

Chapter 11: He Is Left On Shore

I was very angry with my nephew, the captain, and indeed with all the men, but with him in particular, as well for his acting so out of his duty as a commander of the ship, and having the charge of the voyage upon him, as in his prompting, rather than cooling, the rage of his blind men in so bloody and cruel an enterprise. My nephew answered me very respectfully, but told me that when he saw the body of the poor seaman whom they had murdered in so cruel and barbarous a manner, he was not master of himself, neither could he govern his passion; he owned he should not have done so, as he was commander of the ship; but as he was a man, and nature moved him, he could not bear it. As for the rest of the men, they were not subject to me at all, and they knew it well enough; so they took no notice of my dislike. The next day we set sail, so we never heard any more of it. Our men differed in the account of the number they had killed; but according to the best of their accounts, put all together, they killed or destroyed about one hundred and fifty people, men, women, and children, and left not a house standing in the town. As for the poor fellow Tom Jeffry, as he was quite dead (for his throat was so cut that his head was half off), it would do him no service to bring him away; so they only took him down from the tree, where he was hanging by one hand.

However just our men thought this action, I was against them in it, and I always, after that time, told them God would blast the voyage; for I looked

upon all the blood they shed that night to be murder in them. For though it is true that they had killed Tom Jeffry, yet Jeffry was the aggressor, had broken the truce, and had ill-used a young woman of theirs, who came down to them innocently, and on the faith of the public capitulation.

The boatswain defended this quarrel when we were afterwards on board. He said it was true that we seemed to break the truce, but really had not; and that the war was begun the night before by the natives themselves, who had shot at us, and killed one of our men without any just provocation; so that as we were in a capacity to fight them now, we might also be in a capacity to do ourselves justice upon them in an extraordinary manner; that though the poor man had taken a little liberty with the girl, he ought not to have been murdered, and that in such a villainous manner: and that they did nothing but what was just and what the laws of God allowed to be done to murderers. One would think this should have been enough to have warned us against going on shore amongst the heathens and barbarians; but it is impossible to make mankind wise but at their own expense, and their experience seems to be always of most use to them when it is dearest bought.

We were now bound to the Gulf of Persia, and from thence to the coast of Coromandel, only to touch at Surat; but the chief of the supercargo's design lay at the Bay of Bengal, where, if he missed his business outward-bound, he was to go out to China, and return to the coast as he came home. The

first disaster that befell us was in the Gulf of Persia, where five of our men, venturing on shore on the Arabian side of the gulf, were surrounded by the Arabians, and either all killed or carried away into slavery; the rest of the boat's crew were not able to rescue them, and had but just time to get off their boat. I began to upbraid them with the just retribution of Heaven in this case; but the boatswain very warmly told me, he thought I went further in my censures than I could show any warrant for in Scripture; and referred to Luke XIII. 4, where our Saviour intimates that those men on whom the Tower of Siloam fell were not sinners above all the Galileans; but that which put me to silence in the case was, that not one of these five men who were now lost were of those who went on shore to the massacre of Madagascar, so I always called it, though our men could not bear to hear the word MASSACRE with any patience.

But my frequent preaching to them on this subject had worse consequences than I expected; and the boatswain, who had been the head of the attempt, came up boldly to me one time, and told me he found that I brought that affair continually upon the stage; that I made unjust reflections upon it, and had used the men very ill on that account, and himself in particular; that as I was but a passenger, and had no command in the ship, or concern in the voyage, they were not obliged to bear it; that they did not know but I might have some ill-design in my head, and perhaps to call them to an account for it when they came to England; and that, therefore, unless I would resolve to have done with it, and also not to concern myself any further with him, or

any of his affairs, he would leave the ship; for he did not think it safe to sail with me among them.

I heard him patiently enough till he had done, and then told him that I confessed I had all along opposed the massacre of Madagascar, and that I had, on all occasions, spoken my mind freely about it, though not more upon him than any of the rest; that as to having no command in the ship, that was true; nor did I exercise any authority, only took the liberty of speaking my mind in things which publicly concerned us all; and what concern I had in the voyage was none of his business; that I was a considerable owner in the ship. In that claim I conceived I had a right to speak even further than I had done, and would not be accountable to him or any one else, and began to be a little warm with him. He made but little reply to me at that time, and I thought the affair had been over. We were at this time in the road at Bengal; and being willing to see the place, I went on shore with the supercargo in the ship's boat to divert myself; and towards evening was preparing to go on board, when one of the men came to me, and told me he would not have me trouble myself to come down to the boat, for they had orders not to carry me on board any more. Any one may guess what a surprise I was in at so insolent a message; and I asked the man who bade him deliver that message to me? He told me the coxswain.

