

**Charles B. Stilson**

*Polaris and  
the Goddess  
Glorian*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[CHAPTER I](#)

[THE GOLDEN STRANGER](#)

[CHAPTER II](#)

[THE LONG BLACK ROAD TO ADLAZ](#)

[CHAPTER III](#)

[THE KING JUDGES](#)

[CHAPTER IV](#)

["DEAD MEN ARE BEHIND US"](#)

[CHAPTER V](#)

[WHERE THE ILLIA MEETS THE SEA](#)

[CHAPTER VI](#)

[ZOAR OF THE AMALOCS](#)

[CHAPTER VII](#)

[POLARIS MAKES HIS CHOICE](#)

[CHAPTER VIII](#)

[BEL-AR HEARS THE DRUMS](#)

[CHAPTER IX](#)

[THE COMING OF THE BEASTS](#)

[CHAPTER X](#)

[THE GODDESS GLORIAN'S DECREE](#)

# Introduction

## [Table of Contents](#)

In the antarctic wilds far below Ross Sea, Polaris Janess (Polaris—of the Snows), was born, of a mother he never knew, and grew to manhood's years knowing one human face only, that of his father. When that father died, the young man set his face to the north, to find the world of men, of which his father and his books had told him; and to deliver to the National Geographic Society in Washington a packet containing scientific data compiled by his explorer sire.

Journeying through the silent wastes with his dog team, the son of the snows found Rose Emer, an American heiress, who had strayed from an exploring party, and who waited death in the icy wilderness.

Hurled southward again in a breakup of the ice floes where they had camped, Polaris and the girl came upon the kingdom of Sardanes—a valley girded by volcanic hills which warmed it, and peopled by a lost fragment, some two thousand strong, of the ancient Greeks.

The adventures of the man of the snows and the American maid in Sardanes; how they escaped thence; how their love bloomed amid the eternal snows; and how they won at last to America, where the Geographic Society hailed the dead Stephen Janess as the first man to set foot on the Southern Pole—all these things have been related.

Zenas Wright, friend of Polaris's father, and a celebrated student of volcanic phenomena, told Polaris that the fires which had warmed Sardanes for centuries were passing

away from the valley, and that all life in the ancient kingdom must perish.

Chartering the United States second-class cruiser *Minnetonka*, Polaris, Wright, and Captain James Scoland set sail to rescue the Sardanians. Scoland, who loved Rose Emer, deserted Janess and Wright in the wilderness and went back to America to woo the Rose-maid. But Rose Emer refused him, and gray Marcus, Polaris's dog, protected her from Scoland's profaning lips and tore the recreant captain so horribly that the man went mad, and in his madness revealed his inhuman treachery.

Again the *Minnetonka* turned her nose to the mysterious South, and Rose Emer went down the bitter seas to find her sweetheart.

Meanwhile Polaris and old Zenas Wright found Sardanes a waste of snows, its volcanic girdle cold and dead, its people, led by the mad priest of Analos, gone to their doom through the fiery "Gateway" of their god Hephaistos. Only Minos, the kind, and his bride, the Lady Memene, remained alive, hidden in a cave in the hills. Those four, Polaris, Wright, and the two Sardanians, were picked up by the *Minnetonka* near the Antarctic Circle as they were making their perilous way northward in a small launch which they had found in the wreck of Captain Scoland's supply ship.

In the story which follows will be related the tale which was brought back to America by old Zenas Wright—what befell Polaris and his companions after the *Minnetonka* turned northward—homeward.

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# CHAPTER I

[Table of Contents](#)

## THE GOLDEN STRANGER

[Table of Contents](#)

On the bridge of the cruiser *Minnetonka* stood Minos, the Sardanian king, staring southward in the wake of the ship, southward where his lost, dead kingdom lay buried under the soft, cruel snows beyond the unchartered antarctic seas. Ahead of the ship, full of promise, full of hope, was America. For the *Minnetonka* had rounded the Horn that morning and was on her long straight course for the port of home.

Below him, in her cabin, was the girl bride of Minos, the Lady Memene, so strangely won and saved from the crowning horror of his kingdom's fall. It was mid-forenoon of a cloudless day. Gay voices echoed along the decks of the cruiser. Gladness was in the very air the voyagers breathed—the gladness of the homeward-bound.

But the mien of the king was somber. There was a shadow on his brow and deeper shadows in his dark eyes gazing so steadily into the south. Bright as were his prospects, memory still whispered sadly to him of the only spot on earth which had been home to him. He could not forget.

Far away on the dancing, sparkling waters something caught the eye of the king, a something which flashed and disappeared and flashed again, as the wave on which it rode dipped and arose among its fellows. Minos watched it curiously.

Leaning against the rail beside the king, so close that their elbows almost touched, was Lieutenant Irwin Everson, commander of the *Minnetonka*, trim in his naval blue. Minos touched his shoulder and said:

"Yonder—something shines on the water."

