

FLIP & LOOPY
BY ALVIN RAY KESSINGER
Cover Design, Layout & Edited by Robert E. Jennings, Jr.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

© Copyright 2003 by A. R. Kessinger

This is a story of two young Irish men, who leave Ireland to see the world. In search of excitement and adventure, they found more than they bargained for.

“Flip & Loopy” is an action-filled adventure with suspense and humor. This is a good book for the young and not-so young.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWO.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER THREE.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FOUR	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FIVE.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SIX	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER EIGHT.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER NINE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TEN.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER ELEVEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWELVE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER NINETEEN.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE	Error! Bookmark not defined.

CHAPTER ONE

Flip lay back on the bank of the river and rested his head on the root of a tree. Loopy was sitting at his side. Flip thought, the fish must be asleep. They had not had a bite for a long time. The river was dark green and moving very slowly.

He had been fishing in this river as long as he could remember, He looked to his left, and there was the dock he and Loopy had built about two years ago. It had a rowboat tied to it and he wondered, maybe we should take the boat out, they may bite better out in the middle of the river. He thought, if he had a big boat, I could sale down this river and right out into the ocean and go anywhere I wanted to. He would watch the barges as they went up and down the river. He would wonder what kind of things they were bringing to the towns on the river. His mind wondered off to far away places he had heard about in school and hearing the old men talking in town. He had never been anywhere, he had lived in the same valley, in the same farmhouse that sat just a few hundred yards from where he was sitting, all of his life.

He was now twenty-five years old, he had reddish blond hair, and he was six one and weighed about one hundred and eighty pounds. He was very handsome and muscular and his eyes were light green.

He thought, there is a whole world out there, and the only place I have ever been is the next valley to visit my Grandmother. He had heard people talking in town about big cities in far away places.

As his eyes moved a crossed the landscape, He saw the beautiful green meadow. And rolling hills in the distance, that were covered with trees that seamed to touch the sky. The sun was making its way across the sky and was about to go down behind the trees on top of a hill. It was a beautiful spring day in Ireland, he thought, I am glad

that I was razed here, it surely is a beautiful place, but he wanted to see more than just this valley, he wanted to see the places he had heard about, he wanted to have some excitement in his life for a change.

He wondered if the people in those cities could see the sun now, or was it nighttime there, and were they looking at the stars. He turned his head and looked at Loopy, he was sitting there holding his fishing pole in his hand as though he was expecting a big fish to bite at any time. I don't think he has moved since we got here.

Loopy was a small man, not even five feet tall, about twenty years old. He had brown hair and eyes, and was not considered to be very good looking. But he had a personality that made everyone like him. His family had died when their house burnt DOWN. His mother had carried him out, and then went back in for his little sister. They never came out again.

He was about five at that time. He wasn't very bright and no one wanted HIM. This is farming country, He was so small and everyone thought that he wouldn't be any help doing the hard work on a farm. But Loopy is one of the hardest workers that I know. He has a lot of hart. I talked my dad into taking him in as his own, every since then he has followed me around like a puppy, but I don't mind, he's like a little brother. My parents call him their son, and he calls them dad and mom.

Flip said, "Loopy, I have made up my mind, I am going to leave the valley.

Loopy said, "Where are you going?"

Flip said, "I don't know, but I'm going to see what this world has to offer. I'm going to see some of the places that they talk about in town. You can't go without me, laying down his pole. I want to see the world too."

Flip said, “We may never come back here.

Loopy said, “I don’t care, I want to go with you. You won’t leave me here will you.”

Flip said, “No! I won’t leave you here.” At that moment, Loopy's pole flew through the air and into the water. Flip thought he was going to jump in after it. He might have if he could swim.

That night they told their father and mother about his plans. They didn’t like the idea, but told him, you are men and should be able to make your own decisions about your own lives.

Flip and Loopy got up before sunrise the next morning, as they always did. Did their chores, ate a big breakfast, and went into town to talk to some of the men there. There were always several old men that sat out front of the general store. Flip knew all of them, and as he walked up to them, they all said hello to him and Loopy.

Flip said, “Loopy and I are leaving in a few days to travel around the world. We wanted to get some advice about where to go.”

One of the men said, “Go to Paris.”

”No!” said another, “Go to Hong Kong.”

Another said “Rome”

And yet another said, “New York City.”

Flip thanked them all for the information and went on his way.

Then the day came when it was time for Flip and Loopy to start their journey. They said goodbye to their father and mother and began their journey to see the world.

CHAPTER TWO

Flip had saddled his horse and he and Loopy were riding double. It was about fifty miles to the ocean and the nearest big town. It will take two or three days to get there riding double. He will sell his horse when he gets there. That will give them some money to live on for a while.

After a full days ride, they stopped to make camp. Loopy gathered some wood, while Flip unsaddled the horse. They were both very tired and ready for a good night's sleep. Their mother had sent along something for them to eat. So with full bellies they settled back to get some sleep. Flip had just got to sleep, when Loopy woke him up.

“Flip did you hear something?” said Loopy

“What was it?” replied Flip

Loopy answered, “I don't know, but it came from over there by the bushes.”

Just then they heard someone say, “Hello in the camp.”

Flip replied, “Hello and come on in.”

Then, in walked a man that looked like he had been through very hard times. He was a very big man, about forty years old. He walked over and sat down by the fire.

“Do you have any food?” he asked.

A little. We'll share what we have with you.” said Flip as he picked up the bag with their food in it.

The man snatched the bag out of Flip's hand and said, “I'll just take it all. I haven't eaten for days.”

As the man ate up all their food he asked, “where are you going?”

Flip said, “We are just traveling.”

“How much money do you have?” said the man.

“We don’t have any money?” said Flip.

“Don’t give me that?” said the man, “Nobody travels without money.”

Then Loopy said, “We are going to sell the horse when we get to the city.”

“No you won’t, I’m taking your horse when I leave.” said the man.

Flip stood up, walked over about six feet from the man and said, “I think you had better go now, you have wore out your welcome.”

The man stood up, he was at least a foot taller than Flip said, and a heck of a lot bigger. Flip had only been in two fights in his life, and both were when he was much younger. But he still was not afraid of this man just because he was bigger than he was. The big man took one step, drew back his fist and threw a punch at Flip. He was very slow. Flip ducked the punch very easily and hit the man on the jaw as hard as he could. It was like hitting a brick wall.

The man just laughed. It didn’t even shake him. Maybe now he was just a little afraid. The man threw another punch at Flip. This time Flip ducked it, then hit the man three times on the nose. The man staggered a bit, then stepped back and discovered that his nose was bleeding. Flip took a step toward him. Immediately, the big man raised his hands and said, “Hold it friend.”, I was just kidding you, then he started laughing. He turned and walked out into the darkness surrounding the camp. They never saw him again.

However, just to be safe they decided to take turns standing guard that night. The next morning they continued their journey.

After riding all day, they stopped at a farmhouse. They asked the farmer if they could feed their horse and sleep in the barn. The farmer told them to take care of their horse, and afterwards come into the house to eat. They were older people and had no children at home.

After they ate, Flip and Loopy went out and split firewood for about three hours, then went into the barn and fell asleep. The next morning the farmer told them to come in and eat before they departed. They ate a good breakfast, thanked them, said their goodbyes, and were on their way.

Later that evening they came to a town that sits on the ocean. There was a large ship at the dock. After selling the horse and saddle to a farmer they walked back into town.

Then they went back to the dock, found the man that was in charge, and ask him if there were any jobs to be had on the ship. The man told them to wait just a minute, turned and called out to another man

“Captain Jack”

The man came over to him and asks what he wanted. Captain Jack was a heavysset man, about sixty years old; he had white hair and a beard. He was smoking a pipe and spoke with authority and wisdom.

“These men are looking for work on the ship.”

Captain Jack looked at Flip and then at Loopy and said, “Have you ever worked on a ship before.

Flip said, “No Sir, but we are hard workers.

Captain Jack said, “I need experienced men.

Flip answered, “We are travelers trying to work our way across the ocean. We expect no pay just passage on your ship. We will work very hard, and we will take any kind of work that you have for us.

Captain Jack said, “Well, ok! I am impressed by the way you talk. But no one works on my ship without getting paid for it. Go aboard and tell the first mate I said to put you to work. But you will earn your keep.”

Flip happily replied, “Yes Sir!”

As they approached they both noticed on the bowel of the ship in big letters “THE SEA WITCH”

Loopy said, “This is just about the biggest boat I have ever seen.”

Flip said, “That’s not a boat, it’s a ship, and it’s the only one you have ever seen.”

Loopy replied, “You know Flip said, I’ll bet a man would get real tired trying to walk all the way around that ship?”

“I would not be a bit surprised, but thank goodness we don’t have to walk all the way around it, we can just walk up this ramp right here.” answered Flip.

“Are we going aboard now Flip?” said Loopy

“Yes.” said Flip.

“Do you think it is safe?” said Loopy.

“Yes.” said Flip.

“You don’t think it will sink, do you?” worried Loopy.

Flip said, “No, I don’t think it will sink, and stop asking so many questions and watch where you are going, you’re walking awful close to that edge.”

Loopy said, “Ok Flip, I won’t ask anymore questions.”

“Eeeeeee!” yelled Loopy as he fell from the ramp and into the water below.

“Help me Flip! I fell in the water.” yelled Loopy.

“I told you to watch where you were going, here, give me your hand. Uh, there now. It’s a good thing you dropped your backpack before you fell in the water.” Flip said patiently.

Loopy said, “I’m all wet.”

Flip said, “You can change when you get on the ship.”

Loopy said, ”Do you think they will let me on board?

Flip said, “I’m sure they will, after all, you didn’t mean to fall in the water did you?”

Loopy answered, “No.”

Flip replied, “Well, they should let you go aboard.”

Loopy said, “I sure hope so” Flip said, “I wouldn’t want you to leave me behind.”

Flip said, “I’m not going to leave you behind, after all we are pals aren’t we?”

Loopy said, “Yes Flip, we are pals.”

CHAPTER THREE

Flip said, “We were very lucky to get jobs on this ship. So whatever they give you to do, work very hard and make them like you.”

Loopy said, “OK! I will work as hard as I can so they will like me.”

As they got to the top of the ramp and stepped onto the ship, they heard someone say,

“Ahoy there, where do you think you are going?”

