



CHAPTER I

*I plowed the land with horses,  
But my heart was ill at ease,  
For the old sea-faring men  
Came to me now and then,  
With their sagas of the seas.*

—*Longfellow*

**T**he storm door of the smoking room had been left open to the North Atlantic fog, as the big passenger ship rolled and lifted, whistling to warn the fishing fleet.

“That Cheyne boy’s the biggest nuisance aboard,” said a man in a wool overcoat, shutting the door with a bang. “He isn’t wanted here. He’s a brat.”

A white-haired German reached for a sandwich, and grunted between bites: “I know der breed. America is full of dot kind.”

“Oh, stop complaining. There’s no real harm to him. He’s more to be pitied than anything,”

said a man from New York, as he lay along the cushions under the wet skylight. "They've dragged him around from hotel to hotel ever since he was a kid. I was talking to his mother this morning. She's a lovely lady, but she don't pretend to have much control over him. He's going to Europe to finish his education."

"Education hasn't begun yet." This was said by a man from Philadelphia, who was curled up in a corner. "That boy gets two hundred dollars a month in allowance, he told me. He ain't sixteen yet, either."

"Railroads, his father, ain't it?" said the German.

"Yep. That and mines and lumber and shipping. Built one place at San Diego, the old man has; another at Los Angeles; owns half a dozen railroads, half the lumber on the Pacific, and lets his wife spend the money," said the man from Philadelphia in a lazy voice. "She doesn't like California, she says. She just travels around with the boy, trying to find out what'll keep him happy, I guess. Florida, the Adirondacks, New York, and 'round again. All that moving can't be good for him. When he's finished in Europe, he'll be a real troublemaker."

"Why can't the father take care of him personally?" said the voice from the wool coat.

"The old man's too busy. Don't want to be disturbed, I guess. He'll find out his mistake in a

few years. Too bad, because there's a heap of good in the boy if you could get at it."

Once more the door banged, and a thin, small boy about fifteen years old, a half-smoked cigarette hanging from one corner of his mouth, leaned into the room. It was clear that he was trying very hard to act older than his age. He was dressed in expensive clothes: a cherry-colored blazer, short pants, red stockings, and bicycle shoes, with a red cap on the back of his head. His pale complexion did not look healthy on a boy his age, who should be tan and weathered from playing outdoors. After whistling between his teeth, as he looked over the company, he said in a loud, high voice: "Say, it's thick with fog outside. You can hear the fishing boats squawking all around us. Say, wouldn't it be great if we ran one over?"

"Shut the door, Harvey," said the New Yorker. "Shut the door and stay outside. You're not wanted here."

"Who'll stop me?" he answered. "Did you pay for my ticket, Mister Martin? 'Guess I've as much right as the next man."

He picked up some dice from a checkerboard and began tossing them from one hand to the other.

"Say, gen'elmen, this is boring. Can't we play a game of poker between us?"

There was no answer, and he puffed his cigarette and drummed on the table with rather dirty

fingers. Then he pulled out a roll of bills as if to count it.

“How’s your mamma this afternoon?” a man said. “I didn’t see her at lunch.”

“In her private room, I guess. She’s always sick on the ocean. I’m going to give the stewardess fifteen dollars for taking care of her. I don’t go down more ’n I can avoid. It makes me feel nervous to walk around down there. Say, this is the first time I’ve been on the ocean.”

“Oh, don’t apologize, Harvey.”

“Who’s apologizing? This is the first time I’ve crossed the ocean, gen’elmen, and, except the first day, I haven’t been sick one little bit. No, sir!” He brought down his fist with a triumphant bang, licked his finger, and went on counting the bills.

“Oh, you’re a high-grade machine” the Philadelphian yawned. “You’ll blossom into a credit to your country if you’re not careful.”

“I know it. I’m an American—first, last, and all the time. I’ll show ’em that when I hit Europe. Hah! My cigarette’s out. I can’t smoke that rubbish the ship attendant sells. Any gen’elman got a real Turkish cigar on him?”

