

JAMAICA RUM

BY ANTHONY GILLIS



FREEDOM, WEALTH, AND POWER

OR THE HANGMANS NOOSE

JAMAICA RUM

BY ANTHONY GILLIS

First Print Edition 2012

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Nancy's Tavern, as it appears in this work, is inspired by
the song Nancy the Tavern Wench by the Scottish pirate
metal band Alestorm. Visit them at:

www.Alestorm.net

DEDICATION

To my beloved wife and editor, Alexandria

To those who sailed the seas in fair times and foul,
whether explorers, merchants, military, or pirates.

To authors of the sea, from Robert Louis Stevenson
to C.S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian.

To my father, who lived a brave life at sea

And to all, in all times, who lived free



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PREFACE

Buccaneers and bawdy wenches, cutlasses, pistols, cannons, daring duels and battles at sea... you'll find them all here! Then of course, there is the rum, lots and lots of it. Did I mention there is rum? The beginnings of this book came from my observation that most stories about pirates involve very little actual piracy. There is nothing wrong with magical quests, sea monsters and searches for buried treasure. I enjoy them too. Ultimately though, pirates are, well, pirates, and I wanted to see a story where they acted accordingly, yet stayed sympathetic enough to be protagonists. In the end, I decided to write that story myself.

Though it is set in the Caribbean in 1672, *Jamaica Rum* is not, strictly speaking, historical fiction. It could be better described as an adventure story in a somewhat historical setting. While not outright fantasy like some popular films, or like most pirate books geared toward younger readers, I have nonetheless played loose with the chronology of events, and introduced fictional characters, ships, and even a small island. Many details of my version of Port Royal are fictional, though no wilder than the real city was at the time. For example, by 1672 and the outbreak of war between the English and Dutch, Sir Thomas Modyford, patron of Henry Morgan and the buccaneers, was no longer governor of Jamaica, and was in fact serving a two year jail stint in the Tower of London. However, in the end I didn't care – the story was much more fun with the roguish

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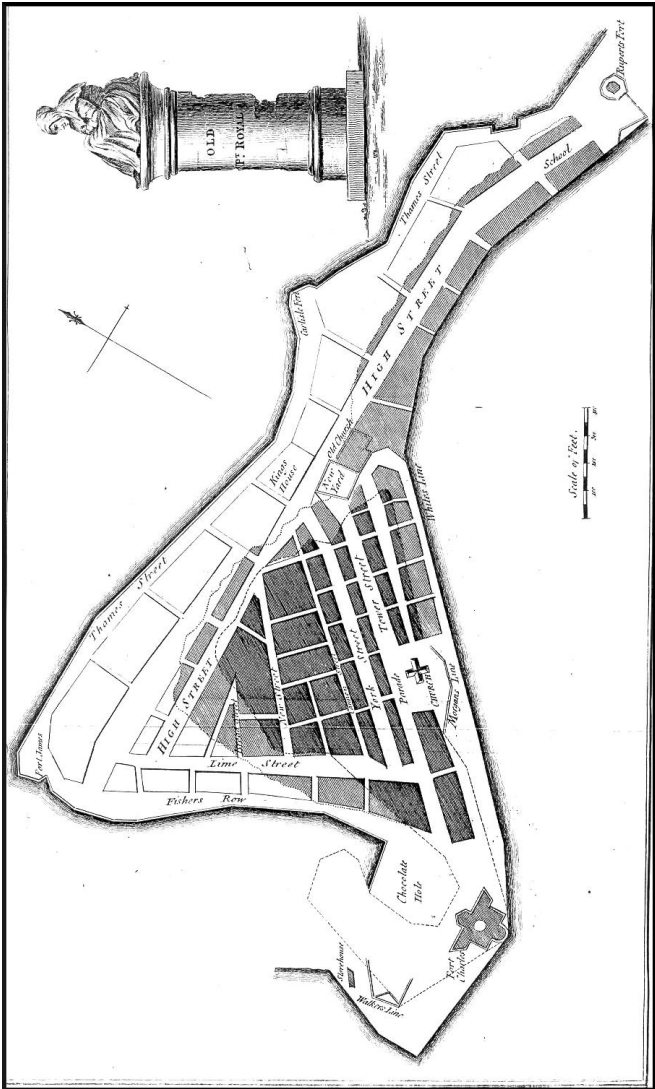
governor, the pirate admiral, and the start of a big naval war all on hand at once, if only briefly.