Flip turned to see a man coming toward them. He was about thirty-five or forty years old. He had a beard and berry large eyebrows that almost touched in the middle. He was just about Flip’s height and build.

Flip said, “Are you the first mate?”

“Yes I am.” the man replied.

Flip said, “Captain Jack said for you to put us to work.”

He looked Flip up and down, then turned his attention to Loopy and said, “Pickens must be real slim this trip. My name is Buck Wilson, I am the first mate on this ship and you will be working for me. “

Flip said, “My name is Flip McGuire, and this is my brother Loopy.”

Buck said, "Is Loopy your real name?"

Loopy said, “My name is Louis Edward Francis Morison. Is Buck your real name?”

Buck said, “Yes it is, I see why they call you Loopy. Why are you wet?”

Loopy said, "I fell in the water. "

Buck just shook his head, turned and said, "Come on, I'll show you your quarters."

He took them down into the ship to a large room that had beds hanging on the wall.

Buck said, "This is where you will live while you are on this ship. The rest of the crew will be on board shortly. This ship will leave port at 6:00. In case you don't know, that's 6:00 AM. "He looked at Loopy and said, "By the way, if you fall over board, this ship does not stop for you. If you are going to change your mind, do it before 6:00 AM.

Flip said, "We won't change our minds."

It was late afternoon, Flip and Loopy found themselves a bed and locker that was not in use, and begin to put their things away.

Flip said, "This will be our home for a while, so make the best of it."

CHAPTER FOUR

After getting their things put away and their beds made they went and took a shower and changed their clothes, then they sat down to rest.

Loopy said, "I wonder what time we eat on this ship?"

Flip replied, "I don't know, but I hope it's soon, I'm getting very hungry."

"Me too." as Loopy pat his stomach.

About that time they heard several voices coming down the hall. Then six men came in through the door, laughing and talking about their experiences in town. They saw Flip and Loopy and went over to them.

"Well." said one, "What do we have here?"

"Don't know." said another one, looking at Loopy. "This one looks like an anchor weight." he added.

"What is an anchor weight?" asked Loopy.

"Each time we drop the anchor, we have to tie someone to it to hold it down." said the man.

Loopy looked at Flip with confusion on his face. The other man said, "Yah, he's just about the right size for an anchor weight too" they laughed.

"You guys lay off, will you!" one man said as he come over and sit next to flip.

"No." said the first man, "I don't think he would weigh enough, then he laughed."

“They like to kid the new men. My name is Sparks, but everyone calls me Sparky. These two ship anchor clowns are Nash and Cash” Sparky said while pointing to the perpetrators.

“And them three over there are, Adam, Don Wan and Cyclops.” continued Sparky.

Flip said, “Hi, My name is Flip McGuire and this is my foster brother Loopy. “

“What kind of a name is Loopy?” said one of the men.

Loopy said, "My name is Louis Edward Francis Morrison.”

The men laughed a little at Loopy and went on about their business.

Flip sat back on his bunk and leaned against the wall. As he looked at the men he thought, I’ll bet these men have been just about everywhere. He looked at Sparky; a rough looking man of about forty-five years old. But it looked like it had been a hard forty-five years. He had a bald spot right on the top of his head, which he covered with a derby.

Then his eyes went to Nash; a short man, but not near as short as Loopy. He had big arms and very broad shoulders. He looked to be about the same himself.

Next was Cash; he didn’t know why they called him Cash, unless that was his real name. He looked to be about fifty years old.

Then he moved to Don Wan, a very handsome young man, of about twenty-three or four. He could see why they called him Don Wan.

Afterwards, was Adam; a Frenchman, he was about forty-five and looks very distinguished. He looked like he should have been a

schoolteacher or an attorney. And he had not said a word since he came in the room, (he found out later that Adam was mute).

Then last, but for certain not least, was Cyclops; a very large black man. He had to be at least six feet six inches tall. He had to bend over to get through the door. He guessed his weigh at least three hundred pounds, all muscle. His head was bald and real shiny, He had a black patch over his left eye, and he had tattoos on his chest, back, and arms. He looked like someone you would not want to make mad.

Later he discovered that Cyclops had been in the U. S. Army Special Forces a few years before.

CHAPTER FIVE

After supper and a good nights sleep they were awoken by the voice of Buck, the first mate, yelling, "Get up, its four bells, time to get up."

All of the men woke up, got dressed, made their bunks and went to breakfast. Flip was used to his mother's cooking, he wasn't quite sure just what he was eating, but guessed he would get used to it before the journey was over. He looked over at Loopy who was eating like it was his last meal. I think he's already used to it thought Flip.

After breakfast, they went back to their bunks and waited for someone to tell them where they would be working.

A short time later, Buck came to Flip and Loopy and said, "Alright you two come with me and I will show you where you will be working."

All three went down a long hallway back to where they had eaten. Flip and Loopy met a man about thirty-years old and about five foot six inches tall, and very fat.

Buck said, "This is the ships cook. We call him Fats. Loopy, you will be working here."

Loopy looked at Flip as if he were going to say something.

Flip said, "Remember Loopy, do a good job so they will like you."

Loopy said, "I will."

Buck said to Flip, "Come on, he will do fine. "

They turned and walked back down the hall a ways, then went down another flight of steps and down another long hallway. At the end of

the hallway there was a door. They opened the door and went through it.

Buck said, "This is the engine room, everybody starts working here. This ship is powered by steam. This furnace is what heats the water and makes the steam to run the engines. Coal flows from this box, into the furnace. Your job will be to keep the box full of coal."

Buck continues, "Have you met Cyclops yet?"

Flip said, "Yes, last night."

Buck smiled and said, "Don't worry about him, he's just a big teddy bear. He's in the control room through that door, if you have any trouble, or need him just open the door and yell for him."

The day went slow for Flip, There was no one to talk to and he thought his arms were going to fall off. The work was in twelve-hour shifts. Two times during the night, Cyclops came in and relieved him for fifteen minutes to go to the restroom. Finally, it was 6:00 PM and Don Wan came to relieve him.

Don Wan asked, "How did you like your first day on this job?"

"It wasn't bad" said Flip, "but I like to work out in the open air."

Don Wan said, "You will get used to it after awhile, see you at 6:00 A M."

The coal box was full and Flip was ready to go. All he wanted now was to take a hot shower, get something to eat, then find his bunk."

Flip sat down to eat, the food tasted much better than it did this morning. He wondered if Loopy had fixed any of it. After he had finished eating, he took a long walk on deck to get some fresh air.

Afterwards he went down to his bunk, lay down on it, he could here Loopy trying to tell him about his day. Then he drifted off to sleep.

Loopy's day went pretty fast. It wasn't that hard to peel potatoes. He had never heard them called spuds before, and he still didn't know why they called it chow. But he didn't like washing all of the dishes, including and pots and pans. But Fats was a nice man and he had told him that he had done a real good job. Flip would be proud of him.

CHAPTER SIX

As Flip awoke, he raised his head and looked around, the room was dark, and he noticed he had fallen asleep on top of his covers, and was still in his clothes. He did not own a watch so he had no idea what time it was.

Flip got up and made his way to the door, walked down the hall and up the steps and out on the deck of the ship. He walked over put his hands on the rail and took a deep breath of fresh air, then looked down at the water.

He didn't like working way down in the ship. He prefers working out in the open air.

The water was dark and like a mirror. He could see the reflection of the stars in it. He looked up at the sky. It took his breath away, he had never seen so many stars in his life.

Then he heard someone say, "Are you alright kid."

He turned to see Captain Jack walking up from behind him.

Flip said, "I'm fine Sir, I was just getting some fresh air while I could, there isn't any down in that engine room, that's for sure."

Captain Jack said, "I know what you mean, however everyone has to start there. "

Flip said, "Where is this ship going?"

Captain Jack said, "New York City. We should get there in about a week. Have you ever been to New York?"

Flip said, "No, I have never been anywhere before. I just decided I wanted to see some of the world."

Captain Jack smiled and said, “That’s the same way I felt when I was just about your age. Just don’t take things too fast, and by all means don’t forget where home is.”

Then Captain Jack turned and walked down the deck.

Flip said, “I’ll remember that Sir.”

Things went pretty smooth for the next three days. Flip was getting used to the long hours and hard work.

On the fourth night at sea Flip was awakened by a jolt that nearly threw him out of his bed. The ship’s whistle was blowing in short spurts. Then he heard someone yell, “This ship is sinking, get the hell out of here.”

Loopy was sitting up in the bed wondering what was going on.

Flip said, “Get up Loopy, the ship is sinking.”

Loopy said, “You said it wouldn’t sink. What do we do?”

Flip said, “I said I didn’t think it would sink, stay close to me.”

They grabbed their clothes, putting them on as they ran up the stairs and out onto the deck.

It was very dark. The sea was rough. Flip could hardly see them letting the lifeboats down to the water.

Just then Cash ran by and Flip asked him, “What happened?”

“I don’t know” said Cash, “I think we hit something. Have you seen Don Wan?”

Flip said, “No, not since he took over for me in the engine room.”

Cash said, “You had better get off of here and find a lifeboat.”

When they got to the rail, they could barely see the two lifeboats moving away from the ship. Loopy said, “Flip, you know I can’t swim.”

Flip said, “Give me your hand and jump.”

Flip took Loopy by the hand and they jumped into the water. When they came up Flip turned Loopy around and took him by the shirt and began to swim towards one of the lifeboats.

When they got to the lifeboat, they heard Sparky say, “Give me your hand.”

Sparky took Loopy by the hand and helped him into the boat, afterwards, he helped Flip. A few minutes later Adam swam up to the boat and they helped him in. They heard explosions that sounded like they were down in the ship. Someone said, “That sounds like the engine room.”

After a while all the sounds of the ship just stopped, then they knew the ship had gone under.

Loopy said, “It sure went down fast didn’t it.”

Flip replied, “It sure did Loopy.”

Then they heard Buck yell out, “Is anyone missing?”

“I don’t see Fats” someone replied.

There was a long silence then Buck said, “Captain Jack and Don Wan are missing too. I never saw them leave the ship.”

After looking for them for about an hour and finding no one, Sparky said, “May God rest their souls.”

Buck said, “We have enough food and water for about six days. Lets just hope that someone got a radio message out before the ship went down.”

They kept searching the area and waited around for hours.

“Well we can’t just sit here, we might as well start rowing.” said Cyclops, “Which way?”