The chief engineer entered for a moment, red, smiling, and wet.

“Say, Mac,” cried Harvey cheerfully, “how are we hitting it?”

“Very much in the ordinary way,” was his unsmiling reply.

A low chuckle came from a corner. The German opened his cigar case and handed a skinny black cigar to Harvey.

“Dot is the proper cigar to smoke, my young friend,” he said. “You vill try it? Yes? Den you vill be ever so happy.”

Harvey lit the ugly thing with a dramatic wave of his hand. He felt that he was doing very well in grownup society.

“It would take more ’n this to knock me over,” he said, unaware that he was lighting a terrible cigar—a Wheeling “stogie.”

“Dot we shall presently see,” said the German. “Where are we now, Mr. Mactonal?”

“We’ll be on the Grand Bank tonight,” said the engineer. “But in a general way o’ speakin’, we’re all among the fishing boats now. We’ve come close to hitting three of them since noon. Now that’s close sailing, ye might say.”

“You like my cigar, eh?” the German asked, for Harvey’s eyes were full of tears.

“Fine, full flavor,” he answered through shut teeth. “Guess we’ve slowed down a little, haven’t we? I’ll skip out and see.”

“I might if I vhas you,” said the German.

Harvey staggered over the wet decks to the nearest rail. He was feeling quite sick, but then he saw the deck attendant and since he had bragged in front of the man that he was never seasick, his pride made him go to the second deck at the back

of the ship. The deck was deserted, and he crawled to the very end of it. There he doubled over in helpless agony, for the Wheeling "stogie" and the shaking of the ship's propellers made him feel very ill. His head swelled; sparks of fire danced before his eyes; his body seemed to lose weight, while his legs felt weak in the breeze. He was fainting from seasickness, and a roll of the ship tilted him over the railing onto the outer ledge of the deck. Then a low, gray wave swept out of the fog and pulled Harvey off and away. The great sea closed over him, and he went quietly to sleep.

He was awoken by the sound of a dinner horn. It reminded him of the horn that would call him to supper at the summer school he had once attended in the Adirondacks. Slowly he remembered that he was Harvey Cheyne, drowned and dead in midocean, but he was too weak to fit things together. A new smell filled his nostrils; wet and clammy chills ran down his back, and he was helplessly full of salt water. When he opened his eyes, he saw that he was still on the top of the sea, for it was running around him in silver-colored hills. He was lying on a pile of half-dead fish, looking at a broad human back clothed in a blue jersey.

"It's no good," thought the boy. "I'm dead, sure enough, and this thing is in charge."

He groaned, and the figure turned its head,



showing a pair of little gold eyeglass rings half hidden in curly black hair.

“Aha! You feel some pretty well now?” it said. “Lie still so we float better.”

With a swift jerk he steered the small boat head-on into the rough sea. The boat would rise up twenty full feet, only to slide back down again. But this mountain climbing did not interrupt blue jersey’s talk. “Fine, good job, I say, that I catch you. Better good job, I say, your boat didn’t catch me. How you come to fall out?”

“I was sick,” said Harvey; “sick, and couldn’t help it.”

“Just in time I blow my horn to warn the ship, and your boat, she turned a little. Then I see you come down. I think you are cut into bits

by the propellers, but you drift—drift to me and I fish you out. So you shall not die this time.”

“Where am I?” said Harvey.

“You are with me in the dory—Manuel is my name, and I come from the fishing ship *We’re Here* of Gloucester, Massachusetts. We get supper in a while.”

Not content with blowing through a big conch shell, Manuel also felt the need to stand up in the “dory,” which Harvey observed to be a small rowboat. Manuel swayed with the sway of the flat-bottomed dory, and sent a grinding, shuddering shriek through the fog. How long this entertainment lasted, Harvey could not remember, for he lay back terrified at the sight of the large waves. He thought he heard a gun and a horn and shouting. Something bigger than the dory, but just as noisy, loomed alongside. Several voices talked at once; he was dropped into a dark, heaving hole, where men dressed in waterproof oilskin coats gave him a hot drink and took off his clothes, and he fell asleep.