Everson followed with his eyes the course indicated by the pointing finger of the king. Again the distant object flashed in the sunlight, far away on the starboard quarter. "Might be ice; but I've seen enough of that lately to know that it isn't," muttered Everson as he, too, caught the flash, "and no wave ever shone like that."

Stepping into the pilothouse, the lieutenant returned with his glasses. Their lenses revealed to his eyes a glittering patch from which the rays of the sun were reflected as it rose and fell with the waves. But even the powerful binoculars were inadequate to distinguish the form and substance of the thing.

"I can't make it out," Everson said as he lowered the glasses. "But here comes the keenest pair of eyes on the ship." He leaned from the bridge and called down to a tall man who was crossing the deck below.

"Oh, Mr. Janess! Can you spare us a moment? We need your eyesight."

Polaris turned a smiling face in response to the call. He, too, was glad of the home-going; no man on the ship more so. In a moment he joined the king and the lieutenant on the bridge.

Though he was not so tall by the breadth of a hand as the Sardanian, who was indeed a giant, the tawny head of the son of the snows was inches above that of the young

naval man. As they stood one on either side of him, Everson involuntarily stepped back a pace. He felt puny and absurd, and he was by no means a small man.

For the half of a minute, Janess gazed through the glasses, altering their focus slightly. He lowered them suddenly and swung on his heel to face Everson.

"Put the ship—" He stopped and his face flushed. "I beg pardon," he continued. "It is not mine to give orders, but yonder a man floats. He lies face downward across a piece of wreckage."

Lieutenant Everson hurried into the pilot house, and down to old MacKechnie among his boilers was flashed the signal which swung the gray cruiser off her course in a long arc to the southward.

"A man, you say?" the commander queried as he rejoined Polaris and the king. "But what is it that glitters so?"

Polaris, with the glasses at his eyes again, did not at once reply. When he did, the answer was surprising.

"It is the man that glitters. If he be not of metal himself, then is he clothed in it from head to toe, and it glimmers—" He turned to Minos and lapsed into the Greek of Sardanes. "It glimmers, Minos, as did that suit of armor which thou didst leave behind thee in the cave on the Mount of Latmos," he said.

The king stirred to quick interest. The eyes of the naval lieutenant widened with amazement as Polaris repeated his remark in English.

"A man clothed in metal! In armor!" he exclaimed. "And floating here in the South Atlantic! What can that mean? Poor chap; whoever he is, he will never tell us. He must



have been dead for days. But it's well worth the investigation."

Impatiently the three men stood at the rail of the bridge as the ship swung on.

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At an eighteen-knot clip, the *Minnetonka* cut swiftly through the waves, nearer and nearer to the flashing burden of the waves. Soon other eyes not so keen as those of Polaris could descry the strange objective of the ship. Forward along the rail, sailors clustered, shouting their surprise, and staring at the unusual spectacle of the glittering man afloat.

Presently, with a deep thrumming of her valves, the *Minnetonka* slowed down. With a word to Everson, Polaris left the bridge and hastened across the deck. As a boat was swung over the side in the davits, he sprang into it with the sailors. Less than two-score strokes of the oars took the boat alongside the floating mystery.

Then, indeed, had the sailors cause to stare with open mouths.

On a crisscross tangle of slender beams, oddly twisted and broken, lay the body of a man. So small was the raft of wreckage which supported him that his head and feet projected at each side, and as the waves tossed his unstable craft, first his face and then his heels were dipped beneath the water. Very wide of shoulder was the stranger and powerfully framed, if the outlines of the garb he wore did not belie him.

From crown to sole he was dressed in jointed armor, cunningly fashioned and decorated, and the whole of which

gleamed in the sunlight as only burnished copper or red gold can gleam. His hands only were bare; smooth, strong hands, clenched fast about two of the broken beams beneath him.

But it was none of those things, and they were strange enough, that caused the coxswain to cry out hoarsely as the boat wore alongside, or that caused Polaris Janess, bent over with outstretched hands, to draw them back from the floating stranger, while his lips parted and his breath came hard.

"He's alive! By the grace of God, he's alive!" cried the coxswain.

Face downward the stranger lay, as Polaris had said, loose-flung and inert, and sprawled as though some force had pitched him there. But though his head was more often under the water than above it, his broad shoulders heaved and fell regularly. He was alive.

The supreme wonder of it, and that which awed Polaris and the sailors, was that *the man breathed when his head was under water!*

When a wave tilted the raft so that his face was raised, his breath was expelled with a wheezing, whistling sound. When he was submerged, a stream of small bubbles arose about his neck and clung to the surface of his metal helmet.

For a long moment Polaris stood and looked down at this amazing thing. Then he reached out and very gently took the stranger by the shoulders to turn his face to the sky. So tight was the clutch of those strong bare hands about the two beams of the raft which they held that the entire structure tipped when the son of the snows laid hold. In vain

he tried to loosen that grasp. It was not to be done without breaking the man's fingers. To make an end of it, Janess took an axe from the hands of the coxswain and cut through the beams.

Still gripping the wooden fragments, the man turned over on his back.