Buck said, “West.” while pointing his finger in a westward direction. “I think.”

They tied a rope to the two boats to keep them together, and started rowing.

Flip thought about Don Wan and pondered the idea that if this had happened in the daytime it would be him that was missing. This is a bleak moment for a young man, however he must remain focus on his present situation.

In the front boat were Buck, Cyclops, Nash and Cash. In the second boat were Flip, Loopy, Sparky and Adam.

Each man took their turn rowing, one hour on and three off. Before long the winds began to pick up and it started to rain, the sky got real dark and the waves became a lot higher than before.

Buck said, “Damn, as if we didn’t have enough troubles, now we have a storm coming in. All we can do is ride it out, there’s no way to tell where we are going.

Riding it out would not be that easy either.”

The ocean seemed very angry with them, and the boats were tossed around like matchsticks. They all worked hard to keep the water out. It was all Flip could do to hold on and he hoped Loopy could hold on to. But it was so dark that he could only see him when the lightning flashed. The storm lasted a long time, they didn't even know how long, but they knew it was a matter of days, about four or five they thought.

When it cleared and the water calmed down a little, they did not see the other boat, it had broken lose during the storm. But at least all four of them [Flip, Loopy, Sparky and Adam] were still in the boat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

They decided to just ride the waves until they could pinpoint a particular direction they needed to go.

The storm cleared up almost as fast as it had started. The clouds went away and the sun came out, and it began to get very hot.

Sparky said, "It should not be getting this hot. I think the storm carried us a long way to the south of where we were. The best I can tell, that storm lasted about four days.

He put his hand in the water, the water is warm, he said, we must be in the Gulf Stream. I think we should still go west. Do you all agree?"

They all agreed with Sparky. Flip took the first turn at rowing the boat. Another three days had passed.

Sparky said, "We have been out of food and water since yesterday, We had better find land or a ship soon, we can't survive long in this heat without water."

Another day passed, no one had the strength to row the boat. Their lips were swollen and cracked and they could hardly talk. Night came and they all drifted off to sleep.

It had just started to get light when Loopy was awoken by what he thought was an angel. It was standing on the edge of the boat, it was white and it had very large wings. The sun was just coming up, and there was a sunbeam that seemed to be shining down right on the Angel. Loopy's eyes were blurred, and he couldn't see just what the angel looked like. It was making a strange noise and flapping its wings, afterwards, it flew away. Loopy woke Flip up,

Loopy said, "Did you see that?"

Flip said, “Did I see what?”

Loopy said, “That Angel that landed on the boat.”

Flip reached for the top edge of the boat and pulled his self up. To his amazement he couldn't believe his eyes.”

Flip yelled, “Land, I see land. Loopy, what you saw wasn't an angel, it was a big beautiful bird.”

Loopy said, “It was an Angel.”

Flip crawled over and shook Sparky said, “Wake up Sparky I see land.”

Sparky didn't move. Flip made his way to the seat and begin to row. It took him about an hour to reach the island.

As the boat hit the shore, Loopy raised his head and looked over the edge of the boat.

Flip said, “Come on Loopy we are on land. Lets go see if we can find some water.

They got out of the boat and pulled it ashore as far as they could, then made their way up towards the trees. They had not gone far into the trees when they came to a large pool of crystal clear water with a small stream running into it and then out the other side. It was about two feet deep. They both jumped in and begin to splash around. After getting a drink themselves they filled the water jug they had brought with them, then went back to the boat to see if they could help Sparky and Adam.

Flip thought they were both dead, but as he started to wash their face and put a little water in their mouth, they started to come around. When Sparky opened his eyes Flip said, “We are on land.”

Sparky said in a whisper, “Where are we?”

Flip said, "I think it's an island."

Flip and Loopy helped Sparky and Adam out of the boat, through the trees to the water. After cooling themselves off in the cool water of the pool, and filling their bellies with nearby fruit that was plentiful on the ground, they all lay down in the shade of the trees and went to sleep.

CHAPTER EIGHT

With no idea how long they slept. Flip raised his head and looked around. At first he did not see Sparky. Then he saw him standing on the shore looking out over the water. Flip got up and stood next to him.

Flip said, "Are you alright?"

Sparky said, "Yes, I feel fine."

Flip said, "Do you know where we are?"

Sparky said, "No, I don't have any idea. That must have been one hell of a storm, I don't know where we are, but, I know this, we are way south of where the ship went down, and that is very strange."

Flip said, "Why is that so strange?"

Sparky said, "Most storms move to the north, yet this one went to the south." He turned around and looked back at the island.

Sparky continued, "Do you think you can make it to the top of that hill?"

Flip said, "Yes."

Sparky said, "I don't know how big this island is, but you should be able to see a lot from up there. Someone needs to stay here and watch for ships. Flip said, "I'll leave now, I should be back by nightfall, but if I can't get back tonight I will wait till morning."

Flip turned and walked back to where Loopy was sitting.

Flip said, "Loopy, I will try to be back by dark."

Loopy said, “Where are you going?”

Flip said, “I am going to the top of that hill to see what this island looks like.”

Loopy said, “I’m going with you.”

Flip said, “I want you to stay here, it may be dangerous.”

Loopy said, “You may need my help.”

Flip said, “I can travel faster by myself so you stay here.”

Flip turned and walked towards the trees.

CHAPTER NINE

As he walked, he was amazed at all the different kinds of beautiful birds there were on the island. He wondered how they all got there.

It was late afternoon by the time he reached the top of the hill. The sun was low in the sky, and it had taken him longer than he thought it would.

Standing on a huge rock, he could see the whole island. It looked to be about ten or fifteen miles wide, and about three times as long. The hill he was sitting on was close to one end of the island. He could see something at the other end of the island, but he couldn't make out what it was. There was another island, which looked to be about twenty or thirty miles away. As the sun began to set Flip decided to stay where he was, until morning.

The rock he was sitting on was flat and about twenty feet across. It was worn smooth as glass by the wind and rain. Darkness was just about upon him as he looked toward the opposite end of the island again. It looked like he could see campfires burning, but it was a long way off and he could not be sure. He would tell Sparky about it tomorrow and maybe they would investigate it. He lay back, putting his hands under his head. As he watched the stars appear in the sky, he thought, it's almost like being at the top of the world. He lay there for hours looking at the Heavens and counting the falling stars, as they streaked across the sky. He thought about Loopy, I hope he doesn't come looking for me tonight. Then he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

CHAPTER TEN

When Flip awoke he saw the sun, a huge ball of fire that looked like it was rising out of the ocean. He got up, climbed down off of the rock, and started down the hill. After he got into the trees again, he found him some fruit to eat. It didn't take as long to get back as it did to get up there.

Loopy was glad to see him when he walked into camp. They all got up and greeted him.

Loopy said, "What took you so long, we were worried about you."

Flip said, "It took longer to get up there than I expected, so I just spent the night."

He told them what he thought he saw at the opposite end of the island.

Sparky said, "we will get a good nights rest tonight, then tomorrow we will check it out.

Right now he said, we must pull the boat back in the trees and hide it.

Flip said, "Why?"

Sparky said, "We don't know what is here on this island, and we just can't be too careful."

After hiding the boat, Flip told them what he saw from upon the rock and especially about the other island. They ended the day giving thanks to God and a prayer for their fellow crewmen, then they all laid down and went to sleep.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

When they awoke, it became clouded during the night. It was not daylight yet, but it had started to rain a little, and woke them.

Sparky took out his pocket watch, looked at it and said, "It's 3:30 AM, and we might as well start now." Flip, how far would you say it is to our destination?"

Flip replied, "It's hard to say, it could be as much as forty miles around the shore."

Sparky said, "OK, we'll take our time and if we see anyone we'll take cover until we know what they are up to."

Flip couldn't understand why Sparky was being so careful, but he had learned to respect his judgment.

They started walking, and the rain had stopped at least for a while. It was still dark and hard to see where they were going. Sparky was in the lead, and he kept them close to the trees. They kept walking for about four hours.

Sparky said, "Let's take a little break and rest in the woods."

As they sat down to rest, Flip sat next to Sparky.

Flip said, "Tell me why you are being so careful? Do you know what we will find up ahead?"

Sparky said, "I don't know for sure, it could be a friendly village. However, in these islands, it could be smugglers, or worse, cannibals. And we have no weapons, just this flair gun and five flairs.

After resting for a while, they got up and started walking again.

Sparky said, "I want to get there just before dark if we can, that way we can see what is going on. They walked the rest of the day.

CHAPTER TWELVE

It was about 8:00 PM when they rounded a bend. Loopy was the first one to see the boat. It was about a forty-foot cabin cruiser. He tapped Flip on the arm, pointed and said, "Look!"

They all got down on the ground. Flip moved on ahead until he could see a compound of four buildings, a dock and two boats. There were men walking around in the compound. What he saw next just about blew his mind. Next to the dock, turned upside down was the other lifeboat. He turned and motioned for Sparky to come to him. Sparky moved up beside him.

Flip pointed at the boat and said, "Isn't, that our other lifeboat?"

Sparky said, "It sure is. I wonder where the men are."

Flip said, "There is a man standing guard at that shed, they could be in there. What do we do now?"

Sparky said, "We wait, maybe we will see them."

Flip said, "What do you think these people are doing here?"

Sparky said, "I don't know, probably smugglers."

Flip said, "What would they smuggle?"

Sparky said, "Maybe dope, maybe guns, we will wait and see."

After watching for about two hours, they saw a man come out of one of the buildings. He had a pistol in his hand. He walked over to the small shed where the man was standing in front of the door. The first man told the other one to bring them out. The other man turned and opened the door and said, "All of you, get out here."

Out of the door came Buck, Cyclops, Cash and Nash. He lined them all up in front of the shed. The first man said, “Now I’ll ask you for the last time, what are you doing here?”

Buck said, “We told you we are part of the crew of the freighter called, ‘The Sea Witch’. It sank about a week ago and we were blown off course by the storm. We only came here looking for help.”

The man said, “I don’t believe you, it was on the radio, the Sea Witch sank hundreds of miles to the north.”

Buck said, “I don’t understand it either, but we were in one hell of a storm for at least four days.”

“I think you are government agents, sent here to spy on us.” replied the man angrily.

Nash spoke up and said, “You dumb ass can’t you tell when someone is telling you the truth? Hell, we don’t look like Government agents.”

The man took Nash by the arm and led him to the middle of the compound, put the pistol to his head and pulled the trigger. Nash fell to the ground.

