

Jack McGill

Excerpt for *In the Deep* Ch. 1

I was driving towards the dock at San Francisco early in the morning. It would be a long job not being able to sleep in the comfort of my own home or see my family for a month at least. It was sad knowing I would not be able to take my son to his first day of school this week, but I had a letter for him and my wife to read while I was away. I parked right by the wharf's parking lot and dropped the letter off in a mailbox down the street. Ah, the fresh smell of the ocean. I remember seeing how huge the vessel tied against the dock, it had to have been around eight hundred feet long. It had a large engraving in the side of it, "Blue Marlin." I walked towards the gate entrance, presenting my ID to the employee.

"Where are you going?" the young employee asked.

"Australia. We are travelling through the Pacific."

"It's going to be awhile."

I already knew it would take us three weeks to deliver the cargo, but I stayed optimistic throughout this trip. I smiled and said,

"You've got to have an exploring spirit if you're going to be a sailor."

The kid chuckled and gave me an approving wave to board the ship. I began walking over to the rickety metal catwalk.

As I was on the connecting bridge, a horn blared from the ship. It was about to depart. I saw the young employee behind me, ready to fold the catwalk. I was frozen, holding a gutted feeling in my stomach, but I knew now was not the time to hesitate. I kept walking until I ended

at the port side of the ship. It was filled with large metal containers, almost like a maze. A sailor walked towards me,

“I’m Neil. You must be the new sailor. David?”

I was surprised he knew my name. He waved for me to follow,

“Come, the rest of the crew is inside.”

I followed. We climbed down a ladder until it felt like we were at the waterline. At this point I felt the ship undocking, and I’m about to meet the people I’ll be with for the next month. I could hear the splashing of water against the ship. Neil spun open a door to a navy rack room, a cramped room with a round table in the middle. Two other men sat around the table playing cards. The only light in the room came from a fueled lantern. Neil sat down in a chair, picking up one of the unfinished hand of cards.

A quiet sailor blurted, “Captain should be down here soon.”

Another sailor chimed in, “Russ needs to get his ass back.” He noticed me observing the room, “Come, finish his cards.” I was nervous, but I went over to the table and picked up the hand of cards. I asked them their names; the quiet one said his name is Samuels and the other one is Bill. They all looked at each other then back at me.

“How long have you been a sailor for?” Bill asked. He gave me a stare so intensely it was like he was looking into my soul.

“Not long.” I replied. “Truth is this is my first time.” They all had a huge grin on their faces.

“So, we’ve got a rookie then eh?” Bill said. They all burst out in laughter, especially Bill.

Neil pulled himself together, “How’d you end up here?” I shut down the question, because in all honesty I was unsure how I got it either.

Bill chimed in, “We’ve all got a story. Come on, tell us.” The room was silent, the only sound being the crashing water.

I stuttered, “I’m a cargo loader.” They all looked confused as to how I landed here too, but my records stated my duties were those of a sailor. The pay seemed good too, much more than I had previously made. The only sacrifice is that I can’t see my family, but at least it will pay for my kids school. The door burst open to a bald man in the same sailor uniform they all had on. The reek of tobacco began to linger in the room. The man looked around at all of us.

“Who’s he?”

Bill spoke to him, “He’s the new guy. Say what’s your name?”

I answered, “David.” Bill repeated my name back to himself,

“David... David the cargo loader.” The mysterious man asked, “You were a cargo loader? I heard about you.”

I became curious and asked, “What’d you hear?”

He looked at Bill, “Not much, captain just mentioned something about a cargo loader. He should be down here soon.”

Neil spoke to the man, “Russell you better switch your clothes or he’s going to notice.” Russell didn’t seem to not care about any repercussion he could face against the captain. He walked over to his bed, and casually undressed.

He grabbed a new pair of clothes in his hand and turned to all of us, “So what if he catches us? He’s just a dirty old drunk.” Bill got out of his chair and directly in his face.

“Don’t speak about the captain that way!”

“Why not? You praise him as a legend and for what? So, he can piss himself tonight?” Bill became tense ready to strike.

The door flung open; it was the captain...

**End of Preview**