If rollicking pirate adventure with daring deeds and vast amounts of carousing are your cup of rum, then by all means, read on!



MAP OF PORT ROYAL

LATE 17TH CENTURY





Captain Bartho. Roberts

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CHAPTER ONE

BLACK FLAG APPROACHING

High in the crow's nest of the Saucy Lass, Cargrave saw something glint on the horizon. He was basking in the cooler air of the tops on a fine Caribbean morning. Around the ship, blue sky, white clouds, and blue-green sea gleamed in all directions. He pulled up a spyglass, the small one used for this very duty, and took a look. No doubt of it. That was a sail. Here in the central Caribbean, one might see ships from anywhere on

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any sort of business. This one seemed to be heading roughly the same way they were, though faster. He looked below for Captain Davies and saw him where he'd expect, up on the poopdeck near the helm. He hailed down.

"Cap'n, sail on the horizon west by northwest, might be headed same way as us."

The older man looked up, his broad weathered face a match for the faded brown of his coat, and his graying brown hair flying in the wind.

"Thank ye Cargrave, let me know if you become sure."

"Aye aye, Cap'n!"

As merchant captains went, Davies was a good sort, thought Cargrave. He didn't kick sailors when in a bad mood like old captain Browne of the Pigeon, and the only men he'd ever had flogged had deserved it. On the other hand, he was as stingy with pay as any. No one ever said life as a merchant sailor was easy.

For what was easily the hundredth time, or the thousandth, Cargrave thought about how differently his life might have gone if his parents hadn't died of plague ten years earlier, in 1662. His father had been an unusually successful sailor, an officer, sharp enough to put back a bit of money, bold enough to marry the beautiful woman he'd met in Spain, and stubborn enough to bring her back home to England in a time when the dour Puritans ruled there and Catholics lived in fear. He'd even seen to it that their son got a bit of education.

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Then they'd died when Cargrave was only thirteen years old. Distant relatives and lawyers got involved, and his father's bit of money vanished down a dozen holes. Cargrave himself had gone to sea rather than be put into a home for orphans with the budding pickpockets and beggars. And what had he done since? By the standards of an average sailor, he'd been successful. He'd learned his trade well. As Master Gunner's Mate, he was an officer of a sort, though not much of one on a ship with only two small cannon. Like his father, he put away a little of his pay rather than spending it all as most sailors did.

But he was always restless, and he was starting to wonder where the cure might be.

He raised the spyglass and took another look. That ship was moving fast, and had turned. It was now on a course that if kept, would bring it to intercept the Saucy Lass. It was a bigger vessel, a fast three-masted barque, and better able to move against the wind than even fast two-masted brigs like the Lass.

"Hoy, dago, you daydreaming again up there?" yelled a gruff voice, that of the big, ruddy, foul-tempered Boatswain, Smith.

"No sir!"

That answer was only partially true. Merchant ships carried small crews, and that meant long days and long watches. A lot of men tried to get out of duty up in the crow's nest if they could help it. The motion of the ship was exaggerated up here and there were plenty of

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sailors, even good ones, whose stomachs couldn't handle it for long. Cargrave wasn't one of them. He'd always had good balance and an iron gut. Up here, he was as happy as a bird in a tree.

And up here, despite Smith, he could go for a while without being called dago. It was a jibe directed at his given name, Diego, and his dark-haired and dark-eyed looks, but it felt like one at the mother who'd given them to him. It stung, but once again he swallowed his anger. Crossing a senior officer on a ship, even to return one half-joking insult with another, was a good way to end up on bad duty or worse. A smart sailor mastered his pride and took the jibes.

But that didn't mean he liked it.