Sparky and Flip were astonished to see this ruthless act before their very eyes. Both worked to maintain their anger as Sparky uttered the words, “God be with you Nash.”

The man walked back to the others and said, “You three will have until morning to think about it. Either way, none of you will ever leave this island alive.”

Then they put Cyclops, Cash and Buck back in the shed. The man that shot Nash ordered two other men to get rid of the body. They picked up Nash while laughing about the shooting and took him into the woods behind the compound.

Flip said, “That’s cold-blooded murder!”

Sparky said, “Yes it is, and we will try to make them pay for it tonight.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

By this time it had gotten very dark. There were campfires sat around the compound and there were men sitting around them. Sparky counted sixteen men. Most were not armed, and they acted like they had nothing to fear from anyone.

Sparky said, "Here's what we will do. We will wait until they are asleep. He told them his plan, and they went over reviewed again and again until about 2:00 AM.

Sparky said to Flip, "Will you and Loopy be alright?"

Flip said, "Yes, we can do the job."

Sparky said, "OK, lets go. Good luck, and may God be with us all."

In the compound, all of the men, except the guard at the shed, had gone into one of the buildings to sleep. Sparky and Adam moved down to the water and slid into the ocean. Very slowly they moved through the water to the boats. Sparky pulled himself up into one of the boats, and Adam took the other one.

Adam hotwired the boat and got it ready to go. Sparky opened the gas can and poured gas on the deck of the other boat.

In the meantime, Flip and Loopy crawled up behind the shed that the other men were in. Loopy got up and walked around the shed. Flip had a big rock in his hand and went around the other way.

When the guard saw Loopy he jumped up, when he did Flip came up behind him and hit him as hard as he could in the head with the rock.

They opened the door to the shed and told the others to come on. They moved around the shed and through the woods and into the water.

Loopy said, "I can't swim."

Cyclops told him to get on his back and they all swim to the boat. There was a very large automatic weapon mounted to the deck, and plenty of ammo to go with it.

Cyclops went over to it and said, "I'll take care of this baby. Loopy, you just hand me a clip when I ask for it."

Cyclops loaded it and said, "Alright let's kick some ass."

Loopy said, "Yah, let's kick some ass."

Sparky said, "Adam, will it start!"

Adam shook his head yes.

Buck said, "I'll drive."

Adam touched two wires together and the engine started with a roar. The men in the compound started running out of the buildings firing their weapons at the boat."

Sparky said, "Keep your heads down."

There were bullets flying all around them. Sparky shot a flare towards the compound, it went off and lit it up like it was daylight.

Cyclops said, "This is for Nash!"

He started cutting them down. Cyclops' Special Forces commando training was apparent as he sure knew how to operate that gun.

Sparky fired a flare into the other boat and it went up in flame. The other flares he shot towards the buildings. One went through a window. A moment later the whole building went up with an explosion. When they pulled away all the buildings were on fire, there were bodies lying all over the place and there was no one moving in the compound.

Sparky said, “Lets get the hell out of here before anyone comes. We don’t know if they have any friends nearby.”

As they headed out to sea, they hugged and congratulated each other for staying alive.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Buck said, “Well I have our location, so where do we go from here?”

Sparky said, “You’re the first mate, we will go where you say.”

Buck said, “The closes port is Miami, Florida in the United States. We should go and tell the authorities what happened out there on that island.”

The rest agreed, so they headed for Miami.

As they entered US waters, a Coast Guard cutter fell in behind them. A man with a loud speaker said for them to stop their engine and prepare to be boarded.

Buck told Adam to stop the engine. Adam pulled the wires loose and the boat came to a halt. The Coast Guard pulled up beside them. They had their weapons drawn and one man was at the machine gun. The Captain of the Coast Guard vessel told them to put their hands on their heads. They did what they were told to do. They were all put on the Coast Guard cutter; hand cuffed and sat down on the deck. Then they put a towrope on the other boat and headed for shore.

Once upon shore, they were removed from the boat and transported to a large building. Their handcuffs were removed and they were put into a cell. They tried to tell them what happened, but no one would listen.

About two hours passed, then two men came to their cell. One man asked, “Who is in charge here?”

Buck said, “I guess that’s me.”

“Take him out!” the first man told the other man.

He unlocked the cell door, Buck walked out and the man locked the door again.

Buck said, "How about getting my men something to eat, they haven't eaten for days."

"I'll take care of it." said the man. They took Buck to a room that had only a table and a few chairs in it and told him to sit down.

As Buck sat down, the man said, "I am officer Stevens, I am with the B A T F. Do you want to tell me what happened out there?"

Buck told him all that had happened starting from the moment the ship went down, to when they were stopped by the Coast Guard.

Stevens replied, "That is one hell of a story. Too damn crazy not to be true. That Island looks like they went up against an army."

Buck smiled and said, "I have some damn good men, but I also think we just got lucky and caught them by surprise."

Stevens said, "I don't think you're giving yourself, or your men, enough credit."

Stevens gestured to Buck, then picked up the phone and said, "Get those men in the cell something to eat and have Mr. Craft come in here, please."

Stevens said to Buck, "Wait here! There will be someone in to talk to you in a few moments."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

After awhile, a man came in carrying a tray full of food and sat it down in front of Buck. He said, “My name is Craft, I have a job offer for you and your men.”

Buck said, “Well, I can’t speak for my men, but since my ship sank I’m out of a job.”

Craft said, “After you finish eating, you and your men will be given quarters and new clothes to wear. I will return tomorrow to talk with all of you.”

After dinner, all were taken to the penthouse on the top floor. It had ten bedrooms, four baths, a full kitchen, and a very large living room with a wide screen television.

When they walked into the living room, Cyclops said, “Now this is what I call living. Sparky returned to the main entrance and opened the door, only to witness two armed guards standing across the hall. Sparky smiled at them, their expression did not change. He closed the door and said. “Well. One things for sure, no one can get in to bother us.”

They all laughed, then Adam turned on the television. The news was reporting a big weapons smuggling ring that was taken over by a rival gunrunning outfit on an island fifty miles from Cuba. This was followed by the weeklong report of the sunken ship, ‘The Sea Witch’. And how all search activities have been concluded with no survivors.

Buck said, “You all look real good for dead men.”

Cyclops said, “What the hell is going on?”

Buck said, “Damned if I know, but I don’t think it is good. Well, lets get cleaned up and get a good night sleep. I can’t wait to sleep in a real bed again. Some guy named Craft is supposed to be in to see us tomorrow.”

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Two days passed, then three, then a week. Then there was a knock on the door. Flip opened it.

Craft walked in and said, “Good morning Gentleman, how is your accommodations?”

Cyclops said, “Never mind that. You are six days late.”

Craft said, “Yes, I wanted to give you time to rest. You all have been through a lot of stress.”

Cyclops said, “Why are we being held here against our will? And why have we been reported dead?”

Craft said, “I am here to answer all your questions and to make you an offer.”

First, Craft answered all the questions they had. Then he said, “The boat that you took from the smugglers has been painted. It has been modified for silent running and to go twice as fast as it did before. Additionally, the boat has been armed with two fifty caliber machine guns, one in the front and one in the rear. No one can tell that it is the same boat. Upon completion Ownership, will be given to you.

Buck said, “Why would you give us a boat like that?”

Craft said, “Because I have a job offer for you. By the way, does anyone have a name for the boat?”

Adam waved his hand, took a piece of paper and wrote something on it and handed it to Buck. Buck looked at the paper and said, “The Beth Ann”. Craft said, “That will be her name. On board her are two hundred AK 47s and fifty hand-held rocket launchers with ammo. You will be given instructions and pose as gunrunners. The ring that you broke up on that island was just a small part of the

organization. Their main base is an island about one hundred fifty miles south east of Cuba. It is very well fortified. I want them all, dead or alive it doesn't matter to me."

Buck said, "Why us? Why not use your own men? Don't they have more experience at this kind of thing?"

Craft said, "We have no jurisdiction there, and what I am asking you to do must never leave this room, That is why nobody knows about you except Stevens and myself. You men don't look like B A T F agents, but you do look like gunrunners. I saw what you could do when I went to that island."

Buck said, "This kind of thing is way out of our league. We worked on a cargo ship. What we did out there was a matter of survival. Get yourself someone else. Hell! Send the Navy out there to blast them out."

Craft said, "I can't send the Navy, it must look like a rival gunrunner did it. This is a chance for you to do something for your country."

Buck said, "That won't wash. We are not all from this country."

Craft said, "Well, I can't make you do this, but If you will take this job and complete your mission you will receive one hundred thousand dollars each, but if you get killed or captured, we don't know any of you. That is why it was reported that all was lost on your ship, and that another gunrunner was the one that raided the island. And that is why you have not been allowed outside. I wanted to keep you a secret."

They all looked at each other, and then at Craft.

Buck said, "Well, that does make it a little more interesting, but this is a decision that everyone must decide on, let us talk it over between us."

Craft said, "I'll be back in one hour."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

After he left, Buck said, “For some reason I just don’t trust that man. Well what do you think?”

Sparky said, “That’s a lot of money, but what do we know about gunrunning, or killing for that matter.”

Cyclops said, “I know a lot about killing, and that kind of money sounds good to me.”

Flip said, “Loopy and I just joined this crew to see the world, but we could see a lot of world with two hundred thousand dollars, so whatever you men decide, I will go along. Loopy, you must decide for yourself on this one.”

Loopy looked at Flip, then he looked at Cyclops, smiled and said, “Lets kick some ass.” and they all laughed.
Cash said, “I sure could use that money.”

Buck said, “OK, lets vote on it.”

Cyclops said, “Yes! Go for it.”

Adam, he smiled and raised his hand with his thumb up.

Cash said, “Yes!”

Sparky said, ”Yes, I guess.”

Flip looked around at all the others and said, “Yes!”

Loopy said, “I’m with Flip, we are pals. I say yes too.”

Buck said, “Well I guess we must all be crazy, it looks like we go for it, Lord help us, I say yes too, someone has to go along to keep you all out of trouble.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A little while later Craft came back and said,
“Well, what did you decide?”

Buck said, “We will do it, but you must deposit one million dollars into a safe deposit box in all our names tomorrow.”

Craft said, “The deal was seven hundred thousand dollars if you complete the mission.

Cyclops said, “That was your deal, our deal is we get one million dollars tomorrow, or we don’t go.”

