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# Hornblower: The Even Chance

By Unknown

January 1793.

The british fleet lies at  
anchor at Spithead.

Ships and men rot in idleness.

Across the channel,  
revolution in France is sweeping away  
the old order.

- Shore boat, ahoy!

- Aye, aye!

Jump!

You'll be all right!

Welcome to purgatory.

Mr. Eccleston, sir.

- Come aboard, sir.

- Your name?

H- h- Horatio Hornblower, sir.

Midshipman.

Eccleston, first lieutenant.

Mr. Chadd, lieutenant of the watch.

Did you bring your dunnage  
aboard with you?

My seachest is coming  
aboard for'ard.

I'll see it's sent below,  
where you should go too.

Get out of those wet clothes.

Yes, sir. I mean, aye, aye, sir.

Mr. Kennedy, take Mr.Hornblower down  
to the midshipmen's birth.

Aye, aye, sir.

Mind your step.

Difficult to say  
who smells the worst,  
the men or the beasts in  
the manger for'ard.

One gets used to it.

Watch your head.

There goes His Majesty's latest  
bad bargain.

Belay that, Styles  
unless you want  
to find yourself at the gratings.

Aye, aye, sir.

They're not bad men for

the most part,  
provided they're kept busy.  
But this, endless waiting  
most of us have been here  
six months already.  
Discipline, you see?  
Things will be different once  
we transfer to a fighting vessel,  
I don't doubt, but who knows  
when that may be.  
Our only hope is that the  
unpleasantness in France  
might come to something.  
You've heard the latest rumours,  
of course?  
that Louis was captured just  
before Christmas.  
What do you think they'll do  
with him? You can't kill a king.  
It's as my father explained  
to his gillie  
Perhaps some of these people  
have missed the odd meal or two  
but lopping the heads of the nobility  
isn't going to fill their bellies,  
is it?  
Still, that's Johnny Crapaud for you.  
Well, allow me to introduce  
the midshipmen of His Majesty's  
ship of the line, Justinian  
Known elsewhere to her intimates  
as the good ship  
Slough of Despond.  
What's this, Archie?  
Another mess mate, gentlemen.  
And whose pretty rear did you neglect  
kissing to find yourself  
among the fleet's forgotten, eh?  
- Well, speak, Apparition!  
- My name is Hornblower.  
What an infernal piece of  
bad luck for you.  
How old are you, Mr. Hornblower?  
Seventeen, sir.

Seventeen, sir! You hear  
that Cleveland?

If you wanted to be a seaman, boy,  
you should have started at twelve.  
I doubt he even knows the difference  
between  
a head and a halyard.

No, but I'll make sure it's the first  
thing I look up in...

in Norrie's Seamanship.

Now, gentlemen, if you will  
excuse me.

- Seasick!

- Seasick in Spithead!

Your pardon, sir.

There. Just lie quiet until you  
feel yourself again.

The captain's coming aboard.

Captain Keene...

if ever a man was wrongly named.

He looks frailer by the day.

I must thank you for your  
earlier kindness, Mr  
Clayton.

You mustn't mind Hether  
and Cleveland.

It's just their way till they  
get used to you.

Present arms!

Your father writes that  
you are a solitary boy.

Well, on a vessel of over 800 souls,  
you are unlikely to find either time  
or place for solitude.

How is the good Doctor Hornblower?

Well, I trust?

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

He said to be sure to thank  
you for accepting me  
in Justinian as midshipman, sir.

One good turn deserves another.

Your father is an excellent  
physician.

Yes, sir.

The son of a doctor! Ha!  
You'd have done better to choose  
a lord for your father  
if you wanted to make a career  
in His Majesty's navy.  
How far did your education go?  
I was a Grecian at school, sir.  
- Speak up.  
- I was a Grecian, sir, at school.  
You construed Xenofot, then,  
as well as Cicero.  
Yes, sir. But, not very well, sir.  
You'd have done better if you knew  
something  
about sines and cosines.  
Better still if you could foresee  
a squall  
in time to get t'gallants in.  
We have no time for ablative  
absolutes in the navy.  
- No, sir.  
- Obey orders, do your duty,  
and no harm will come to you.  
That will do.  
Ah, the Indies, now that's  
the place, Horatio  
Clear blue skies, and waters too.  
I should very much like to see  
that, Mr. Hether.  
So you may,  
if we ever get off this stinking  
hulk and put to sea again.  
You're in my seat.  
The head of the table is my place.  
Come on, up!  
How now, my sweet brother officers?  
No cheer for Jack's return?  
We took you for a lieutenant  
by now, Jack.  
- Did you?  
- Your commission?  
- Refused.  
- Oh, bad luck.  
Bad luck indeed.

So, acting lieutenant Simpson is  
once again

Mr. Midshipman Simpson.

At your service.

What's this? A new face among  
our august company. Mr?

Hornblower, sir.

Pleased to meet you.

What have you there?

Mutton, sir.

Very fine. Very fine indeed.

A mite salty for my taste.

What do you mean by helping  
yourself to my vittles, sir?

I should have thought my intention  
was quite obvious.

Kennedy

You'll acquaint young Snotty here  
with the way of things  
or have you forgotten so soon?

N- n- no. I,

Mr. Simpson may levy a toll upon  
our seachests for fresh shirts.

Likewise, our issue of spirits,  
and the best cuts  
of meat go to him.

