remains. This, Eddie thought, would be a more nature-loving custom than the usual human practices of putting a body into a manufactured casket or burning it in cremation.

In our lives, Eddie thought, we continually take from other species. In our death, we should freely give our body back to other species. Eddie now felt free to give up his body. After all the times that he had been close to being killed, never before had he felt that it was time for him to give up his life so that other beings could live. Eddie now had no fear of death. He saw he must give back to the sea, in the form of his own body, what the sea had given him. It was all a great balancing. There was no evil involved.

As the great white shark swam ever closer, Eddie's mind raced. He was thinking deeper thoughts than he ever imagined possible in such a short time. Despite his youth in years, he felt that he had had a fulfilled life. He had traveled much of the world, much more than most people ever got a chance to do. He had experienced more sexual excitement and total love, in his wonderful relationships with Joey, Yoshi, and Aikane, than many people were fortunate enough to experience in a long lifetime.

He had contributed something positive to improve the condition of humanity by helping to weaken the institution of slavery. His ingenuity had been crucial in thwarting the plans of the Confederate Navy to attack San Francisco and steal the United States Treasury. Only a few people knew what really happened, and his name would never be mentioned in a history book, but Eddie Freeman knew that his action was as important as that of many generals in the Union Army. He had helped to defeat the Confederacy and to change the world, for the better.

In this moment before the shark engulfed him, Eddie gained new insights on life and death, and the nature of existence in the universe. He finally understood what the Hawaiians were talking about when they spoke of the shark as a god. Whereas before he had seen only the devil, and experienced only fear; now at the

moment of his impending demise he realized the approaching creature was indeed a sacred being. Its coming attack was graceful, its efficient body a wonder to behold. In a way that he would not have believed possible before this instant, Eddie lost all his fear. He willingly gave up his body to the sacrifice. He felt he was part of a great religious ceremony, a ritual of nature.

As the shark swam up to him, again Eddie held his breath and remained motionless in the water. He let go of the float and turned himself completely over to the power of the deep. The shark stopped, no more than three feet in front of him. Rather than fear, Eddie now felt a longing for the shark, a sense of connectedness to the creature for which his body would soon provide sustenance.

Eddie slowly reached out his hand. He wanted to touch the great powerful tip of the shark's head. He forgot about the emptiness of his lungs, about the future, about life. His only desire was to touch the magnificent sacred being in front of him. As he reached out, he said to himself a blessing to the shark: *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*.

When he did this, the creature looked at him questioningly. The shark's eyes met his. It was as if the shark had heard the words of the Buddhist mantra. Where the shark had expected fear, defensiveness, and resistance, now it found only admiration and interconnectedness in Eddie's eyes. Maybe it sensed spiritual power. This was not what the shark expected. With that, suddenly the shark turned and was gone.

Realizing that the shark had disappeared, Eddie's body reacted on its own. Eddie's lungs demanded oxygen and he lunged to the surface for air. He hung onto the float in exhaustion. His brain was so overtaxed by these events that he could not think. He only lay there in the water, gently bobbing up and down in the current.

After floating for a while, he was not sure for how long, Eddie's body had rejuvenated its strength. He noticed the current had carried him closer to shore. He abandoned the float and began swimming toward land. He swam calmly, without any sense of panic.

Then, once again Eddie noticed the fin slicing the surface of the water. The shark was again coming right toward him. Though Eddie's eyes ached from the sting of the salty water, he went below the surface to see the approaching shark. There was no fear left in Eddie's body; he was beyond that. Curiosity, wonder and respect were the only emotions he felt.

This third time would surely be the occasion for the great white to consume him. Eddie continued swimming, gently paddling with his legs and arms, in the stroke that Aikane had taught him. He looked in wonderment as the shark approached. Eddie found himself offering a prayer, in honor of the spirit of the shark.

This time the shark did not stop but swam up beside Eddie. Eddie went to the surface and gulped a great lungful of air without breaking his stride. When he returned underwater, as he stroked he could see the shark right next to him. It was hardly the stupid primitive eating machine he had expected. The shark's large dark eye was looking directly into his own. Eddie detected a calm, indeed mellow, look in the shark's eye.

Nam Myoho Renge Kyo, he again chanted to himself as he looked deeply into the shark's eye. They swam, side by side, only a foot apart. Sometimes Eddie's arm brushed against the shark's smooth skin. He had nothing but awe and admiration for the incredible, beautiful beast. This sacred being, this creature of matchless grace, was next to him in both the spirit and the flesh.