After pacing back and forth a couple of times Craft answers, “OK, I’m sticking my neck out but, you have it. It will be there tomorrow morning.”

Buck said, “I will go with you to the bank just to see that all is done like you say.”

Craft said, “Don’t you trust me?”

Buck said, “No, we don’t.”

Craft said, “O K, but if you cross me, there’s no place in the world for you to hide.”

Buck said, “Don’t you trust us.”

Craft said, “No, I don’t.”

Buck said, “Now that we understand each other give us all the information you have on the gunrunning organization. We will make our own plan and carry it out in our own way. We will leave in one week, and we will give you a list of what we need before then.”

Craft said, "That will be fine, Here is a map of the island. It shows where all the buildings and two big guns are, and it also shows all beaches where you can enter the island."

Buck said, "One more thing, tonight is party time, bring us some booze and women, or let us out on the town."

Craft smiled and walked out and closed the door.

Buck turned and looks at the others, smiled and said, "Well, it was worth a shot, I guess we're not the dirty seven."

Buck laid the map out on the table for them to study. He said, "These beaches look like easy entry. I am sure they will be protected, so where is the best place to enter the island?"

Cyclops said, "Right here pointing to a place on the map."

Buck said, "That's about a one hundred foot cliff, and straight up at that."

Cyclops said, "I know that, and they will not be expecting us to come in that way, it won't be guarded either."

Buck said, "Cyclops you know more about this kind of thing than any of us, so why don't you make up a plan of attack for us."

Cyclops said, "Ok!"

He stood up, picked up the map and said, "I will let you know when the plan is ready."

Then he turned and went into his room.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The next morning, after they ate then convened at the kitchen table.

Cyclops said as he laid the map on the table, “OK, here is the plan. Buck, you will drop Flip and I off here at the base of the cliff at midnight. Proceed south one-quarter mile away from the docks.

Buck said, “Can you climb that wall?”

Cyclops said, “Yes I can! Can you climb it Flip?”

Flip said, “I don’t know, I have never climbed anything like that before.”

Cyclopes said, “It’s a piece of cake, I will drop a line to you.”

Flip said, “That makes me feel a lot better, what happens if you fall on me.”

Cyclops said, “Then they get all the money.”
He laughed while pointing at a location on the map then he continued, “Here are the two big guns. Flip and I will take them out. Who are the best swimmers here?”

Buck said, “That would be Adam and I.”

Cyclops said, “O k, you two will take care of all the boats at the dock, after dropping Flip and I off, you will pass the docks slowly at about two hundred yards out.

You and Adam will have on scuba gear. When you get even with the docks you will go in the water, swim to the boats and plant your explosives on every other boat, set them to go off at 1:30 AM.”

Sparky said, "You will drive the boat. After you drop them off you will go out to sea until you can no longer see the island. Give them thirty minutes to do their job, then come back and pick them up. After you pick them up, wait thirty minutes, then come and pick up Flip and I. That should make it about 1:30 AM. Everything will be set to go off at 1:30 AM. Then we give them hell."

Loopy said, "I want to do something, what can I do?"

Cyclops said, "You have just about the most important job of all."

Loopy said, "What's that."

Cyclops said, "You will take the telescope and keep a watch on the horizon, and make sure nobody sneaks up on us."

Loopy smiled, he was glad to have such an important job.

Cyclops said, "Cash, Sparkly, and Loopy you three will stay with the boat. Well how do you like my plan. Does anyone have any questions."

Sparky said, "How will Buck and Adam know where the boat is?"

Cyclops said, "When you drop them off, you will check your position, they will put a beacon at the bottom so they will know where to come up. "Any more questions?"

No one said anything.

Cyclops said, "OK! All we have to do is give that jerk Government man a list of what we need, then wait for our time to go."

CHAPTER TWENTY

They told Craft everything they would need. They spent the next few days working out and just resting up. They were going over the plans, when Craft walked into the room.

“You have to go tomorrow night.

Buck said, “What do you mean tomorrow night, that’s two days early.”

Craft said, “I know that but it must be done tomorrow night.”

Cyclops said, “What is so important about tomorrow night.”

Craft said, “The day after tomorrow is Saturday, they are moving out a big shipment at 10:00 AM. That shipment is headed for The United States, can you do it.”

Cyclops said, “Sure we can do it, just have our boat ready to go at midnight tonight.”

Craft said, “Why midnight?”

Cyclops said, “We don’t want to travel in the daytime, and we want to look at the island before we make our move.

As Craft left the room, he said, “Everything you ask for is ready, Now, you can leave any time you want to, and then he closed the door.”

They all looked at each other. Then Buck said, “That man is an asshole, I don’t trust Government people.”

After going over the plans one more time.

Buck said, “Well I am going to try to get some sleep. I suggest the rest of you do the same. We will be leaving in twelve hours.

Cyclops said, “You all go ahead, I am going to study these close up pictures of that cliff some more. I don’t want to get stranded about half way up there.”

Flip said, “Go on to bed Loopy, I’m going to take a look at these pictures myself. After looking at the pictures for awhile.”

Flip said, “Cyclops, how are you ever going to climb that cliff?”

Cyclops laughed and said, “This is an easy one to climb.”

Flip said, “Well, I’m going to bed.” Flip got up and went to his room.

Cyclops look down at the pictures and uttered softly to himself, “How the hell am I going to climb that damn cliff? Oh well I guess I better get some sleep.” Cyclops got up and went to his room.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Meanwhile, sitting on his bed, Buck looked at his watch, it was 2:00 PM. He got up and quietly walks to the door of the apartment, opened the door and there were no guards. Craft had taken them away. He walked out and closed the door behind him. Three hours later he returned with a very large duffel bag over his shoulder. Buck entered his room, put the duffel bag in the closet, and lay down on his bed.

It seemed like he had just got to sleep when there was a knock on the door, Buck sat up, looked at his watch, it was 9:00 PM and they had ordered dinner for this time. He got up and went and opened the door. They brought the food in on two carts and sat up the table.

Buck went to each door and woke up everyone, then he took a shower and changed into fresh clothes. Later they all sat down to eat dinner. There wasn't much talking, everyone was in his own thought.

Finally, Sparky said, "You know some of us may not be coming back."

Buck replied, "Yes I have thought about that."

Cyclops interrupted, "Man what are you talking about, this mission is a piece of cake."

Sparky said, "I have a letter here, It tells what to do with my share of the money if I don't make it."

Sparky laid the letter on the table. They all looked at the letter. Then Buck pulled a letter out of his pocket and laid it on top of Sparky's letter. Then Adam and Cash joined in.

Then Flip said, “It looks like we all had the same idea. This one is for Loopy and I.”

They all looked at Cyclops who hadn’t produced a letter. Cyclops returned a look at his friends. He smiled, hesitated, and then said, “OK. OK.” Cyclops slowly pulled out a letter and laid it on the stack. They all got a good laugh out of it.

Buck said, “Did you know we have no guard at the door anymore.”

They all shook their heads.

Buck said, “I went out for a while this afternoon and I have something I want to show you all.”

Buck got up and checked the door to see that it was locked. Then he went to his room and came back with a duffel bag.

Sparky said, “What’s in the bag?”

Buck opened the duffel bag, turned it over, and poured one million dollars on the floor.

Buck said, “I just don’t trust that asshole government man to keep his word.”

They all begin to laugh and jump around

Flip said, “What are you going to do with it while we are gone?”

Buck replied, “We will take it with us, and when the job is done we’ll just keep going.”

Sparky said, “What if we lose the boat?”

Buck replied, “If we lose the boat, we won’t need the money.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

At last it was time to go. Their transportation was there to take them to the boat. They went aboard and began checking their gear to make sure it was what they had ordered.

Upon their satisfaction, Buck said, “OK! Adam, fire it up and lets get moving.”

They had not gotten far from the dock when they saw Craft getting out of a car and shaking his fist at them.

Buck said, “He knows about the money.”

They all waved at him.

Cash said, “You know, we could just forget about that island and keep going.”

Sparky said, “Now that’s and idea. I’ve thought about too. But, I keep thinking about Nash.”

Cyclops said, “I know what you mean. All this is kind of a personal thing to me, but it sure is nice to get paid for it too.”

They decided to try the boat out to see what it would do.

Sparky said, “That’s about fifty-five miles an hour. The damn thing sure will move, and on silent running, you can’t even hear the engine.”

Loopy said, “I want to go with you and Cyclops.”

Flip said, “No, don’t even think about it. I want you to stay here on the boat where it will be safe. Besides, you will have a job to do here.”

Loopy said, “Yes, I know. But I just don’t want anything to happened to you.”

Flip replied, “Don’t worry, I will be OK. Cyclops knows what he is doing.”

It was about 5:30 AM when they first saw the island. It was just a little bigger than the other island. They stayed out a ways and looked at it through the telescopes. They could see the docks. There were about twenty boats at the dock.

Buck said, “Damn, we only have ten charges and there are at least twenty boats there.”

Cyclops answered, “No big deal! Put one on every other boat.”

They circled the island two times, and then went out to sea to wait until it is time to go into action at 11:30 PM.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Cyclops said, “We had better get going if we want to be there by midnight.”

They pulled up about fifty yards from the cliff.

Flip said, “You take care Loopy, I’ll see you in a little while.”

Loopy said, “OK Flip, you be careful too.”

Cyclops said, “Good luck fellows and be careful.”

Buck said, “We will. You come back safe.”

They slid into the water and Buck handed them their gear that was on a floating device. They took it and swam away towards the cliff.

Buck and Loopy watched until they saw Cyclops going up the side of the cliff. He looked like a big black spider going up that cliff. The boat returned to sea and kept out of sight.

Flip saw Cyclops as he pulled himself over the top edge of the cliff. A few minutes passed and Flip was starting to get a little worried. Then he saw a rope as it came down and landed beside him. He took the rope and tied it to the gear and waved for Cyclops to pull it up.

A little while later the rope came back down. Flip took the rope and started climbing up the cliff. He had never done anything so hard but he finely made it to the top.

Cyclops took his hand and lifted him up like a rag doll. He already had their gear laid out for them.

“Be very quiet,” whispered Cyclops as he looked at his watch, “It’s 12:15: AM”

They strapped on their backpacks along with an AK forty-seven with four clips of ammo and a very large knife.

Cyclops said, "Are you ready?"