- Why?

- He is senior officer in the mess.

We are all midshipmen.

That smacks of republicanism  
to my mind, Mr. Hornblower.

Is that what you are?

To my knowledge there is nothing  
in King's Regulations

I pee on your regulations!

There is but one law in this mess  
render unto Caesar

And I'll leave it to you to figure  
which of us is Caesar

and which is to do the rendering.

He takes your meaning, Jack.

Oh Clayton, you gin-soaked sot.

Strangle a tune from that  
fiddle of yours.

Hornblower...

Cut a reel.

Didn't you hear me, sir?

Dance, I said.

Dance! Dance! Dance!

I've seen men caper more lively on  
the end of a gibbet.

Mr. Kennedy,

that Mr. Hornblower might learn  
who runs this mess,

you'll wake him every half-hour  
day and night

until I tell you otherwise.

Kennedy! Archie!

Kennedy! I said wake Hornblower,  
not me and the whole darn ship

- He's sick.

- I don't care if he's dying. Keep him quiet.

Archie!

He's started again. I feared as much.

Clayton! If he's unfit,

you'll take his duties

in respect to waking Hornblower.

- Do you hear?

- As you please, Jack. As you please.

Help me get him back to his bed.

It's all right, Archie,

it's all right. A bad dream.

Sleep now, sleep.

What ails him?

What ails us all?

Sir! Mr. Hornblower!

Mr. Eccleston asks if you can attend  
him in the fighting top.

- The fighting top?

- Aye, sir. At once, he said.

Not afraid of heights,

are you, Snotty?

Mind you, mighty long drop.

Help me! Please.

Help me... please.

Time, gentlemen!

Let's see how you have fared  
with the problem

set for you by Mr. Bowles.  
Mr. Simpson We must all rejoice,  
the sources of the Nile have been  
discovered at last.  
Your ship, as far as I can make out  
from your illiterate scrawl  
is in central Africa.  
see what other terrae incogitiae  
have been opened up  
by the remaining intrepid explorers.  
Mr Cleveland, No.  
Mr. Hether, No.  
Mr. Kennedy, No.  
Mr. Hornblower.  
You must be proud to be  
alone successful  
among this crowd of  
intellectual giants.  
If you double your attainment while  
you double your years,  
I'm a-feared you'll leave  
the rest of us behind.  
Well done, Mr. Hornblower.  
Mr. Bowles! Be so good  
to see that Mr. Simpson  
pays even further attention to  
his mathematical studies.  
Good day, gentlemen!  
I've been thinking, gentlemen.  
It's time to reconvene the  
proceedings of the Inquisition.  
Who shall we question? There can  
only be one candidate  
who else but the captain's favourite  
Mr. Hornblower. Cleveland,  
Hether table.  
- Jack...  
- Do it unless you want to take his place.  
Leave me go!  
Quiet boy!  
You're a bit of a dark horse,  
aren't you, Snotty?  
Showing us all up in front  
of Captain Keene. Turn him over.



Come on!  
Now, the purpose of this Inquisition  
is for me  
to get to know you better.  
You see, I know these dogs.  
I know what gnaws at their  
souls at night  
things they'd rather no one knew of.  
So, what's your dirty little secret?  
A fancier of other boys, perhaps?  
Or is it that your mother makes  
her living on her back?  
You filthy!  
Come on, Snotty! Get up!  
You've won, Jack! He's finished!  
This little whore's son needs to  
learn respect for his betters.  
Come on, Snotty, get up!  
Enough Jack, you'll kill him!  
Stay down, boy, for goodness sake.  
Stand off.  
Clayton, my bold friend.  
I've no quarrel with you.  
Stand off Jack,  
or by cracky I'll trim the  
wall with your brains.  
Take him to Dr. Hepplewhite.  
My, but how bold you are  
with a pistol in your hand.  
But I know you for the coward  
you are, don't I?  
Hornblower! Mr. Hornblower!  
What is the matter with you this day?  
I gave orders  
Man, what happened to you?  
I missed my footing in the dark  
last night and fell, sir.  
Onto both sides of your face  
at once? Hmm?  
Come, no more of this nonsense.  
With whom did you fight?  
Well, answer me!  
Quickly now and you may be dealt  
with more leniently.

I fell, sir.

Very well. We shall see if a  
spell in the rigging  
can't teach you to tread  
more carefully.

Dearest Father,

I am pleased to tell you that  
everything is going along  
splendidly.

I count myself fortunate indeed to  
serve under Captain Keene  
and with so fine a body of men as  
are to be found here in Justinian.

I am very happy here.

I trust this finds you as it leave me  
well and in good spirits.

Your affectionate son, Horatio.

A drop of grog in it to  
warm you through.

Horatio?

Death.

I was thinking on death.

- Whose?

- Mine.

Darned unsporting of the Everlasting  
to fix his canon  
against self-slaughter,  
If you ask me.

You could always desert.

I'd never be free of him then.

He'd have won,

and that should be worse than death.

Someone should stand against him.

The beating he gave you

that was nothing, believe me.

You don't know half what

he's capable of.

The East India convoy is  
expected today.

Mr. Simpson will take a party  
of men ashore

and report to Lt. Chalk

of the Goliath, who is in charge

of the press gangs.

- Mr. Hornblower shall accompany him.