Cargrave watched the tiny white sails grow larger. Now he was sure that ship was headed their way. He took another look with the spyglass. It was still hard to say at such long distance, but Cargrave thought for a ship its size, the barque seemed to be carrying a lot of men. There was plenty of activity going on there as well. He saw cannon on its deck, gleaming in the morning sun. What were they up to?

A moment's thought, and he knew. He tucked the glass in his belt, leaped over the railing of the crow's nest, dropped fast down the ratlines, hit the main deck hard, and went up the steps to the quarterdeck at a run. Men turned to look at him in surprise. The captain was coming down the upper stairs from the poopdeck, talking to Smith

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and to Ipswich, the Ship's Carpenter. Smith scowled at him. Davies narrowed his eyes.

"What are ye doing down here?" said the captain.

"Cap'n sir! That ship is making ready for a fight!"

"Cargrave?"

"I'm sure now that they're making course for us, and with the glass, I could see them clearing the deck and readying guns."

"From here? Even accounting for the glass, you've got good eyes!"

Davies raised his own spyglass, a finer one with a long range. He looked long and hard at the approaching ship. He turned again to Cargrave, and spoke barely above a whisper.

"Cargrave, by her rig, I'd say she was a Spanish vessel, but we're a long way out for that to be a king's ship, unless it be that we're at war again. We might be smuggling to the Spanish Main, and so a fair prize for both England and Spain, but if that is a man o' war and not a pirate, we still might get out of this with our skins. D'you see anything more with those eyes of yours?"

Cargrave raised his glass and took another look. His blood ran cold.

"They're raising a black flag, cap'n."

"Damn!" Davies boomed, "All hands, all hands, listen up!"

Crewman stopped working and turned to their captain.

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“That ship on the horizon means us trouble, lads! Clear the deck and ready the guns!”

There were muttered curses and panicked expressions, but men set to work. Davies turned to Smith.

“Get ‘em in order. I’ll see if I can get us turned about and with the wind. We’ve got no chance to out run that barque against it!”

He started off, but turned to Cargrave as he went.

“Good work, now help Evans with those cannon!”

“Aye aye sir!”

Cargrave went at a trot back down the stairs, then through the hatch under the quarterdeck, and down the little hall to the cabin at the stern with the two brass cannon. Evans, the Master Gunner, was already at work readying them for a fight. A small, thin man with scraggly gray hair but dapper green clothes, Evans had been in the Royal Navy, and seen action against the Spanish in ’57 and the Dutch in ’53. Other than Cargrave himself, he was the only man on board with much knowledge of ballistics or the measurement of powder.

“Ah, there ye are, lad! I heard the commotion. Let’s set to work,” he said.

“Sir, the captain means to turn us ’round southeast and try to catch the wind before they can bring about.”

“Or we might end up facing ’em head on,” finished Evans.

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“Aye sir.”

“Well then lad, we’ve got to get these guns forward. They’ll do us no good here. You’ve got the twice the strength I do, get ‘em turned around while I go fetch a few more lads to help move ‘em to the bow.”

Cargrave set to work. There were no other proper gunners on the Saucy Lass, but a couple of the younger sailors would be put to work in battle helping position the guns and bring up powder and shot. By the time Cargrave had the little guns turned around and the carriages limbered, Evans was back with Bryce and Green, sturdy fellows a couple of years younger than Cargrave. Together they hauled the two cannons down the hall, through the hatch, across the main deck, and into the gun ports of the forecastle. Evans took direct command of the starboard gun, and gave Cargrave the larboard.

By that time the ship was turned around, and making good time. Diego, who hadn’t had time to turn his glass over to a new watchman, decided it would be best to hold onto it for a while. He was over twenty younger than Evans, and with much better eyes. They would need them now, if they were going to accomplish anything with the guns in the few shots they’d have. With that thought, he put his head through the gun port to see how things stood. What he saw was bad news. The pirate ship had turned faster than he would have thought possible – it must have a

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sharp pilot at the helm – and was bearing down on them almost nose to nose.