Flip said, "Yes."

They started down through the trees. Flip was amazed at how quiet Cyclops moved considering how big as he is.

All of a sudden Cyclops stopped and held his hand out signaled for Flip to stop.

Cyclops said, "There's the first cannon."

Flip looked in the direction where he was pointing. He couldn't see a thing. They moved ahead a little ways, and then finally Flip began to see the shape of a big cannon.

Cyclops told Flip to maintain his current position. Cyclops moved in the direction of the cannon.

Flip waited a few minutes for Cyclops. Then he heard a grunt coming from the direction of the cannon. It wasn't long until Cyclops returned.

"Come on now, its all clear." whispered Cyclops.

They returned to the cannon. Flip saw two men lying on the ground. Their throats had been cut from ear to ear.

It was all Flip could do to keep from throwing up. Cyclops told Flip to drag the bodies into the trees and try to hide them. Flip took the first one by the wrist and drug it away. He hid it behind a big rock, and then he went back and to get the other one.

Cyclops took an explosive device out of his backpack and set the timer for 1:30 AM and placed it inside the cannons barrel.

Cyclops commanded, “Flip! Come on! One down and one to go.”

Flip replied, “How far is the other one?”

“About one quarter mile I think.” said Cyclops.

In the meantime, Buck and the rest of the crew put the Beth Ann [boat nomenclature] on silent running and proceeded toward the dock. As they passed it Buck and Adam put on scuba gear and quietly dropped into the water. After setting the beacon on the bottom the bay they swam to the docks and put charges on every other boat.

Then they swam back to the beacon waded on the top of the water and waited until the boat picked them up.

At that moment, Flip and Cyclops moved through the trees without making a sound.

Finally Cyclops said, “Hold it Flip! Looks like trouble.” This time Flip saw the second cannon

This cannon sits within the camp. There were ten men around it. Four of them were asleep on the ground, while others were sitting, talking and drinking coffee. They moved in a little closer until they could hear them talking.

“Do you recognize that one?” said Cyclops.

“That’s the man that killed Nash,” replied Flip, “He must have nine lives to have escaped that other island.”

Cyclops said, “If I have anything to do with it he won’t escape this island. Cover me from here. I will go around and get the drop on them. When I do, you come in from here.”

Flip wait then he heard Cyclops say, “Hold it right there, don’t anybody move. Flip came into the camp on the other side of the men. “Who the hell are you?” the man that killed Nash asked, “Do you work for the U S government?”

“I’m the grim reaper you dirty murdering bastard.” said Cyclops.

Cyclops told the men to drop their weapons and take off their t-shirts. Then he told Flip to rip up their t-shirts and tie them to the cannon. After they were all tied to the cannon, Cyclops put the explosive in the barrel.

Cyclops took out his knife and said, “This one goes off at 1:00 AM. Flip, do you know your way back.”

“Yes.” said Flip, “What are you going to do?”

“Go on!” replied Cyclops, “I will catch up with you.”

Flip turned and started walking back to the cliff. He had only been gone a little ways when he heard the screaming. He didn’t like the fact that he walked away and let that happen. But he could understand how Cyclops felt. He would probably do the same thing if someone had killed Loopy the way that man killed Nash.

Anyway, they would have died anyway when the explosive went off. Flip wasn’t far from the cliff when he heard the gunfire. It was coming from behind him. Cyclops is in trouble he thought. He turned and went back in the direction from which he had come. He saw Cyclops behind a big rock and several men were shooting at him. He was pinned down by the gunfire. Flip moved around until he could see most of the other men, he counted eight all together. They had not spotted him. Flip fires his weapon and picked off two of them right away.

“I was wondering where you were.” said Cyclops.

Flip replied, “You didn’t think I would leave you did you?”

“Throw me a clip I’m out of ammo!” said Cyclops.

Flip threw him an ammo clip.

“OK!” said Cyclops, “Flip, gives me some cover.”

Flip fired his weapon and two more fell. He kept firing at the men until his weapon was empty. Cyclops moved away from the rock and took cover behind a tree.

“Come on Flip! I’ll cover you now.” yelled Cyclops

He started firing his weapon as Flip took off running. As he passed Cyclops says, “Give me your last clip.”

Flip passed the clip.

“Now, head for the cliff!” said Cyclops.

When Flip got to the edge of the cliff he saw the boat waiting for them.

Cyclops yelled, “Jump Flip!”

Flip said, “Jump! Are you crazy? That’s a one hundred foot drop to the water.”

A bullet just nipped Flip’s ear. His mind was quickly changed and he jumped. He thought the fall would last forever. When he hit the water it felt like concrete. He didn’t think he would be able to hold his breathe long enough to reach the top of the water.

Finally, Flip raised head from the water. After he got some fresh air in his lungs he looked up towards the top of the cliff. He could see Cyclops firing his weapon. When Cyclops ran out of ammo he threw down his weapon and jumped.

Flip saw the bullets hit Cyclops just as he jumped. Cyclops flipped from the force of the bullets that hit him. When Cyclops hit the water, Flip went down and brought him up. He could see the blood coming from Cyclops body.

When he came up, there was gunfire coming from the boat. Sparky and Adam were providing cover. Flip swam to the boat with Cyclops. Sparky and Adam retrieved Cyclops and Flip from the water.

Buck said "Lets get the hell out of here."

As they pulled away Flip saw Adam hit by two bullets. The bullets took the back of his head off. He fell over the side and into the water.

Sparky said, "Adam fell overboard."

Buck replied, "I'll go back for him."

"Don't bother" said Flip, "I saw him get hit. He's dead."

"How can you be sure?" said Buck.

"I'm sure, he was hit in the head." said Flip.

Flip picked up a piece Adam's skull and threw it in the water.

Flip said, "How is Cyclops?"

"He's dead." replied Sparky.

“Damn!” said Flip.

They were almost to the dock, when they heard two loud explosions on the island. They knew that Cyclops and Flips work had paid off. Seconds later all hell broke lose at the dock. The boats at the dock were turned into kindling.

Buck said, “Cash, drive the boat.”

Loopy started bringing out rocket launchers.

Flip said, “Let’s see what kind of damage we can do to that island.”

They made a dozen trips past the island and fired about ten rockets each time. When it was all over there wasn’t one building standing anywhere and that part of the island was on fire. There was no movement anywhere.

Buck said, “Well Cyclops old friend your plan worked, but, we sure paid a hell of a big price.”

They all just stood and looked at the island for a while.

Then Buck said, “Well how about Mexico City?”

“Now you’re talking!” said Sparky.

When they got to deep water, each paid their condolences to Cyclops then lowered his body into the ocean.

Sparky said, “It’s time to read the letters.”

Buck replied, “Why don’t you and Flip take care of that.”

So, Flip and Sparky went into the cabin and retrieved the letters from a drawer where they had put them for safekeeping. They took out the two that Cyclops and Adam had written. Sparky picked up Adam's and handed Flip the one Cyclops'.

Sparky opened the letter and started reading.

"If you are reading this letter, I am dead. If there is life after death, I am sure I am missing you all. Tell my daughter that I love her very much and she was always on my mind and in my hart. And tell her I wish I could have spent more time with her. Please give her the money I have coming.' The letter supplied her name and address:

Beth Ann DeBaun

5221 National Street

Paris France

Sparky said, "I didn't even know he had a daughter. I was wondering who Beth Am was."

Flip opened the letter for Cyclops and it read, "Well I guess I didn't make it, just my luck. I won't get to spend a dime of the money. I hope it wasn't painful I can't stand pain. You men are all I have so split my share between you. Spend it well and good luck in all you do."

Buck said, "Well now! Four ways. That's a quarter of a million each that's not bad."

There was a big change in Buck's voice.

Flip said, "What do you mean four ways? I count six ways."

Buck said, "Sparky, Cash, You and I."

Flip said, "You forgot about Loopy, and Adam's daughter share."

Buck said, "I don't think so! What Adam's daughter doesn't know won't hurt her. And as far as Loopy is concerned you will just wind

up with his share too. So that would give you double. Any fool can see what you are up to.”

Sparky said, “Come on Buck, don’t be greedy. You know we have to do what the letters say and Loopy has a share coming just like the rest of us.

Buck said, “Why there will be more for us.”

Sparky said, “How could we live with ourselves later.”

Buck said, “Well, just tell me what a dumb ass like Loopy needs with that much money.”

Before any one could blink Flip hit Buck right between the eyes. Buck landed hard on the deck, sat up and shook his head then said, “You Son of a Bitch, I’ll kill you.” Buck jumped to his feet and started running towards Flip to tackle him. Flip side stepped and pushed him aside as he went by. Buck hit his head on the rail as he went over and into the ocean. Flip tried to grab him but he missed. Flip yelled at Cash said, “Buck is in the water, go back and get him. Cash turned the boat around and went back. They saw no sign of Buck anywhere.

Just then Loopy said, “Flip look!” as he pointed off the back of the boat. They look to see two more boat coming up fast. They were about a half-mile away.

Sparky yelled, “Cash, there are two boats behind us, see what this thing will do.”

Cash opened it up but the other boats kept gaining on them. Flip and Loopy brought out some more rockets. The other boat started firing at them. There were bullets flying all over the place.

They started firing off the rockets, after five or six tries, a rocket hit one of the boats. It turned into a ball of fire and then disintegrated.

The other boat turned and took off the way it had come from. After things settle down, they opened Buck's letter. It said to send the money to his wife and gave her address:

Linda Marie Wilson
424 North Ketcham Street
Indianapolis, Indiana
Flip said, "Sparky what do we do now?"

Sparky said, "I don't know about anyone else, but I'm ready for a vacation in Mexico City. We can go there, divide up the money, then we can send Buck's wife and Adam's daughter a cashers check."

Cash said, "That sounds real good to me Sparky."

Flip said, "Ok Loopy, what do you think?"

Loopy said, "Lets do it."

Flip said, "Mexico City it is."

Sparky said, "Cash, set a course for Mexico City."

When they arrived in Mexico City, they found the best hotel, and all got them a room. After resting for a while, Flip and Loopy decided to take in the sites of the city. This is what Flip had been dreaming of all along.

Flip and Loopy spent about three days sight-seeing. On the third day, when they returned to their hotel room, Flip unlocked their room and went inside. He told Loopy said, "I am going to see Cash for a moment, and I'll be right back."