- Aye, aye, sir.

Some of the hands of the East India  
convoy

may try to sneak ashore  
to escape being pressed  
for further service.

It's our business to cut off  
their retreat.

- Mr. Simpson and

- This is Mr. Hornblower, sir,  
distinguished as the midshipman who  
was seasick in Spithead.

You shall arrange a cordon along  
the waterfront

to sweep up any absconders.

I leave the details to  
you, Mr. Simpson.

Aye, aye, sir. Thank you, sir.

Rendezvous is back here  
at "The Lamb."

Why aren't you on watch  
where I left you?

The convoy has not yet signaled.

Then all is well with the world.

Here's to the East India convoy  
long may it be delayed.

Come on Hornblower, give us a toast.

Come on!

Confusion to Robespierre.

Your men are all properly placed,  
Mr. Simpson?

Indeed they are, sir.

This is Mr. Caldwell,  
also of the Goliath.

Mr. Simpson and Mr. Hornblower  
of the Justinian.

We have a long wait  
before us, I fear.

Will you gentlemen join me in a glass?

- Yes, sir.

- And a game of cards to pass the time.

- Gladly, sir, gladly.

Excellent. Potman! Cards and a light!

And the rest are mine.

What do you mean the rest are yours?

- Five tricks. Game and rubber.

- I might take another.

I trump a lead of hearts

with diamonds

and make three more clubs.

- You're very sure.

- It's a mathematical certainty.

You know too much about this game.

He seems to know the backs of

the cards as well as the fronts.

That is an insulting remark,

Mr. Simpson.

For that I shall have

to ask satisfaction.

Come, Mr. Hornblower. Mr. Simpson had

a momentary loss of temper.

I am sure he will explain.

I have been accused of cheating

at cards, sir.

That is a hard thing to explain away.

The wine was in and the wit was out.

Mr. Simpson was speaking in jest,

I am sure.

Let's call for another bottle and

drink it in friendship.

- With pleasure

- Excellent.

if Mr. Simpson begs my pardon at once

before you two gentlemen,

and admits that he spoke without

justification and in a manner

no gentleman would employ.

Apologize to you?

Never this side of hell.

You hear that, gentlemen?

I have been insulted.

Mr. Simpson refuses to apologize,

while insulting me further.

There is only one way now in which

satisfaction can be given.

A duel? Are you mad?

Tomorrow sees an end to it, Archie.

One way or another, I shall  
be rid of him.

I have an even chance.

An even chance?

Simpson is reckoned one of the best  
shots in the navy.

He'll kill you certain sure.

I'll act as your second, of course.

But, have you ever fought  
a duel before?

You ready?

I can't prevail upon you to  
change your mind?

Very well. Hand me my cloak.

Where is he?

I regret my principal has met  
with an accident,  
which prevents his attendance  
this morning.

The coward has wet himself.

As his second, I am willing  
to stand proxy.

- Proxy?

- I shall fight the duel in his stead  
unless Mr. Simpson is willing to  
withdraw his accusation,  
of course.

- Never.

- Wait a moment Mr. Clayton,  
I'm not sure if that's legal.  
Legal or not, Dr. Hepplewhite,  
it would settle the matter,  
I am here.

And you're not afraid of me,  
are you, Jack?

I will say, "One, two, three, fire."

At the last word gentlemen, you  
can fire as you will.

- Are you ready?

- Yes.

Yes.

One, two, three,

Fire!

Got you, bastard.

Upstairs.

Clayton?

I'm sorry. I didn't kill him.

What is it?

What are they shouting about?

I don't know.

Archie, see if you can't quiet them.

Why?

You were right, Horatio.

Someone had to stand against him,  
but not a boy.

You shamed me.

Even a coward can't run forever.

I thought I could beat him

I had an even chance.

Horatio, is it evening?

Hornblower!

I'm not done with you yet, boy.

Im going to flay you alive!

- He's dead.

- Yes.

No, you fool, not Clayton.

Louis.

The frogs have murdered their king.

Tried and executed for crimes  
against the people.

It means war, Horatio.

Don't you understand?

It means war.

- Well, what's the word?

- Do we transfer?

A third of the crew are to remain  
with Justinian.

A third will go to Arethusa  
under Black Charlie Hammond.

And we few,

- we fortunate few

- Don't keep us on tenterhooks!

Keene has recommended our  
transfer to Indefatigable!

- Yes, a frigate!

- You hear that, Horatio?

It means prize money.

Horatio!

Poor old Clayton, he always  
wanted to serve on a frigate.  
It is a sure opportunity  
for advancement,  
for distinction, for prize money.  
It is the opportunity of a lifetime,  
sir. I thank you for it, but  
Any ambitious young officer  
would jump at the chance to serve  
on a frigate!

I know, sir. But, you accepted me  
here as midshipman and  
of course, I must stay with you.  
Not many young men would have  
said that, Mr. Hornblower.

I am very touched by your loyalty,  
even though I won't live to  
appreciate it.

No, please, don't interrupt.  
Youth and quick wits  
belong where they can be rewarded,  
not on a channel proper with  
a dying captain.

Sir?

A midshipman's share of prize  
money is not much,  
I grant you, but at last you  
can start to repay  
the debt that you owe your father.  
It is the good of the service I have  
in mind, Mr. Hornblower,  
when I insist that you take  
up this posting.