The shark accompanied Eddie until they got close to shore. Then, with one final eye-to-eye contact, the great white turned back and disappeared into the deep. With a few more strokes Eddie reached the shallows and staggered onto shore. He collapsed onto the sand, with the small waves still washing over his feet.

As he lay there Eddie realized he had met death and overcome his fear of it. The shark could have easily killed him at any time. Eddie had experienced total powerlessness, as he had never felt before in his life. Even as a slave, he had never felt this kind of total helplessness, from a white man, that he felt when he was at

the mercy of the shark. This sense of being at nature's mercy was, ironically, liberating to him.

No longer did he feel a sense of fear of death. Instead, it was now a sensation of giving up his body in the religious sacrifice called nature. But, as he lay there exhausted on the sand, he also felt a new determination, a determination to live each day—each moment—to the fullest while he was still privileged to draw breath. He felt a greater appreciation for life, for the simple joys of the day.

He returned to the house and found Aikane there alone. Though Eddie did not tell Aikane about what had happened, Aikane understood in his own intuitive way that something momentous had occurred. Eddie leaned over and kissed his beloved. He felt the savoring deliciousness of the kiss in a way he had never appreciated previously. They lay down on the grass mat and began to make love.

Eddie felt grateful to everything around him, to the gentle breeze that cooled him as his body sweated in passionate movement, to the flooring which supported his weight, to his body for allowing him the intensity of excitement that he felt in making love, and of course to Aikane. For everything surrounding him Eddie felt incredible gratitude. As their torsos rubbed against each other, he felt the sweet mix of their pleasure.

As he drifted off to sleep, with Aikane holding him securely in his strong arms, Eddie made a new determination that he would pull the best that he could from every single day remaining for him. His fear of the shark was the one thing that was preventing him from being completely comfortable in his Molokai environment. He could not be completely free until he had moved beyond this fear. The sacred shark had now taught him to release fear of death. When his final day of life was ending, however long or short away that might be, Eddie decided he would give himself up without reluctance. He would willingly sacrifice himself, so other beings might live. That was the spirit of the sea, the spirit of the Pacific, to which Eddie Freeman now felt totally connected.



About the Author

Walter L. Williams is an acclaimed author and retired professor of anthropology, history and gender studies. He received his Ph.D. in history and anthropology from the University of North Carolina, and he has taught at the University of Cincinnati, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the University of Southern California (USC), and as Fulbright Professor of American Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia. At USC he established ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, which is the world's largest collection of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender materials. He is the founding editor of the *International Gay & Lesbian Review*, the world's first academic journal to be published entirely on the Internet <gaybookreviews.info>. He was also the co-founder and chair of the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History for the American Historical Association, and an officer of the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists.

He is most noted for his non-fiction book *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* which is partly responsible for bringing to light Native American Two-Spirit traditions. Based on his own experience living on several reservations for extended periods of time, and working closely with traditionalist Indian shamans, his book carefully and inspirationally recounts the respected place many Native American cultures accord to androgynous persons who combine both the spirit of man and the spirit of woman into their personality and sexual behavior. This book won the Gay Book of the Year Award from the American Library Association, the Ruth Benedict Award from the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists and the Award for Outstanding Scholarship from the World Congress for Sexology.

Based upon this research, especially the time he spent on the Navajo reservation, Walter Williams conceived and crafted an historical novel with a Two-Spirit person as the main character, in the context of real historical events that tragically impacted the Navajo in the 1860s Civil War era. Toby Johnson, Ph.D., award-winning novelist and spiritual writer, joined the project to give texture and style to Walter's story. Together they authored *Two Spirits: A Story of Life With the Navajo*. This book, also published by Lethe Press, won a prize for historical fiction from the Arch & Bruce Brown Foundation.

Inspired by the success of *Two Spirits*, Walter L. Williams decided to write another historical/anthropological novel on the Civil War era. For this book, as with *Two Spirits*, he drew upon his knowledge gained from years of teaching courses on the American Civil War. He also did extensive new research, as a Fellow at the East-West Center of the University of Hawai'i, on whales, on the lifestyle of crewmen on whaling ships in the mid-19th century, and on the transgender *mahu* and homosexual *aikane* traditions in Polynesian culture. In addition, he traveled to Alaska where he interviewed Aleut people about their Two Spirit traditions. Finally, he did much historical research about the honored place of same-sex relationships among samurai warriors in medieval Japan, and among Buddhist monks. He learned much about Nichiren Buddhism from meeting and reading the writings of Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International Buddhist Association. Together, all of these influences provide an accurate historical and cultural context for the characters and the story recounted in this book.

For more by Walter L. Williams, see his videos on youtube, his books at amazon.com and the web site livelyfully.info.