I immediately found out the supercargo, and told him the story, adding that I foresaw there would be a mutiny in the ship; and entreated him to go

immediately on board and acquaint the captain of it. But I might have spared this intelligence, for before I had spoken to him on shore the matter was effected on board. The boatswain, the gunner, the carpenter, and all the inferior officers, as soon as I was gone off in the boat, came up, and desired to speak with the captain; and then the boatswain, making a long harangue, and repeating all he had said to me, told the captain that as I was now gone peaceably on shore, they were loath to use any violence with me, which, if I had not gone on shore, they would otherwise have done, to oblige me to have gone. They therefore thought fit to tell him that as they shipped themselves to serve in the ship under his command, they would perform it well and faithfully; but if I would not quit the ship, or the captain oblige me to quit it, they would all leave the ship, and sail no further with him; and at that word ALL he turned his face towards the main-mast, which was, it seems, a signal agreed on, when the seamen, being got together there, cried out, "ONE AND ALL! ONE AND ALL!"

My nephew, the captain, was a man of spirit, and of great presence of mind; and though he was surprised, yet he told them calmly that he would consider of the matter, but that he could do nothing in it till he had spoken to me about it. He used some arguments with them, to show them the unreasonableness and injustice of the thing, but it was all in vain; they swore, and shook hands round before his face, that they would all go on shore unless he would engage to them not to suffer me to come any more on board the ship.

This was a hard article upon him, who knew his obligation to me, and did not know how I might take it. So he began to talk smartly to them; told them that I was a very considerable owner of the ship, and that if ever they came to England again it would cost them very dear; that the ship was mine, and that he could not put me out of it; and that he would rather lose the ship, and the voyage too, than disoblige me so much: so they might do as they pleased. However, he would go on shore and talk with me, and invited the boatswain to go with him, and perhaps they might accommodate the matter with me. But they all rejected the proposal, and said they would have nothing to do with me any more; and if I came on board they would all go on shore.

Well," said the captain, "if you are all of this mind, let me go on shore and talk with him." So away he came to me with this account, a little after the message had been brought to me from the coxswain.

I was very glad to see my nephew, I must confess; for I was not without apprehensions that they would confine him by violence, set sail, and run away with the ship; and then I had been stripped naked in a remote country, having nothing to help myself; in short, I had been in a worse case than when I was alone in the island. But they had not come to that length, it seems, to my satisfaction; and when my nephew told me what they had said to him, and how they had sworn and shook hands that they would, one and

all, leave the ship if I was suffered to come on board, I told him he should not be concerned at it at all, for I would stay on shore. I only desired he would take care and send me all my necessary things on shore, and leave me a sufficient sum of money, and I would find my way to England as well as I could. This was a heavy piece of news to my nephew, but there was no way to help it but to comply; so, in short, he went on board the ship again, and satisfied the men that his uncle had yielded to their importunity, and had sent for his goods from on board the ship; so that the matter was over in a few hours, the men returned to their duty, and I began to consider what course I should steer.

I was now alone in a most remote part of the world, for I was near three thousand leagues by sea farther off from England than I was at my island; only, it is true, I might travel here by land over the Great Mogul's country to Surat, might go from thence to Bassora by sea, up the Gulf of Persia, and take the way of the caravans, over the desert of Arabia, to Aleppo and Scanderoon; from thence by sea again to Italy, and so overland into France. I had another way before me, which was to wait for some English ships, which were coming to Bengal from Achin, on the island of Sumatra, and get passage on board them from England. But as I came hither without any concern with the East Indian Company, so it would be difficult to go from hence without their licence, unless with great favour of the captains of the ships, or the company's factors: and to both I was an utter stranger.

Here I had the mortification to see the ship set sail without me; however, my nephew left me two servants, or rather one companion and one servant; the first was clerk to the purser, whom he engaged to go with me, and the other was his own servant. I then took a good lodging in the house of an Englishwoman, where several merchants lodged, some French, two Italians, or rather Jews, and one Englishman. Here I stayed above nine months, considering what course to take. I had some English goods with me of value, and a considerable sum of money; my nephew furnishing me with a thousand pieces of eight, and a letter of credit for more if I had occasion, that I might not be straitened, whatever might happen. I quickly disposed of my goods to advantage; and, as I originally intended, I bought here some very good diamonds, which, of all other things, were the most proper for me in my present circumstances, because I could always carry my whole estate about me.