Aye, aye, sir.

My name is Captain Sir Edward Pellew,  
and I am here to tell you that your  
days of idling are over!

You have in mind to fight?

That is well, for you shall  
have your fill!

Yesterday, His Majesty received  
a communication from Paris.  
The Revolutionary Government  
in France

has declared war on Britain.  
The old adversary may wear  
a new face, but whatever mask  
he chooseto hide behind, a Frenchman  
is still a Frenchman, and  
we will beat him as we always  
have beaten him!  
For there is no power on earth  
that can withstand  
the might of the British Navy!  
God Save The King!  
God Save The King!  
Midshipman Hornblower, sir.  
You sent for me.  
Mr. Simpson, as I am sure  
you will be glad to hear,  
shall recover and rejoin the service.  
However, he is to remain with  
Captain Keene aboard Justinian.  
You should know, Mr. Hornblower,  
that I do not think much of men who  
let other's fight their battles  
for them.  
No, sir.  
But, neither will I base my opinion  
of an officer on hearsay.  
I judge a man on what I see him do,  
not what  
- others tell me he has done.  
- Yes, sir.  
Doubtless, had you been properly led,  
this situation would not have arisen.  
Captain Keene bears no blame  
It's not your place to condemn  
him or defend him.  
No, sir, I meant only that what  
befell was outside his control.  
Aboard his ship, sir,  
there is nothing outside  
a captain's control  
- and you would do well to remember it  
- Yes, sir.  
England is at war, Mr. Hornblower.  
You have already cost this navy



two midshipmen

one injured, one dead.

No one mourns Mr. Clayton's loss more  
than I, sir, and I resent

You resent?

Darn your impudence, sir.

I will not lose men to no better  
cause than

the satisfaction of their own vanity.

Whilst under my command,

you will issue

no further challenge,

is that understood?

- Aye, aye, sir.

- Very well.

I have it from Lt. Eccleston that

those hands formerly

of Mr. Simpson's division

are something

of an ill-disciplined rabble.

- Would you concur?

- Yes, sir.

They are now your division.

We sail to battle, Mr. Hornblower.

I cannot afford to feed men

who do not pull their weight.

You will make them work

- or you will answer for it.

- Yes, sir.

Division line up for inspection.

Name?

What's the matter with

your face, Styles?

Oh, he gets bi...

Boils, sir, awful bad.

- Have you done anything about them?

- Oh yes, sir.

- Well?

- I've put plasters on them, sir.

Very well. What's funny, Oldroyd?

- Nothing, sir.

- Matthews?

Nothing, sir.

All right, carry on.

Be about your work, now.

Aye, aye, sir.

Break his back. Break his back.

Time! Time, Styles!

Five dead, pay your bets,  
evens or better.

- Six!

- Five!

- Where?

- There, that one's dead.

- No, he ain't. Come on

- Look, yes he is, his back is broken.

Oh, fuck!

Who's in charge, here?

- We're not on watch, sir.

- No, you're gambling.

This is now't but a bit of fun, sir.

It's hardly what you could  
call gambling.

There are other charges possible  
here, Matthews.

Other charges?

A member of His Majesty's forces  
can be charged  
with rendering himself unfit  
for service.

Similarly, there could be charges  
of aiding and abetting,  
which might include you.

I should consult the Articles of War.

Punishment for such an offense is

- flogging around the fleet, I believe.

- Really, sir.

I could bring charges against  
every man jack of you.

You could be court martialed,  
dis-rated, flogged.

By God, one more look like that  
from you, Styles, and I'll do it.

Belay that, mate.

You'd be in irons five minutes after  
I've spoken to Lt. Eccleston.

Mr. Simpson had no argument  
with our sports.

Mr. Simpson is no longer in charge  
of your division.

I am.

And I'll have no more of these  
filthy games, do you understand?

The next hint of misbehaviour and  
you will be at the gratings.

- But, sir

- I've said it and I mean it!

After this, I want to see you in  
the dogwatches,  
sky-larking on deck,  
not skulking in the cable tiers like  
a lot of darn Frenchmen.

Are you going to tell Mr. Eccleston?

No, not this time.

I'm giving you a chance to prove  
yourselves worthy of my trust.

Aye, sir.

Right, now. Get rid of  
those rats there.

Styles, get your face  
plastered up again.

Matthews, coil these cables  
down properly  
before the boatswain sees it.

Oldroyd, it was six.

Hands to quarters! Hands to quarters!

Enemy ship to larboard!

- Fire as they bear, Mr. Eccleston.

- Aye, sir.

Fire!

Lay us alongside, Mr. Bowles.

We can carry this action  
by boarding her.

Hard a larboard!

Styles, help me get him  
to the surgery!

Come on, Davey.

- This man needs help.

- I'll tend to him presently.

Lt. Chadd, may I inquire as to  
the extent of your injuries, sir?

- Splinter.