Davies gamble had failed, and unless they could do something else fast, they were in for a fight. Cargrave pulled out the spyglass and took a better look. He'd been right, the barque was crowded with over a hundred men. They were rough looking sorts with wild clothes in many colors. Some had rich coats in sizes not meant for them, others were bare-chested in billowing striped sailors breeches, many had scarves or weather-beaten hats on their heads, and all had weapons. There were raised cutlasses, axes, clubs, and pikes, and pistols tucked in belts. At the helm was a tall figure with flying red hair and a blood-red coat in the style made famous by Henry Morgan, greatest buccaneer of the day and now a privateer admiral. Atop the mast was a black flag with a white skull in front of crossed bones and a single red drop of blood below.

“What do you see, lad?” asked Evans.

“Pirates all right, sir! Their flag is a skull and crossed bones with a drop of blood below.”

Evans groaned.

“Lad, that is the flag of Red Jack Hughe, a Welshman like me, and one who served under Morgan as a privateer against the Spanish. I'd heard rumor he'd turned pirate, and that was his flag. It seems those rumors are true.”

“What sort of man is he, sir?”

“Morgan might be his majesty's admiral of Jamaica now, but he did fell bloody deeds against

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the Spanish towns for many years. By all accounts, Hughe took a full part in those deeds. What he'll be like as a pirate with his own command, I cannot say, but he'll not be happy with us for trying to escape, and even less if we fight."

With that, they both grew quiet and set to work preparing the guns as Bryce and Green ran to get powder and shot. Behind them, through the open door, they could hear officers shout and men work. The sun, indifferent to it all, beamed brightly and the day grew hot.

When the other two returned, Green spoke with breathless excitement, "Captain's compliments, and he says report to the quartermaster for weapons!"

Evans turned to the three of them with the weariness of experience, "Well lads, it's a fight then. Follow me!"

As they walked back out through the fore cabin and joined the others on the main deck, Cargrave watched his fellow crewmen. Some, mostly the older men like Captain Davies, Smith, and Evans, looked grim, others looked nervous, even frightened. A few, like Green, looked tense, but far from afraid. Cargrave reflected on his own thoughts, the feelings deep in his heart, and in his gut. He was surprised at what he found there.

Eagerness.

They were twenty-five merchantmen against a hundred or more black-hearted pirates, and he was spoiling for a fight! He'd never thought of himself as a man who sought out adventure for

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its own sake, and he wasn't sure if that is what he was feeling, but regardless, he was afire. In ten years of sailing, he'd been on ships that had escaped a couple of battles, but never faced one head-on. He'd been in his share of fights on the streets, but never been preparing in earnest for a boarding action.

Was he a man of war after all, or just a naïve fool? He guessed he'd find out soon.

His thoughts were interrupted by Captain Davies.

“All right men, each of you shall have your arms from the locker. Those with none will get an axe or pike from the ship's stores. Form up a line with Elkins here, and he'll hand 'em out. Fast now!”

One by one, though in great haste, the men stopped before the quartermaster and gathered their weapons. Kept locked safe at most times to prevent trouble on board, they were released only ashore, or at times like this. Cargrave had made a point of putting coin into a good Toledo steel cutlass and a fine brass-inlayed pistol. Some had laughed at his vanity, but he was glad now. Why trust his life to something cheaply made?

With cutlass tucked in his belt and pistol in hand, he ran back to the forecastle, through the door into the cabin, and straight to the bow gun ports. He packed his pistol as he watched the approaching pirate ship. Cargrave raised the spyglass again, and took a look at the enemy ship.

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The pirate crew was ready. Some were yelling and waiving weapons in the air. They had twin bow gun ports of their own, but the cannons looked like long nines, more powerful and much longer ranged than the little six pounders of the Saucy Lass. Cargrave knew they wouldn't be able to match them in a head-on duel, but he hoped that wasn't the plan.

"Sir, those pirates are going to have to turn, sooner rather than later, if they want to come alongside us and board."

"Aye lad, and when they start to, that's when we'll take our shot. If we can give 'em a good knock on the nose in the right spot, it might slow them enough for us to escape. These little guns would be lucky to put a hole in her hull, but we might knock out her bowsprit. It'd be a lucky shot, but with your eyes and my aim, we might achieve it."

"Aye sir!" said Cargrave with a grin.