He went out and closed his door and went to Cash's room and knocked. There was no answer. He knocked again, a little louder

this time. He turned the knob and the door opened. Flip walked into the room and looked around. The place looked like a storm had come through there. He looked all about the room but did not see Cash anywhere. He walked over and opened the closet door. Cash was hanging by his shirt on a coat hook. Blood was on his face. He had been shot in the head. Flip searched the room for Cash's money, he couldn't find it so he left the room and went to Sparky's door and knocked. He heard Sparky say, "Just a moment." Flip heard him moving around in his room. After a brief moment the door opened.

Sparky said, "I was just getting ready to take a shower, come on in."

Flip walked in and closed the door.

Flip said, "Cash is dead, he's been murdered."

Sparky said, "What do you mean murdered?"

Flip said, "He was shot between the eyes, and his money is gone."

Sparky said, "How do you know his money is gone?"

Flip said, "I looked for it before I left the room, its not there, his room was tore apart. I guess whoever killed him took it."

Sparky said, "I was out all night. I have only been here for about fifteen minutes. I heard nothing."

Flip said, "Loopy and I just got in too."

Sparky said, "I wonder who did it?"

Flip said, "I don't know. Should I call the police?"

Sparky said, "Hell no! Are you crazy? We are in Mexico. Get your things together and let's get the hell out of here."

Flip said, "What about Cash?"

Sparky said, "There's nothing we can do for him now. Get Loopy, your money, you're cash, your clothes, and let's get the hell out of here before someone else finds him."

Flip said, "OK, I'll be ready in a few minutes."

Flip went back to his room and told Loopy to get packed.

Loopy said, "Where are we going Flip?"

Flip said, "Don't waste time talking, just get packed."

In about ten minutes Sparky came to the door.

Sparky said, "Are you ready yet?"

Flip said, "Yes! We are ready. Let's go!"

They left the hotel and went straight to the boat. Fired her up and was out of Mexican waters within thirty minutes.

Flip said, "I wonder who could have killed him."

Sparky said, "I don't know. He probably told someone about the money and they killed him for it. There is nothing we can do about it, so we might as well forget it."

Flip said, "Where do we go now?"

Sparky said, "How about L A?"

Flip said, "That will be fine."

So they set a course for L A. When Flip first saw the size of the city, he could not believe his eyes. After getting a hotel room, Flip told Sparky he and Loopy was going sightseeing. Flip put some money in a briefcase; it was almost a hundred grand, which would do them for a long time.

Flip sent their father and mother three hundred thousand dollars. They sure will be surprised to get this he thought. Then he took the briefcase to the bus station and put it in a locker. He took the key and put it on a shoestring and put it around his neck. Afterwards, they spent the whole day sightseeing, and they had never dreamed they would be in any place like this.

Later that evening, Flip and Loopy returned to their hotel room very late. They did not want to bother Sparky at such a late hour.

After a good nights sleep, Flip and Loopy got up, took their showers and got dressed.

Flip said, “Why don’t we call room service for breakfast.”

Loopy said, “That will be great, I want to watch television.”

Flip replied, “I think I’ll go ask Sparky if he wants to eat with us.”

Loopy said, “OK Flip!”

Flip went out the door and down the hall to Sparky’s room and knocked. There was no answer, he knocked again, and still no answer. Flip tried the doorknob and it was locked.

Flip said to himself quietly, “Well, I guess he must be asleep or gone somewhere.”

He turned and went back to his room.

Loopy said, “Is Sparky going to eat with us?”

Flip said, “I guess not, he didn’t come to the door. I guess he wasn’t there.”

Loopy replied, “Where do you think he is?”

Flip said, “I don’t know, I guess he went out early.”

For the next three days, Flip and Loopy went sightseeing, they wanted to see all there was to see, and that was a lot.

Each morning and evening Flip would knock on Sparky’s door, but never got an answer. Flip was getting very worried about him. The next day as they were leaving, Flip saw the maid coming out of Sparky’s room. He ask her if his friend had checked out. She said, “Mr. Sparks, no he hasn’t checked out, but his bed hasn’t been slept in since he tore his room up two nights ago.”

“His room was torn up!” Flip asked.

“Yes, she said, two nights ago, it looked like he had a wild party or a fight, the room was a mess. Could you please let me in his room?”
“No sir, I can’t do that. It’s against the rules. I’ll get fired.” said the maid.

Flip thanked her and gave her a twenty-dollar bill.

“Thank you!” she said, then turned and went into the elevator. Flip went back to his room and told Loopy not to answer the door for anyone.”

Loopy said, “Where are you going?”

Flip said, I’m going down to the desk. I will be back in a few moments. You just watch television while I’m gone.”

Loopy said, “OK Flip.”

Flip left the room, making sure the door had locked. He went to the elevator and down to the lobby. He walked over to the desk and asked the clerk, “Have you seen Mr. Sparks in room 618 in the last two or three days?”

“I am sorry.” said the clerk, “I can’t give out information on anyone.”

Flip put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a fifty and placed it under the clerk’s hand.

“He left the day before yesterday, said the clerk.

“Did he check out?”, asked Flip.

“No.”, said the clerk, “He just turned in his key and said he would be back later.”

“Did he come back?” said the clerk.

“No, at least not while I was working.”, the clerk turned his head and looked at the key boxes, then turned back to Flip, “His key is still here.”

“Thank you.” said Flip.

“You’re welcome.” said the clerk as he watched Flip get into the elevator. Then he looked at the fifty as softly said, “Uh, I would have told him that for a twenty.”

Flip went back to his room.

Flip said, “Loopy! Get everything packed.”

Loopy quickly replied, “Where are we going?”

Flip said, “We are going home.”

Loopy said questionably, “Do you mean home to Ireland?”

Flip replied, “Yes, don’t you want to go home?”

Loopy said, “Yes I do but, where is Sparky? Is he going with us?”

Flip said, “I don’t know where Sparky is, he’s still not in his room. I think something may have happened to him.”

Loopy said, “How are we going to get home?”

Flip said, “We are going to take The Beth Ann and sail her right up the river to the house.”

Loopy said, “That will be great! We can sit on it and fish in our river.”

In a few moments they were ready to go.

Flip wrote a note to Sparky and put it in an envelope and gave it to the clerk to put in Sparky’s mailbox. It read, ‘Sparky, we waited on you for three days. Don’t know where you are or what has happened to you. I don’t know if you will come back or not but if you do we are going home and are taking the Beth Ann. You have my address. Your friend, Flip.’

Flip paid the bill then he and Loopy left the hotel and flagged a cab.

Flip told the driver they were going to the peer, but had to stop at the bus station first. After picking up the briefcase with the money in it they went straight to the peer.

The cab fare came to fifty-three dollars and change. Flip gave the driver a hundred and told him to keep the change. They got on the boat and put their bags in the cabin. Flip started the boat and checked the fuel, it was full and so were all the fuel cans. The man had done a good job getting it ready to go.

Flip thought to himself that it's a good thing Sparky had taught him how to navigate and operate this boat, otherwise they would have to sell the boat and fly home.

Before leaving, Flip went in the cabin and got Sparky's letter out of the drawer. It gave his sister's address in New York City. Sparky want his share sent to her along with another personal letter he had written.

Loopy said, "Why are you reading Sparky's letter?"

Flip replied, "Because I think he's dead. Loopy, I think the same person that killed Cash also killed Sparky."

"Who do you think it is?" asked Loopy.

"I'm not sure." said Flip, "But let's not worry about that now. You and I are going home."

Flip took the rope loops from the dock, put the boat in reverse and backed it out,

Flip said to Loopy, "Here we go pal! We are on our way home."

They had been at sea for about two hours. Flip was driving the boat and Loopy was in the cabin lying on the bed.

Flip didn't know that he and Loopy were not alone on the boat. He had the radio playing, and he did not hear someone open the hatch to

the engine compartment, come out and quietly walk across the deck coming up behind him.

Flip felt something poke him in the back, and heard someone quietly say, "Turn the engine off Flip."

Flip reach over and turned the key to the ignition.

"Well now, just keep your hands on the wheel and don't turn around." says the intruder.

"Hello Buck. I thought it might be you." said Flip.

"Yes, how did you know it was me?" replied Buck.

Flip said, "I just had a feeling that you were still alive. I thought it had to be you or Craft. However, I thought we could get away."

Flip added, "I knew Sparky couldn't kill Cash in cold blood. Not even for that much money."

Buck said, "Well I had no problem with it, and where is that little dumb ass brother of yours.

Flip said, "Loopy is in the cabin asleep. Let him be."

Buck answered, "I'll let him be for now. First I'll take care of you. Then it will be his turn."

Flip said, "How did you manage to stay alive?"

The boat had stopped and Buck backed away.

"You can turn around now." Buck announce while holding the gun.

Flip turned around, Buck had a gun in his hand. It was a 38 caliber.

Flip said, "Is that the gun you shot Cash with?"

"Yes." said Buck, "and Sparky too."

Flip said, "You killed Sparky too."

Buck said, "Yes."

Flip said, "You dirty Bastard."

"Yes!", said Buck, "and I am a rich one. This is working out real good for me. Instead of two hundred thousand, I get eight hundred thousand and the boat."

Flip said, "It doesn't work out that way."

Buck said, "Why not."

Flip said, "I sent all the money home to be put in the bank. I only have a few grand on me."

Buck shook his head, "Well, That is one big disappointment to me, but I still get the boat and the pleasure of killing you. I never did like you, or that little dumb ass Loopy either."

Flip said, "Tell me something. If you wanted all the money so bad why didn't you just keep going with it the day you took it out of the safe deposit box?"

Buck said, "I had no way to get away and didn't have time to make arrangements."

Loopy was lying on the bed in the cabin. He noticed that the boat had stopped. He thought he heard voices and rose up and looked out

the window to see who it was. He saw Buck holding a gun in his hand and pointing it at Flip.

“I’ve got to help Flip!” quietly said Loopy.

Loopy got up and slipped out of the cabin. As Buck was talking to Flip, he did not see Loopy pick up a rope and tie one end to the anchor chain, then he put a loop in the other end. Back home Loopy used to practice throwing a rope a lot, and he had gotten real good at it. Flip knew just what Loopy had in mind.

Then Buck said, “Well Flip, this is it and pointed the gun at Flip’s chest. You’re a dead man and I just don’t see any way for you to get out of this. Hmm, I guess your Irish luck has just run out.”