- Sir, this man is from my division  
He'll take his turn like  
all the rest.  
Well darn it, if he's not seen to now  
he'll bleed to death!  
Mr. Hornblower! It's all right,  
Hepplewhite, I can wait.  
Very well.  
Come on Styles, let's return  
to our station.  
Did you see me? Did you see me?  
Well, where were you?  
We carried her by boarding.  
I killed two.  
Well, one certainly. Oh, you should  
have been there, Horatio.  
You should have been.  
through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who at his coming  
shall change our vile body  
that it may be like his  
glorious body,  
according to the mighty working  
whereby he is able to submit  
all things to himself.  
Therefore, in the sure and certain  
knowledge of the resurrection  
- we commit the body of  
- Davey Williams.  
Davey Williams to the deep,  
amen.  
May God have mercy on his soul.  
Mr. Hornblower.  
What is it, Styles?  
The lads have...  
asked me to say they value the effort  
you made  
on Davey's part, sir.  
That was all.  
Styles!  
Please convey my thanks to the men.  
Their conduct in this afternoon's  
action was exemplary.  
Aye, aye, sir.

A salute.  
Well, it's a start,  
I suppose.  
Bay of Biscay  
"Indefatigable" attacks  
a French food convoy.  
Quel bateau?  
Claudette, de Marseilles.  
Qu'est-ce-que vous emportez?  
Molasse  
Trois cent tons.  
- Claudette of Marseilles, sir.  
- Cargo?  
- Molasses, 300 tons.  
- Lt. Chadd!  
- Sir.  
- Take 6 men, board that vessel, take her  
into any English port you can  
make and report there for orders.  
Aye, aye, sir.  
Mr. Bowles, the schooner  
to starboard, if you please.  
Aye, sir.  
Brace hard to larboard!  
She's still running under  
colours, sir.  
It's not my intention to chase him  
across the Seven Seas.  
He's asked for it, Mr. Eccleston.  
Let him have it.  
Starboard bow chaser, fire!  
Silence!  
Not into the hull, darn it.  
Cripple her!  
That's better. More like it.  
She's hauling down her colours, sir.  
Well Mr. Eccleston?  
Marie Galante of Bordeaux, sir.  
Twenty-four days out of New Orleans  
with rice.  
About 200 tons, I should say.  
She'll sell for a pretty penny when  
we get her home.  
- How many of her crew?

- Twelve at most.

A prize crew of four then, I should say. Midshipman's command

- Mr. Hornblower!

- Sir!

Take 4 men, board her. Mr. Bowles will give you our position.

Take her into any English port you can

- make and report there for orders.

- Aye, aye, sir.

Your first command.

My congratulations.

Today, if you please, Mr. Hornblower.

I don't intend to lose any more of this convoy

through your dawdling, sir!

Aye, aye, sir.

They've made best use of their time, sir.

- Drunk as lords.

- Wish we were as happy, eh?

Where is your officer?

Midshipman Hornblower, of His Britannic Majesty's frigate, Indefatigable. Good-day.

This vessel is now a prize of war, Captain, under my command.

A midshipman?

You have no officer more senior?

Sir, to the British Navy, a schooner such as

this warrants no more than a midshipman's command.

But you are no more than a boy!

You will find, sir, that even a boy in His Majesty's Navy is capable of an easy two-day run to England.

Put that down, Styles.

At once, do you hear?

And take these men for'ard.

Throw them into the fos'cle.

Come along, you Frenchie.

This way. Come on.

- Right, move!

- I am an officer. I do not go with the men.

- Sir?

- He goes with the rest.

You, come on!

The prisoners are secure, sir.

Matthews, you've the longest service,  
I believe.

- Aye sir, 18 years.

- Very well. I'll rate you petty officer.

Aye, aye, sir.

Thank-you, sir.

Get to work and clear that raffle  
away for-ard

so we can sling the topsail yard in.

- Aye, aye, sir.

- Haul in the fos'cle sheets.

- Aye, aye, sir. Styles, Oldroyd.

- All right, all right!

I'll be busy aft.

And get that staysail in before  
it flogs itself to pieces.

Well, what are you waiting for?

Those were my orders.

Beg 'pardon sir, but if we're to  
sling that yard again,

- we'll need to use the jeers, Sir.

- Yes?

Well sir, we'll need more hands than  
we have

to use the jeers, sir.

Can I put some of those  
Frenchies to work?

That was my intention, of course  
if any of them

- are sober enough.

- I think we can get them to work, sir.  
drunk or sober.

Oh boy, what do I do now?

Dammed.

- Matthews!

- Aye, aye, sir.

We'll square away. Then return the

prisoners to the foc'scle.  
Aye, aye, sir.  
Square away!  
Return the prisoners to the foc'scle.  
- Matthews, take the wheel.  
- Aye, aye, sir.  
- What course, sir?  
- Norwest by west a quarter west.  
Norwest by west a quarter  
west, it is sir.  
Not into the hull, darn it!  
Cripple her!  
By God! She's holed!  
She's holed all right.  
About 2 feet below the waterline.  
Thank-you, Styles.  
She was close hauled and heeling  
right over when we hit her.  
Her bows must have lifted just  
as the Indy fired.  
And of course, she's lower in  
the water now, sir.  
At least, on this tack, the hole  
is not so deep under, sir.  
On this tack, we're headed  
for France.  
We must further a sail and get it  
over that hole.  
Use an old t'gallant.  
Get the Frenchmen to help.  
She is riding a bit heavily, now.  
She's taking a little water, yes.  
A foul wind for England, monsieur.  
- Winds may change, monsieur.  
- So they say.  
Sir, she's riding a bit heavily now.  
- Yes, thank-you, Matthews.  
- I just said so to your captain.  
Well, so much then for your easy  
2- days run to England.  
- Sir!  
- What is it?  
The deck seam is opening up!  
- I've never seen anything like it, sir.