When he woke up, he listened for the breakfast bell on the passenger ship, wondering why his private room felt so small. Turning, he looked into a narrow, triangular cave, lit by a lamp. At the other end, behind an old wood-burning stove, sat a boy about his own age, with a flat red face and a pair of twinkling gray eyes. He was dressed in a blue jersey and high rubber boots.

Several pairs of the same sort of shoes, an old hat, and some worn-out wool socks lay on the floor, and black and yellow oilskins swayed to and fro beside the bunk beds. The place was filled with smells. The oilskins had a strangely thick scent of their own which made a sort of background to the smells of fried fish, burnt grease, paint, pepper, and stale tobacco; all mixed together by one encircling smell of salt water. Harvey saw with disgust that there were no sheets on his bed. He was lying on a piece of the lumpy cloth used to cover the smaller fishing dories. Then he noticed that the boat did not move like the passenger ship, which has a steam engine. She wasn't sliding or rolling, but rather, wriggling around. He could hear water noises, and the wood beams creaked around him. All these things made him grunt despairingly and think of his mother.

"Feelin' better?" said the boy, with a grin. "Hev some coffee?" He brought a full tin cup and sweetened it with molasses.

"Isn't there milk?" said Harvey, looking around the dark room as if he expected to find a cow there.

"Well, no," said the boy. "And there ain't likely to be till 'bout mid-September. It ain't bad coffee. I made it."

Harvey drank in silence, and the boy handed him a plate full of pieces of crisp fried pork, which he ate hungrily.

"I've dried your clothes. Guess they've shrunk some," said the boy. "They ain't our style much. Move 'round an' see if you're hurt anywhere."

Harvey stretched himself in every direction, but could not report any injuries.

"That's good," the boy said enthusiastically. "Get dressed an' go on deck. Dad wants to see you. I'm his son—Dan, they call me—and I'm the cook's helper an' everything else aboard that's too dirty for the men. There ain't no boy here 'cept me since Otto went overboard. How'd you come to fall off in a dead calm sea?"

"It wasn't calm," said Harvey, grumpily. "It was a storm, and I was seasick. Guess I must have rolled over the railing."

"There was a little bit o' waves yesterday an' last night," said the boy. "But if that's your idea of a storm . . ." He whistled. "You'll know better before you're through. Hurry! Dad's waitin'."

Like many other unfortunate young people, Harvey had never in all his life received a direct order—never, at least, without long, and sometimes tearful, explanations of why he should listen to his elders. Mrs. Cheyne lived in fear of breaking his spirit, which, perhaps, was the reason that she herself was always on the verge of breaking down. He could not see why he should be expected to hurry for anyone else, and said so. "Your dad can come down here if he's so anxious

to talk to me. I want him to take me to New York right away. It'll pay him."

Dan opened his eyes as the size and beauty of this joke dawned on him. "Say, Dad!" he shouted to the upper deck, "He says you kin come down an' see him if you're that anxious. 'Hear, Dad?"

The answer came back in the deepest voice Harvey had ever heard from a human chest: "Quit foolin', Dan, and send him to me."

Dan snickered, and threw Harvey his warped bicycle shoes. There was something about the voice on deck that made Harvey hide his extreme rage. He consoled himself with the thought of gradually telling the story of his father's wealth on the voyage home. This rescue would certainly make him a hero among his friends. He hoisted himself on deck up a steep ladder, and stumbled forward over a variety of objects, to where a short, bulky, clean-shaven man with gray eyebrows sat on a step. The sea was calm again, and a dozen fishing ships floated on the horizon. Between them lay little black specks showing where the dories were out fishing. The schooner floated easily at anchor, and except for the man on the step, the boat was deserted.