Following the navy drill he'd learned from Evans, Cargrave wet-swabbed his gun, then packed it with cartridge, ball, and plug, Green handing him each item as needed. Evans did the same with his own gun and Bryce's help, and then together they took careful aim. Smith leaned his ponderous bulk through the hatch to the fore cabin.

"Evans, captain says fire when you spot the chance. And I'll add, make sure dago stays mindful, or it'll be the lash for him."

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“Give the captain my compliments, and let him know I’ll do as he orders,” said Evans, “and as for you, don’t fear, Mr. Cargrave will do his job well. In any case, Smith, if we do not succeed, I doubt the pirates will give you a chance to put anyone under the lash.”

Smith growled something unintelligible and left. A few more tense minutes passed. The pirate ship loomed larger. They adjusted their aim every minute or so. Then at last, the barque began to turn.

“This is it lad,” said Evans, “Light linstocks, and prepare to fire on my count.”

The pirate ship continued turning, and now presented itself at the vulnerable angle between the nines at its bow and the motley collection of twelve and eighteen pounder guns along its sides. Evans and Cargrave fired, aiming for the bowsprit. The shots went off in near unison. The cannonballs went arcing over the glittering waves. Both fell short.

“Hell’s teeth!” muttered Evans, “All right lad, let’s reload. If they want to sink us, now will be their chance, but if we want to escape, we need to keep trying.”

Cargrave set himself to the task. The pirates didn’t seem interested in sinking them. In fact, it occurred to Cargrave, now that they knew how lightly armed the Saucy Lass was, they might be laughing at the easy prize awaiting them. He resolved to make it a bit less easy.

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They fired again, this time both shots went long, one soaring over the pirate ship's bow, the other ripping a small hole in the jib sail. The pirates were closing on them, and moving much faster. Cargrave began thinking if they didn't score a hit on this next shot, they were going to be boarded. They fired. One fell short, the other struck near the bowsprit, but too far aft, and bounced off the thick hull of the other ship. All four sailors at the guns cursed.

The pirate ship was getting close now, and turning to pull along side. They wouldn't get another shot. Its crew was roaring and waving weapons. Men stood on yardarms and along the railings. Other men were busy turning guns, angling them to fire after all. Inwardly, Cargrave wondered. If they were going to fire, why wait till now?

"Canister shot..." whispered Evans, turning to the others, "get down, lads, now!"

"Eh?" said Bryce.

They threw themselves to the deck, and in that moment hundreds of small musket rounds came blasting from the pirate cannons and through their gun ports. Men on the open deck behind them screamed. Cargrave felt something wet running against his hand. He looked to his right and saw Bryce hadn't been quick enough to drop. He was sprawled flat, his face a mass of blood.

There was a tremendous crash. The ship shook as the larger pirate vessel slammed alongside

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it. There were yells and the distinct sound of lines being cast with hooks. Cargrave pulled himself up, then helped Evans. Green hopped up with a sea axe in hand and a fierce look on his pale round face. Evans drew his sword, a long blade he'd taken from a slain Spanish officer during a savage fight long ago, off Santa Cruz in the Canary Islands.

"C'mon lads!" he yelled, and led them out the hatch and into hell.

Pirates were swarming over the ship, leaping from railing to railing, or swinging across on ropes. Cargrave saw the tall pirate captain fending off enemies almost casually as he surveyed the Saucy Lass with an air of ownership. Captain Davies was shouting orders to a knot of sailors on the quarterdeck. A group of pirates flew over on ropes from the yardarms of their own mizzen mast. Davies turned and slashed his sword across the face of one before the man could get his footing. Another, a strong looking blond fellow in broad black striped pantaloons, ran Davies through. He then pulled the sword from the dying captain's hand, but kept twisting his own cutlass in the wound with a cruel smile.

Then Cargrave had troubles of his own to deal with. Ahead of him, Evans cut down a pirate with a clean slash across the neck. Green planted his axe in the shoulder of another with a gleeful yell that turned to shock as another pirate ran him through with a pike. Too late, Cargrave brought his cutlass down on the pike, snapping it in half.