- It's the rice.  
The cargo, Matthews.  
We're carrying rice.  
The water has got into  
it and it's swelling.  
The sooner we get a sail over  
that hole the better.  
Hurry these darn Frenchmen up!  
Come on mesdemoiselles.  
We're not sewing petticoats!  
I told you I thought  
she was riding heavily.  
Go to the devil.  
Another few feet.  
There!  
All right, sir.  
Right, lay her back on the  
larboard tack.  
This is folly, monsieur.  
On this tack, we could easily  
make Bordeaux.  
You're risking all our lives.  
Look! The rats!  
I don't think our problem  
is the hole, sir.  
The rice must have forced her seams  
open under the water.  
We must jettison the cargo.  
Get the sails in and rig a tackle  
from that yard.  
We'll sway it up.  
Madness, this is madness.  
We must have moved about 50 tons.  
My men are exhausted.  
She's lower in the water, sir.  
Settling fast.  
Another hour we'll be swimming.  
It's no go, sir. Sorry.  
I shall make preparations for  
abandoning the ship.  
- Sir?  
- You heard me.  
Get water and bread into the  
ship's boat

and get everyone aboard.

- We shall abandon the ship, Monsieur.

- Enfin!

- Ready to shove off, sir.

- Very good. I'll be up presently.

Beggin' your pardon, sir,

but you should see as you have

some warm clothes, sir.

I've been in an open boat

10 days once, sir.

- It can get darn cold.

- Yes, thank-you, Matthews.

- Is everyone off?

- All save yourself, sir.

Come aboard sir, she's done for.

Matthews, take the tiller.

Get off!

Bear off!

She is going down, sir.

- Breakfast, sir.

- Thank-you, Matthews.

The wind's backing a

little westerly today, sir.

That's so.

There's a chance we might find

the Indefatigable again.

This is her hunting ground, afterall.

- We'll make sail.

- Very good, sir.

Finch, take the sheet.

Styles, take the tiller.

Keep her close hauled on

the larboard tack.

Close haul on the larboard tack, sir.

The wind is still fair for Bordeaux.

We could be there by tomorrow.

- Why do we sail northwest?

- We go to England.

But, this is going to take us a week,

even if the wind is still fair.

The boat is too crowded.

Should there be a storm,

you are risking all our lives.

I insist

that you head towards Bordeaux.

Matthews, take this.

Beggin your pardon,sir,but hadn't  
you better cock your pistol?

Monsieur, I was in a stinking  
English prison for 5 years,  
so let's make an agreement.

Let's go to France.

No.

When we reach shore, anywhere  
you choose, we will land,  
- and you may continue your journey.

- No!

- I said no!

- Shall I clout him on the jaw for you, sir?

Not unless he misbehaves himself.

Put that pistol away,  
it's dangerous.

I will do nothing to interfere with  
your command of this boat.

Do you swear it?

- I swear it.

- And your men?

- Well, what do they say?

- They swear it too.

Very well.

Both hands, you fool!

That water has got to last until  
we reach England.

Or do you want us all  
to die of thirst?

Lay down your arms!

Now!

- Do as he says.

- Sir.

Do it!

- I'm sorry, sir.

- It's all right, Finch.

Thank-you,

sir, thank-you.

My men are in mind of throwing you  
overboard, monsieur.

But,I think you deserve some time

- to reflect on your own stupidity.

- Monsieur?

As I told you, I have spent  
5 long years  
in one of your country's  
fine prison hulks,  
and I am grateful now for  
an opportunity.

to return the courtesy  
The chart and compass,  
if you please.

Fish for it.

As you were, Styles!

That was a foolish thing to do, boy.

I might have killed you.

And forgo the pleasure of crowing  
over my discomfort?

I think not.

Nevertheless, it was a futile act.  
All I have to do to gain France is  
to turn this boat about  
through 180 degrees and  
then sail southeast.

- If you can find it.

- Oh, I can read a chart, monsieur.

I only need the sun and  
the pole star for reference  
a feat of navigation that even  
you might manage.

- What's to do, sir?

- A crisis of confidence, Styles.

Forget's men are complaining,  
and rightly so,  
that we should be in sight of  
the coast by now.

And where is it, though, sir?

He said he had only to  
follow the charts.

So he did.

That would presuppose that our  
position upon the chart  
was accurately plotted.

Nine against five, the odds of them  
gaining the upper hand  
were always favourable.

It would be a poor captain that did  
not take precautions  
against such an eventuality.

So, where have you got our  
true position, then, sir?

In my head, Matthews.

We were sailing north, not northwest,  
when they seized control.

Forget's simply turned us about.

Then we're headed south,  
not southeast.

Indeed, Styles.

We're rowing parallel with the coast,  
we're getting no closer.

Now you may see how the tree  
of indiscipline bears fruit.

An interesting situation, Monsieur.

Sail to windward!

The Indy!

It's the Indy, sir!

Thank goodness, it is!

Right, that's the last one, lads.

Take him away. Lock him up!

So, I'll tell you what he does.

Listen to this.

He drops the compass over  
the side,

"Fish for it," says he,

bold as brass.

- He did!

- And him with a pistol in his face.

- And so the frog captain

- Here he comes lads. Step lively now.

Well done, sir.