"Mornin'—Good afternoon, I should say. You've nearly slept 'round the clock, young feller," was the greeting.

"Mornin'," said Harvey. He did not like being called "young feller," and, since he had

been rescued from drowning, expected sympathy. His mother became hysterical if he even got his feet wet, but this man did not seem excited.

“Now let’s hear all about it. It’s quite lucky, for all concerned. What might be your name? Where from (we suspect it’s Noo York), an’ where to (we suspect it’s Europe)?”

Harvey gave his name, the name of the steamer, and a short history of the accident. He then demanded to be taken to New York immediately, where his father would pay any amount anyone chose to name.

“Hmm,” said the shaven man, quite unimpressed by the end of Harvey’s speech. “I can’t say we think special of any man, or boy even, that falls overboard from that kind o’ ship in a flat, calm sea. Least of all when his excuse is that he’s seasick.”

“Excuse?!” cried Harvey. “D’you think I’d fall overboard into your dirty little boat for fun?”

“Not knowin’ what your ideas of fun may be, I can’t rightly say, young feller. But if I was you, I wouldn’t call the boat that under God’s good guidance, was the means of savin’ your life, names. First, it’s disrespectful to God. Second, it’s annoying to my feelings—and I’m Disko Troop, captain o’ the fishing vessel *We’re Here* of Gloucester, Massachusetts, which you don’t seem rightly to know.”

“I don’t know and I don’t care,” said Harvey. “I’m grateful enough for being saved

and all that, of course! But I want you to understand that the sooner you take me back to New York, the better it'll pay you."

"Meanin'—how?" Troop raised one shaggy eyebrow over a light blue eye.

"Dollars and cents," said Harvey, delighted to think that he was making an impression. "Cold dollars and cents." He shoved a hand into a pocket, and pushed out his stomach a little, which was his way of acting tough. "You've done the best day's work you ever did in your life when you pulled me out of the sea. I'm the only son Harvey Cheyne has."

"He's been blessed," said Disko, rolling his eyes.

"And if you don't know who Harvey Cheyne is, you don't know much—that's all. Now turn this boat around and let's hurry."

Harvey believed that most of America was filled with people who knew his father, and were jealous of his money.

"When do you suppose we shall get to New York?"

"I don't sail through New York. We may see Gloucester about September, an' your pa—I'm real sorry I ain't never heard of him—may give me ten dollars after all your talk. Then of course, he may not."

"Ten dollars! Why, look here, I—" Harvey dived into his pocket for the wad of bills. All he

brought up was a soggy packet of cigarettes.

“Not legal money, an’ bad for the lungs. Toss ’em overboard, young feller, and try again.”

“It’s been stolen!” cried Harvey, angrily.

“You’ll hev to wait till you see your pa to give me my reward, then?”

“A hundred and thirty-four dollars—all stolen,” said Harvey, hunting wildly through his pockets. “Give them back.”

Troop’s hard face suddenly changed. “What might you be doin’ at your age with one hundred an’ thirty-four dollars, young feller?”

“It was part of my allowance—for a month.” Harvey was sure this would impress Troop.

“Oh! One hundred and thirty-four dollars is only part of his allowance—for one month only! You don’t remember hittin’ your head when you fell over, do you? Old man Hasken”—Troop seemed to be talking to himself—“he tripped on his boat and hit his head hard. ’Bout three weeks afterwards, old man Hasken insisted that his fishin’ boat was a fightin’ warship, an’ so he declared war on Sable Island because it was British. They sewed him up in a bag, his head an’ feet stickin’ out, for the rest o’ the trip, an’ now he lives in a mental hospital playin’ with little rag dolls.”

Harvey choked with anger, but Troop went on consolingly: “We’re sorry fer you. We’re very sorry fer you—an’ so young! We won’t say no more about the money, I guess.”

“’Course you won’t. You stole it.”