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He aimed a kick that sent the pirate flying, then turned and parried the cutlass of a scowling pirate in black.

Around him, things were looking bleak. Several men had already surrendered. Led by Smith, the little knot of men on the quarterdeck was fighting hard, but they were falling one by one. Evans, small and thin he might be, was dodging and weaving like a cat, and with each turn, cutting down a pirate. Cargrave had never imagined the old man could fight like that. The black clad pirate aimed a slash at Evans. Cargrave parried it, and then brought his own cutlass down along the man's arm. The pirate yelled in surprise and took a stumbling step backwards. Evans never let him finish the step, and brought him down with a clean stroke through the heart.

The pirate captain, Hughe, was advancing on them. Cargrave remembered his pistol. He drew it, and thought he might at least take down their conqueror in his moment of triumph. He aimed, with a clear shot at the man's head, but never got the chance to fire. Crashing pain struck the side of his head, and he fell into black oblivion.



When he came to, Cargrave's first thought was surprise that he was still alive. His next was black humor at how little he'd accomplished in his

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first, and likely only, fight at sea. His third, as his eyes began to clear, was that something was wrong. His hands were bound behind his back, and he was lying on the deck. He looked around. It looked like he and the other survivors were piled in a corner of the main deck against the forecastle. Blood was everywhere, and the smell of black powder lingered. The pirates were all around. Most of them were busy hauling things out of the Saucy Lass and to their own ship, or tossing bodies over the side. Cargrave saw with dismay that Evans was among the corpses. Hughe and twenty or so cutthroats, including the blond man who'd killed Davies, were watching the prisoners. Their expressions were not so pleasant to see.

“Aye, cap’n, kill ‘em all says I! Let it be a lesson!” said the blond man. His face didn’t match anyone’s view of a rough and bestial pirate, it was genial looking, probably even the kind to strike women’s fancy. But, the look in his eyes was as cold as their ice blue color. He stood to the right of the captain, and unlike most of the others, still had his cutlass drawn.

To the captain’s left was a black man, almost as tall as Hughe, and more powerfully built. He wore white breeches, now much bloodstained, a yellow brocaded vest with a wide sash belt, and a lot of gleaming gold. He spoke in a rich accent that Cargrave, from his time in the slavery-ridden Caribbean, guessed was from somewhere in West Africa.

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“My captain,” said the African, “some of these men were good fighters and brave, why not give them a chance to find a wiser use for such courage?”

Yet another man, a rangy beak-nosed fellow with lank black hair and calico clothes, spoke up, “Besides cap’n, if we kill ‘em, it’ll be a lesson they’ll not pass on to others. Let ‘em live, says I, and they’ll pass the word that cap’n Hughe looks kindly on those who surrender. I’d rather have surrendering ships and easy loot than hard fights from men who are sure they’re going to die either way.”

“Rook, my friend,” said the blond man, turning to the beak-nosed fellow, and in a tone that made it anything but likely the latter was his friend, “Not all these louts surrendered. That fat fellow they say is their boatswain wasn’t even able to stand by the time he stopped fighting, and that lad with the nice pistol was aiming it at the Cap’n when Heinrich clapped him on the head.”

Other voices, arguing one way or the other, started to join in, but then Hughe raised his hands. All the pirates quieted, and those still working, which had grown fewer as the discussion went on, stopped what they were doing to listen.

Hughe had a long sunburned face with many scars, a craggy square jaw, and gold rings in his ears. This close, Cargrave could see the red hair was streaked with gray. The wide red hat atop his head had stitches in it where holes, maybe from bullets, had been mended. The hard lines of his

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face softened for a moment and his mouth opened in a grim smile.

“Aimed at me? I think he would have got me if not for Heinrich. That fellow’s got a good aim. I think Nwoye is right, and we should give him and the rest of the lot a chance to make better use of such talent. Get them up, and let’s see whether they can use their heads.”

Pirates pulled the others harshly into sitting or standing positions. A gigantic fellow, taller even than Captain Hughe, with yellow and black clothes, pale brown hair in plaits, a thick mustache, arms like tree trunks, and hands like mallets pulled Cargrave to his feet with surprising gentleness.