Mr. Hornblower!

The Marie Galante was damaged  
when you boarded her.

And had you had a larger prize  
crew you might

have been able to save her.

No, better by far that France was  
deprived of her cargo

than England should benefit by it.

Still,

it's fortunate for you her captain  
was so poor a navigator.  
else we might never have found you.  
- No, sir.  
- Sail to larboard!  
Make sail before we lose her!  
Darn this fog.  
That's one of ours.  
By God, a Frenchman!  
Ship to starboard!  
She'll hide in the fog.  
After her, Mr. Bowles!  
Starboard two points.  
Starboard two points, sir.  
We're losing her,  
darn it!  
Silence!  
Where is she?  
Where is she?  
There she is!  
Now we have her!  
Mr. Bowles, we're in over our heads.  
Take us out of reach of their  
shore batteries.  
Mr. Eccleston, what was the ship  
you saw afire?  
I couldn't see, sir. One of ours,  
though, certainly.  
Launch boats. Pick up survivors.  
Over here!  
Help us!  
Courage boys, you're safe now.  
Keep shouting, we'll find you!  
There they are, sir.  
Hold water.  
Give him this. Keep him warm.  
Well, Mr. Hornblower.  
The Papillon jumped us from the fog.  
Every time we thought we knew  
where she might come from,  
she came at us from somewhere else.  
It was like there were  
four ships, not one.  
Poor Captain Keene. I was standing

with him when he was hit.  
Tore his insides out and  
Yes, all right, Mr. Simpson, please,  
do not distress yourself  
even further.

Mr. Bowles, the chart if you please.  
The mouth of the Gironde,  
the Papillon lies just here,  
between the shore batteries  
of St. Dye and Blaye.

You gentlemen, will go in with  
the boats and cut her out.

Lt. Eccleston will be in general  
command. Mr. Eccleston

As you have seen at first hand,  
she is a ship of war,  
well-armed and fully crewed.

But, we will be attacking her  
at night, taking her by surprise  
Kennedy, you'll acquaint Snotty  
here with the way of things.

Mr. Chadd will command the gig,  
Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Hornblower,  
the jollyboat.

- Mr. Bowles
- High water tomorrow is at 4:50. Dawn is at 5:30.
- The attack will
- So, what's your dirty little secret?

Is it that your mother earns  
her living on her back?

Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Hornblower,  
board as you see fit, and at once  
ascend the main rigging.

You will ensure that the main  
topsail is loosed  
and sheeted home, on receipt  
of further orders.

I myself, or Mr. Bowles, in the event  
I'm killed or wounded  
Hornblower! I'm not finished  
with you yet, boy.

I'm going to flay you alive!  
Kennedy, I said 'Wake Hornblower,  
not the whole darn ship.

You mean the coward has wet himself,  
has wet himself.

So much for the theory.

Any questions, gentlemen?

Sir, I would like to volunteer  
to go in with the boats.

If you think you're up to it,  
Mr. Simpson.

- Lt. Eccleston?

- We will be glad to have you, Mr. Simpson.

You will go in with Mr. Hornblower  
and Mr. Kennedy.

Hello, Archie.

It's been a long time.

Jack's missed you, boy.

We were just catching up on  
old times, Mr. Hornblower.

These are new times, Mr. Simpson.

- You have no hold over us here.

- No.

No, I see that.

Time we were away, Archie.

Nervous?

Archie?

Boat crews away.

Mind what you're doing, sir!

Mind what you're doing!

- What's going on?

- It's Mr. Kennedy, sir. He's having a fit!

Mr. Hornblower, can't you keep  
your boat quiet!

Shut up.

Archie, for mercy, shut up!

- Do something!

- Sir!

I know, I know.

Mr. Hornblower!

Mr. Hornblower, get your men  
aloft quickly now.

Loose the mail topsail.

Styles, Matthews, lay aloft.

Come on men!

- Follow me boys!

- Stevens, wait!



There are no foot ropes.  
What'll we do, sir? What'll we do?  
Mr. Eccleston, the fos'cle is  
secured, sir.  
Thank-you, Mr. Chadd.  
Darn it, why does he delay?  
If Hornblower doesn't loose  
the sails, the attack will fail.  
Styles, Matthews, starboard yard.  
Finch, Oldroyd, follow me.  
- Drat! Drat! Drat!  
- God Blood  
Quickly, now, quickly!  
Well done!  
Archie?  
Mr. Chadd's complements, sir,  
the ship is ours.  
Christ. My compliments  
to Mr. Hornblower.  
I'm afraid Mr. Hornblower  
is dead, sir.  
I saw him fall from the yard myself.  
Ahoy there, Papillon!  
Help! Help!  
Papillon!.  
No sign of the Papillon?  
They must  
have cut her out by now.  
Sail to windward!  
My goodness, French corvettes!  
It's not too deep. Head wounds  
always bleed terrible bad, sir.  
I expect it hurts like the devil,  
but you'll mend, praise the Lord.  
What about Mr. Kennedy?  
He was still in the boat.  
She came adrift when we  
went about, sir.  
That's what Mr. Simpson said.  
I swear, you were born  
to hang, Mr. Hornblower.  
It's a good thing these Frenchmen  
are such a poor shot.  
French be cursed, I was