Flip knew he had to keep Buck talking long enough to give Loopy time to get ready.

Flip replied, “Before you kill just tell me how you got out of the water. Did the gunrunners pick you up?”

Buck said, “It was Craft, he set us up. He was with the BATF, but he had a gunrunning organization of his own on the side, and he was trying to get rid of his competition. That last island was a stronghold that belonged to the man we killed him that night. Anyway, I guess we started something big. He didn’t want anyone to live to tell about our little deal with him. They were going to kill me but I convinced them that I would kill all of you. They said if I did I could keep the money and the boat. Now its time to fill my contract.”

Flip said, “We came back looking for you, but another boat started shooting at us and we had to run. Do you think Craft will let you live after you kill us?”

Buck said, “Craft won’t be bothering anyone again, see he was on the boat that you hit.”

Just then Loopy threw the lasso. It fell around Buck and dropped to the deck, Loopy pulled it tight around Buck's ankles. Buck was distracted for a second and he took his eyes off of Flip. Flip lunged forward, hitting Buck as hard as he could. The gun went off and the bullet creased Flip's head, knocking him unconscious. Flip fell to the deck.

Buck also fell on the deck. Loopy turned and pulled the lever to drop anchor. The anchor dropped into the ocean, the rope tightened up and pulled Buck screaming across the deck and over the rail. As he went over he grabbed the rail and held onto it. Buck laughs and says to Loopy, "That wasn't bad, maybe you're not as dumb as I thought."

The rope was still around Buck's legs. While Buck strained to hold on, he pointed the gun at Loopy and said, "Now pull the anchor up."

Loopy said, "First you throw the gun into the water."

Buck said, "I'll blow your damn head off if you don't raise the anchor."

Loopy said, "I don't think you can hold on there much longer."

Buck's hands began to slip. He said, "OK Loopy, I'll throw it away."

Buck threw the gun in the water and said, "Now Loopy, raise the anchor so we can help Flip."

Loopy said, "You shot Flip!"

Buck said, "I didn't mean to, it was an accident. It happened when he hit me."

“Well, it looks like you’re a dead man. I just don’t see any way you can get out of this, and I guess your Irish luck just ran out.” Loopy says with a slight grin upon his face,

Buck looked down at the water. He could see sharks swimming. Quickly, his tone changed and he pleaded to Loopy, “Please help me Loopy. I don’t want to die.”

Loopy said, “Well now. Don’t go away Buck, I’ll be right back.” Then Loopy turned to see if Flip was all right.

When he saw that Flip was still breathing, Loopy got a rag and some water and washed the blood from Flip’s head. The cool water brought him too.

Flip said, “Are you alright Loopy.”

Loopy replied eagerly, “Yes! I’m Ok. How are you?”

“Yes, but my head hurts a lot. Hmm, where is Buck? Flip asked while searching the immediate surroundings.

Loopy said, “Oh, he’s hanging around.”

Just then they heard a splash. Flip and Loopy ran to the edge of the boat and looked in the water, it was full of sharks. For a moment the water turned red, then it was the conclusion of Buck Wilson,

Loopy looked at Flip and said, “I guess he couldn’t wait. I told him to hang on, but then, I’m just a little dumb ass. So what do I know.” Loopy smiles.

Flip shared the smile and replied, “That was just great Loopy.”

Loopy said, “Well now I just thought we needed an anchor weight.”

Flip laughed and said, “You did good Loopy, thank you for saving my life.”

Loopy said, “Your head is bleeding, are you hurt bad?”

“No.” said Flip, “the bullet just creased the skin, and I will be fine.” They pulled the anchor up and cut the rope. Then they found the place where Buck had been hiding. There was a suitcase with almost four hundred thousand dollars in it.

Flip said, “Well Loopy I guess we don’t have to be in any hurry to get home now.”

First they stopped at the Caribbean Islands. From there they sent Sparky’s share to his wife, then sent all the rest of the money home, except for thirty thousand dollars. They spent about two weeks relaxing on the Caribbean. Then journeyed to South America and Australia. Seeing all the wonderful sights that there was to see.

They spent the winter in the warm climate of the South Seas. Then, in the spring, their travels took them to Paris, France.

After docking The Beth Ann they made arrangements to have the gas filled, and all preventive maintenance performed before taking off.

Flip and Loopy caught a cab. Flip told the driver they were going to 5220 National Avenue.

Loopy said, “Where are we going Flip?”

Flip replied with sincerity, “To see Adam’s daughter.”

The cab arrived at a very large and beautiful house. Flip paid the driver and told him to wait until they got inside. Flip rang the

doorbell. A man answered the door. Flip introduced he and Loopy then requested to talk to Beth Ann DeBaun.

“What about?” the man asked.

“Her father” replied Flip.

The man invited them to come inside.

“I’ll get her” the man gestured for Flip and Loopy to seated. After a short time they heard a smooth, silky voice say, “May I help you?”

Flip stood eagerly and turned to speak. To his astonishment standing in the doorway was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen in his life. She was about nineteen or twenty years old; five foot three inches; possibly one hundred and twenty pounds; very long coal black hair; and her eyes were deep blue with the smile of perfection.

She spoke exquisite English with a very strong French accent. It was very easy to see that she was Adam’s daughter. Flip was speechless for a moment. Again, she said, “May I help you?”

Flip cleared his throat and said, “I am Flip McGuire and this is my foster brother and best friend Loopy. She looked at Loopy and said, “What kind of a name is Loopy?”

Loopy replied, “My name is Louis Edward Francis Morrison. It’s Irish.”

She smiled.

Then Flip said, “We are friends of your fathers’. I have something here for you. He handed her the note that Adam had written that night. She read the note, then slowly walked to a chair and sat down and gestured for Flip and Loopy to join her.

“Did you work with my father?” she said painfully.
“Yes, he was a very good man.” Flip replied.

Beth Ann said, “I got letters from him all the time, but I haven’t seen him for almost eight years. You say you worked with my father. I thought all were lost when the ship sank.”

Then Flip remembered that in an earlier letter they had told her that her Father had gone down with the ship.

“Loopy and I were on leave during that trip.” Flip said.

Beth Ann said, “How long are you going to be in Paris?”

Flip said, “As long as we wish. We are not on a schedule.”

Beth Ann said, “I thought I would show you around if you’d like.”

Flip said, “That would be great, and I have something to show you also.”

Beth Ann said, “You will stay in our guest room tonight and tomorrow we will begin.”

The following evening she invited them to stay for a week and they accepted. For a week Beth Ann escorted Flip and Loopy throughout Paris.

To prevent overstaying their welcome Flip and Loopy decided it was time to go.

Flip asked Beth Ann, “Would you take us to the peer? There is something I want you to see.”

When they arrived at the peer Flip pointed in the direction of their boat. When she saw the name of the boat she paused.

“When did you do that?” she asked.

“Your father named it when I first bought the boat” Flip said. She sat very still for a moment staring at the name on the boat as her facial expression suggested memories of time gone by of she and her father.

She looked at Flip, “Thank you for coming.”

“I would not have missed this for the world.” said Flip eagerly.

She reached to place her hand on his face. Slowly she leaned to kiss his eager lips.

Softly the words escaped her lip, “Will you write to me sometimes?”

“Yes, and maybe you can come to Ireland to visit” said Flip.

“I’d love to,” replied Beth.

She smiled, then bid them both farewell.

Flip and Loopy left the car and waved goodbye. Beth Ann drove away. Flip watched her car until it vanished over the horizon.

He and Loopy got on their boat and left Paris.

Then Flip said, “Are you ready to go home Loopy?”

“Yes, I can’t wait to get home and fish in our river.” replied Loopy.

A few days later they came to the mouth of a river. It was springtime and they had been gone for a whole year. A lot has happened in that time and Flip was just glad to be alive.

Loopy said, “Isn’t this our river Flip?”

“Yes Loopy, and I am sure glad to be coming home again. I think I have seen enough of the world and had enough excitement to last me a lifetime.”

“Me too,” said Loopy.

As they continued to slowly move up the river, the people along the bank all waved at them and called out their names. Then they went around a bend in the river and there they could see the farmhouse - their farmhouse

In the distance, they could see a small dock that they had built about three years ago. And tied to it is a rowboat.

Flip steered the Beth Ann to the pier and tied it to the dock. Their mother and father came out of the house and welcomed them home.

Flip told them all that had happened to them, from the time they left home until their return. Then their mother fixed a big dinner with all the things that Flip and Loopy liked to eat.

They all sat down at the table, their mother said the blessing and thanked God for keeping her boys safe and returning them home to her.

After dinner, Flip and Loopy quietly strolled down to the dock. On the side of the Beth Ann nearest the dock Flip wrote the names Captain Jack, Don Wan, and Fats. On the opposite side he wrote the names

Nash, Cyclops, Adam, Cash, Sparky and Buck. He put a cross between each one of them.

Loopy said, “Why are you writing Buck’s name on there. He tried to kill all of us?”

Flip replied, “Buck was a good man until he got greedy for all that money.”

On the back of the boat he wrote their names, Flip and Loopy.

Flip lay on the bank of the river resting his head against the root of a tree. He thought of Beth Ann, how beautiful she is and the kiss she had given him before they left.

Maybe he would write to her and invite her to come to Ireland. His thoughts were interrupted when he heard Loopy yell, “Look Flip, I caught a big one!” as he fished from the Beth Ann.

Flip looked across the river at the green meadows and distant hills with trees that seem to touch the sky. His mind wondered over the past year. He thought about all the friends he had met and then lost.

In conclusion, he pondered the words of Captain Jack, ‘Never forget where home is’ and Flip concurred by saying, “It sure is good to be home again”

The end

Or is it!

Written By A. R. Kessinger
08/29/03

BIOGRAPHY

I was born on July 14, 1942 to Estell and Pearl Kessinger in a log cabin. The youngest of six children we lived a very modest lifestyle in Butler County, Kentucky.

After dropping out of school in 1959 I worked in construction with no interest in education and/or writing.

In the mid 1970's I discovered a sincere interest in writing country songs and poetry after receiving my GED in the military.

I began loosing my sight to glaucoma in 1978, which provided the time to focus on my newfound literal craft.

By the early 90's I had aspirations to develop literature, however, my loss of sight made it difficult to use the typewriter. During this time computer training was offered and I immediately took advantage of the opportunity. With the use of a computer screen reading software I was able to begin development of this work.

A. R. Kessinger