“Suit yourself. We stole it if it’s any comfort to you. Now, about goin’ back to New York. Allowin’ we could do it, which we can’t, you ain’t in no good shape to go back to your home, and we’ve jest come to the Grand Banks, workin’ fer our money. We don’t see the half of a hundred dollars a month, let alone extra spending money. With good luck, we’ll be ashore again somewhere around the first weeks o’ September.”

“But—but it’s May now, and I can’t stay here doin’ nothing just because you want to fish. I can’t, I tell you!”

“There’s a heap ’o work to do since Otto went overboard. I think he lost his grip in a storm. Anyways, you’ve turned up, which is plain lucky for all of us. I suspect there’s not much you can do, though. Ain’t that so?”

“I can make it worthwhile for you and your crowd when we get ashore,” said Harvey, with a fierce nod, murmuring vague threats about “thievery,” at which Troop almost—not quite—smiled.

“Except talk. I’d forget that. Keep your eyes open, an’ help Dan do as he’s told. I’ll give you—you ain’t worth it, but I’ll give—ten and a half dollars a month; say thirty-five at the end o’ the trip. A little work will clear your head, and you kin tell us all about your dad an’ your mom an’ your money afterwards.”

“She’s on the steamer,” said Harvey, his eyes filling with tears. “Take me to New York at once.”

“Poor woman—poor woman! When she has you back she’ll forgit it all, though. There’s eight of us on the *We’re Here*, an’ if we went back now—it’s more’n a thousand miles—we’d lose a season’s worth of pay. The men wouldn’t allow it.”

“But my father would make it all right.”

“He’d try. I don’t doubt he’d try,” said Troop; “but a whole season’s catch is eight men’s pay, an’ besides, you’ll be stronger when you see him in the fall. Go help Dan. It’s ten an’ a half dollars a month, I said, an’ o’ course, you’ll help with all the chores, same as the rest o’ us.”

“Do you mean I’m to clean pots and pans?” said Harvey.

“An’ other things. You’ve no call to shout, young feller.”

“I won’t! My father will give you enough to buy this dirty little fishing boat ten times over”—Harvey stamped on the deck—“if you take me to New York safe. And—and—you owe me a hundred and thirty dollars anyhow.”

“How do you figure that?” said Troop, his hard face darkening.

“How? You know how well enough! On top of all that, you want me to do maid’s work till the fall. I tell you I will not! Understand?”

Troop looked up at the main mast of his ship

with deep interest for a while, as Harvey hollered fiercely all around him.

“Hush!” he said at last. “I’m figurin’ out my responsibilities in my own mind. It’s a matter o’ judgment.”

Dan sneaked up quietly and tugged at Harvey’s elbow. “Careful what you say to my Dad,” he pleaded. “You’ve called him a thief two or three times, an’ he don’t take that from any livin’ being.”

“I won’t!” Harvey almost shrieked, ignoring the advice.

“Seems kind of unfriendly,” Troop said at last, his eye traveling down to Harvey. “I— don’t blame you fer being upset, not a bit, young feller, and you won’t blame me when you’re not so angry. Sure you understand what I say? Ten an’ a half dollars for a second boy on the ship—and all chores—to teach you, and for the sake o’ your health. Yes or no?”

“No!” said Harvey. “Take me back to New York or I’ll—”

He did not exactly remember what followed. He was lying in the gutter of the ship, holding on to a bloody nose while Troop looked down on him calmly.

“Dan,” he said to his son, “I was set against this young feller when I first saw him on account o’ my hasty judgment. Don’t you ever be led astray by hasty judgments, Dan. Now I’m sorry

for him, because he's confused in the head. He ain't responsible for the names he called me, nor for the other things he said, nor for jumpin' overboard, which I'm about half convinced he did. You be gentle with him, Dan, or I'll give you twice what I give him. Bleeding clears the head. Let him clean it out!"

Troop went down into the cabin, leaving Dan to comfort the unlucky heir to thirty million.