During my stay here many proposals were made for my return to England, but none falling out to my mind, the English merchant who lodged with me, and whom I had contracted an intimate acquaintance with, came to me one morning, saying: "Countryman, I have a project to communicate, which, as it suits with my thoughts, may, for ought I know, suit with yours also, when you shall have thoroughly considered it. Here we are posted, you by accident and I by my own choice, in a part of the world very remote from our own country; but it is in a country where, by us who understand trade and business, a great deal of money is to be got. If you will put one thousand

pounds to my one thousand pounds, we will hire a ship here, the first we can get to our minds. You shall be captain, I'll be merchant, and we'll go a trading voyage to China; for what should we stand still for? The whole world is in motion; why should we be idle?"

I liked this proposal very well; and the more so because it seemed to be expressed with so much goodwill. In my loose, unhinged circumstances, I was the fitter to embrace a proposal for trade, or indeed anything else. I might perhaps say with some truth, that if trade was not my element, rambling was; and no proposal for seeing any part of the world which I had never seen before could possibly come amiss to me. It was, however, some time before we could get a ship to our minds, and when we had got a vessel, it was not easy to get English sailors - that is to say, so many as were necessary to govern the voyage and manage the sailors which we should pick up there. After some time we got a mate, a boatswain, and a gunner, English; a Dutch carpenter, and three foremast men. With these we found we could do well enough, having Indian seamen, such as they were, to make up.

When all was ready we set sail for Achin, in the island of Sumatra, and from thence to Siam, where we exchanged some of our wares for opium and some arrack; the first a commodity which bears a great price among the Chinese, and which at that time was much wanted there. Then we went up to Saskan, were eight months out, and on our return to Bengal I was very well

satisfied with my adventure. Our people in England often admire how officers, which the company send into India, and the merchants which generally stay there, get such very great estates as they do, and sometimes come home worth sixty or seventy thousand pounds at a time; but it is little matter for wonder, when we consider the innumerable ports and places where they have a free commerce; indeed, at the ports where the English ships come there is such great and constant demands for the growth of all other countries, that there is a certain vent for the returns, as well as a market abroad for the goods carried out.

I got so much money by my first adventure, and such an insight into the method of getting more, that had I been twenty years younger, I should have been tempted to have stayed here, and sought no farther for making my fortune; but what was all this to a man upwards of threescore, that was rich enough, and came abroad more in obedience to a restless desire of seeing the world than a covetous desire of gaining by it? A restless desire it really was, for when I was at home I was restless to go abroad; and when I was abroad I was restless to be at home. I say, what was this gain to me? I was rich enough already, nor had I any uneasy desires about getting more money; therefore the profit of the voyage to me was of no great force for the prompting me forward to further undertakings. Hence, I thought that by this voyage I had made no progress at all, because I was come back, as I might call it, to the place from whence I came, as to a home: whereas, my eye, like that which Solomon speaks of, was never satisfied with seeing. I was come

into a part of the world which I was never in before, and that part, in particular, which I heard much of, and was resolved to see as much of it as I could: and then I thought I might say I had seen all the world that was worth seeing.

But my fellow-traveller and I had different notions: I acknowledge his were the more suited to the end of a merchant's life: who, when he is abroad upon adventures, is wise to stick to that, as the best thing for him, which he is likely to get the most money by. On the other hand, mine was the notion of a mad, rambling boy, that never cares to see a thing twice over. But this was not all: I had a kind of impatience upon me to be nearer home, and yet an unsettled resolution which way to go. In the interval of these consultations, my friend, who was always upon the search for business, proposed another voyage among the Spice Islands, to bring home a loading of cloves from the Manillas, or thereabouts.

We were not long in preparing for this voyage; the chief difficulty was in bringing me to come into it. However, at last, nothing else offering, and as sitting still, to me especially, was the unhappiest part of life, I resolved on this voyage too, which we made very successfully, touching at Borneo and several other islands, and came home in about five months, when we sold our spices, with very great profit, to the Persian merchants, who carried them away to the Gulf. My friend, when we made up this account, smiled at me: "Well, now," said he, with a sort of friendly rebuke on my indolent

temper, "is not this better than walking about here, like a man with nothing to do, and spending our time in staring at the nonsense and ignorance of the Pagans?" - "Why, truly," said I, "my friend, I think it is, and I begin to be a convert to the principles of merchandising; but I must tell you, by the way, you do not know what I am doing; for if I once conquer my backwardness, and embark heartily, old as I am, I shall harass you up and down the world till I tire you; for I shall pursue it so eagerly, I shall never let you lie still."