“I give you clout on head and knock you down, least I can do is pick you back up,” he said in a booming voice with a thick German accent.

Despite his situation, Cargrave smiled and replied, “That was a good crack you gave me with that club all right, nothing ever hit me that hard before.”

“Club? That was my fist,” said the German with a grin.

Cargrave laughed. Then his head hurt again.

Around him were thirteen other survivors. It was more than he’d expected. Eight of them had surrendered without a fight, but the other five were in bad shape. Smith was covered in cuts and his own blood. Too weak to stand and barely conscious, he still sat there glaring. None of the other officers still lived.

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Hughe surveyed them all with a stony expression. When everyone was more or less up and in order, facing him, he spoke.

“All of you made the mistake of running rather than giving honorable surrender. Then you compounded your errors by trying to fight. See ye now what ye have reaped? Count it your good fortune that we brethren are in a merciful mood today.”

Cargrave could see that many of the pirates looked to be in moods that were anything but. However, none of them spoke. All eyes were on Hughe.

“In that spirit of mercy, fools though ye be, I give you a chance to take a wiser course. Wealth, profit, and exercise of courage among the Brethren of the Coast aboard my ship the Sea Drake, or be sent out in one of your ship’s boats, relieved of your valuables but with a bit of water, and return to the miserable lives ye have known.”

There were expressions of surprise from both prisoners and pirates. A thickset young sailor spoke up, one of the ones who’d surrendered without a fight. His name was Drew, and Cargrave had long thought he was pompous for someone with so little reason to be so.

“What about food? I... we... insist that you at least give us a few days rations!”

Hughe walked over to him while drawing his sword, which had a black enameled pommel and cross-guard in patterns of skulls and arabesques, and whipped it with a quick motion

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around Drew's head. A thin line of blood appeared on Drew's left cheek, and the brim of his hat on that side fell cleanly off. He fainted and fell backwards onto the deck. The pirates roared with laughter, and despite himself, Cargrave chuckled.

"Anyone else have any requests?" said Hughe.

No one did.

"Now then ye dogs, time to choose."

Smith spoke up, his voice weak, "Thank ye for your clemency, captain, and set us adrift."

"Not yours to order any more, boatswain!" roared Hughe with a dark laugh, "Each of your men may make his own choice! You've made yours, now shut your mouth and let them speak."

Smith shrugged, and quieted, though his eyes searched the other prisoners.

"I... I'll take the ship's boat, cap'n," said Flaherty, a freckled lad of sixteen and the youngest able seaman on the Saucy Lass.

One by one the others said the same. A pirate dumped a bucket of bilge on Drew's head, and after being brought back up to speed, he hurriedly agreed. Then, eyes turned to Cargrave.

Cargrave looked back at them without fear. His mind was whirling. This was the most astonishing thing to happen to him since he'd gone to sea. A choice, an irrevocable choice was before him. None of the others had hesitated before choosing the life they'd known. None of them had hesitated before returning to scant pay, hard service, and meager prospects.

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And for what? Respectability? The promise of routine and safety? Those things were chancy for sailors in the best of times. What had they really seen of them? What had he? And even if they were real, what made a life like that so worthy? What had his life been thus far? Toil and the hope that he might, if he waited another ten years, or another yet, equal his father's scant success, only for it to be swept away in a cruel moment. The plague, or the tricks of some better connected rival might whither it all away. Or maybe he'd do better... become full owner of his own ship, or a rich merchant with several ships. Still death awaited him, and was as likely to catch him before ten or twenty or thirty years had passed as it was to wait for his success. And in the meantime, there might be kicks, floggings, or insults from the likes of Smith.

On the one hand was a patient, grueling race against time, on the other was a quicker life, more dangerous and more merry. Freedom, wealth, and power, or perhaps the hangman's noose, but either way, he'd wait no more.

He realized Captain Hughe was watching him intently, as was everyone around. Smith looked at him malevolently. Cargrave smiled, and fires roared to life in his spirit.

“Captain Hughe, sir, I'll sign with ye, and join the Brethren of the Coast!”