shot by Mr. Simpson.  
It is a serious accusation,  
Mr. Hornblower, and one I trust  
you would not make without  
the evidence to support it.  
I have the evidence of  
my own eyes, sir.  
This is hardly the time or the place  
to do anything about it.  
Get back to your division,  
Mr. Hornblower.  
I will address the matter when  
we get back to the Indefatigable  
- Mr. Chadd?  
- It's Mr. Hornblower, sir. Surgeon!  
Surgeon!  
Where is Mr. Chadd?  
I regret that Lt. Chadd  
is dead, sir.  
The ship is yours, Mr. Hornblower.  
Take command.  
Get us back to the Indy...safe.  
I'm senior here, the ship is mine.  
Lt. Eccleston instructed me  
to take command.  
You heard him, Mr. Bowles.  
Mr. Simpson is senior,  
Mr. Hornblower.  
Styles, Matthews, confine  
Mr. Simpson below.  
You heard me, Mr. Simpson is  
under close arrest.  
Who do you think you are? I have  
command here!The ship is mine!  
Any man, any man,  
stands against me,  
he will regret it!  
Now, get to work shoring  
up this damage.  
Get back to work, do you hear?  
I have command!  
Mr. Bowles, you will carry  
out my orders.  
If Mr. Simpson resists, you have

my permission to shoot him.

Come on!

- Helmsman, hard to starboard.

- Hard to starboard, sir!

Sir, the Papillon!

My goodness, it is the Papillon.

- God!

- Mr. Bowles, engage the corvette to larboard.

Engage? Sir, we can't take on  
three French corvettes.

We can give the Indy an even chance.

We've a third of her crew  
aboard this vessel.

If any of the Frenchmen get  
close enough to board her,

- she's finished.

- Aye, aye, sir.

Why don't they fire at us, sir?

It may have escaped your  
notice, Mr. Bowles,  
but we are still flying  
French colours.

Shall I have them run down, sir?

If you want me to shoot you  
where you stand, by all means.

Sir, it goes against all  
articles of war.

When we have leisure, you must  
show me where it is written  
and I will gladly concede the point.

Until that time, please confine  
yourself to following my orders  
Fire!

Fire as you bear!

Starboard side!

Fire!

Fire!

My goodness!

Poor devils!

Mr. Hornblower.

They're surrendering, sir!

They are surrendering!

Three cheers, men.

Launch boats to pick

up survivors, Matthews.

Mr. Bowles,

you may raise the Ensign.

Timely, Mr. Hornblower, timely.

I take it by your appearance,

Lt. Eccleston is indisposed?

I regret to inform you, sir, that

Lt. Eccleston is dead.

Lt. Chadd is also among the fallen.

I see.

Who then had command of the

Papillon during the action?

The honour fell to me, sir.

How so? What of Mr. Kennedy,

Mr. Simpson?

Mr. Kennedy was left behind after  
the boarding of the Papillon.

- And Mr. Simpson?

- It's a darn lie, sir!

Begging your pardon...

but he's had it in for me ever since  
that incident in Spithead.

Mr. Simpson, are you

saying Mr. Hornblower

brought this charge against

you purely out of malice?

He's impeached my honour, sir, and

for that I demand satisfaction

There, you see, he's afraid.

Mr. Simpson, I would be very

wary of calling a man

only lately distinguished

in battle, a coward.

Oh, I do call him a coward,

and a liar.

If he spoke the truth, he would not  
hesitate to face me.

Mr. Hornblower's reluctance to accept  
this challenge is, I fear

the result of an order

I gave him when

he first came aboard Indefatigable,

is that not so?

Yes, sir.

Mr. Hornblower, I remove  
that impediment,  
but I must caution you against  
accepting this challenge.  
I maintain the charge against  
Mr. Simpson, sir.  
However, since I cannot prove it  
other than with my body,  
I have no choice but to accept  
his challenge.  
For the last time, gentlemen,  
cannot you be reconciled?  
I'm going to kill you, Snotty.  
Just as I killed Clayton.  
And your little pal, Archie.  
- Kennedy?  
- Very well.  
You may step out  
the distance.  
And, one, two, three, four, five.  
Are you ready?  
One,  
Two  
I did not say, "fire", sir!  
It just went off. It's a misfire,  
I assure you.  
Is he dead? Did I kill him?  
No, you did not!  
Mr. Hornblower, you will  
return fire at will.  
Return. I shot him.  
The duel is over.  
You must stand your ground and  
attend fire, Mr. Simpson!  
Don't shoot!  
No!  
For the love of God,  
please don't shoot.  
Don't shoot me!  
I beg you!  
You're not worth the powder.  
Not worth the powder?  
Exceptionally fine shot, sir,  
if I may say so, sir.

You may, Mr. Bowles,  
you may.

- Sir.

- Mr. Hornblower.

You have fought your duel,  
that is well.

Never fight another, that is better.

I owe you a debt of gratitude, sir.

I dispensed justice as I saw fit.

I told you, Mr. Hornblower, I judge  
a man by what I see him do.

Nevertheless, you saved my life.

As you saved the life of every man  
aboard this ship, sir.

Come on man, no false modesty now.

I see something in you,

Mr. Hornblower.

If you continue in this service  
as you've begun,

- a great future awaits you.

- Thank-you, sir.

Carry on, Mr. Hornblower.

Aye, aye, sir.

Styles, coil those cables  
down properly now.

Matthews! Lend a hand there.