Then the mystery of the stranger's breathing was partially made clear. Under the flare of the helmet he wore his brow was hidden. His eyes were fast closed. Fitting tightly over the bridge of his nose and extending down so that it covered his mouth and part of his chin, was a projecting masklike contrivance of metal and leather. Its straps covered the man's ears and were made fast somewhere at the back of his head under the helmet. So tightly was the mask affixed that its straps cut into the flesh of the man's cheeks. It much resembled the masks worn by the soldiers in modern warfare to protect themselves from the gas attacks of their enemy.

Through its mechanism the breath of its wearer hissed and whistled like escaping steam.

Alive though the man was, and under circumstances which made his discoverers marvel, he was near death. Above and below the confines of the mask he wore, the bones of his face seemed almost thrusting through the flesh. The flesh itself was wasted and puckered by the action of the sea water, and the skin was cracked and raw. His hands, which clung so tenaciously to the bits of broken wood, were bleeding about the nails, and his wrists were gashed and water-eaten.

"Now, here is work for Dr. Marsey," Polaris said. He gathered the limp form of the stranger into his arms and lifted him into the boat.

At the rail of the *Minnetonka* as the boat was shipped, a curious crowd met the advent of the man from the sea. Carrying him as lightly as though he had been a child, Polaris laid the man on the deck. The ship's doctor pushed through the wondering sailors and bent over him.

"Not dead?" he exclaimed when he saw the stranger's face. "A most amazing thing!"

"What resurrection from antiquity have we here?" said old Zenas Wright, falling on his knees beside Polaris, who was supporting the man's head. "No museum I ever saw boasted a suit of armor like this one." The scientist ran a finger over the delicate tracery on the glittering corselet of the stranger.

Polaris sought and found the catch which released the chin strap and laid the open helmet on the deck. Another chorus of exclamations greeted the appearance of the stranger's head. It was covered with a mass of wavy red hair, so red that it shone like flames in the sunlight.

Rumors of the wonder on deck had drawn the grizzled MacKechnie up from his beloved engines.

"Mark me, yon laddie's a Scot—if he isn't of the wild Irish," was his dry comment when he saw the fiery head on the deck.

Undoing its buckle, Janess next laid aside the odd mask from the face of the stranger. Except that he had a high, bold nose and a mouth that closed in a thin, firm line, little could be made of the features of the man, they were so

damaged by his long immersion in the sea and impressed by the tightly drawn trappings of the mask. But he apparently was a young man, of not more than thirty years.

In vain Dr. Marsey endeavored to force the man's clenched teeth apart so that he might apply the neck of the brandy flask which a steward had fetched. The jaw of the stranger was set like a rock and resisted all effort, and the doctor was compelled to pour the liquor between the locked teeth.

"If that doesna' fetch him, nothing whatever will," said MacKechnie, the nostrils of his ruddy old nose twitching.

"Ah, he's getting it!" said Zenas Wright. With the first trickle of the brandy down his throat, the unconscious man stirred faintly. His mouth opened and closed again with a snap, and his hands unclenched and let fall the bits of beams they had held so long. He coughed weakly. A faint tinge of color flowed into his face. His eyelids twitched, but did not open.

Dr. Marsey touched the man's temples and then his wrists with practised fingers.

"I think that we shall hear his story yet," he said. "What he needs now is a bed and nourishment. Bring him below."

Polaris looked into the battered face and was strangely stirred. The grim plight of the man he had rescued, the mystery of him, the strength of the spirit that seemed to dominate even that unconscious body; all struck an answering chord in the nature of the son of the snows. For he, too, had suffered and endured, almost to the gates of death, and had remained steadfast. Was it a premonition

that made him feel so strongly that this man, should he live, would be his friend above many?

When the sailors would have taken up the stranger, Polaris waved them aside, and himself carried the inert body below, the blazing head resting on his shoulder.

MacKechnie gazed after him thoughtfully as he strode across the deck.

"Beware, laddie lad, beware!" the Scotchman muttered softly. "'Tis only ill luck he'll be bringin' to ye, yon gowden mon. For ye hae saved him from the sea."

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Shivering throughout the length of her steel hull, the *Minnetonka* drove southward. A shrieking wilderness of wind and wave surrounded the ship. Reft from all guidance, she sheared through the furious waters with no more of volition than some monster projectile launched by the battling elements. Twice had the stout cruiser come free of scathe from the white portals of the Antarctic. Now she seemed winged by death to enter them once more and forever. In the grip of the tempest the ship was no more than a toy—a helpless, beaten thing.

Calamity, like a black dog, had crept hard upon the heels of the bizarre stranger. He had not been on the cruiser for six hours when a storm burst, the like of which for violence no man on board the ship ever had seen.

In an attempt to breast the gale and make for some port of safety, one of the propeller shafts—weakened perhaps by the pounding of the ice-drift months before—had snapped short off. Unequal to the double task, its twin had sprung

beyond all use. Thereafter the scant mercy of chance ruled the destinies of the ship and of all she bore.

Nor was the damage to the shafting all that disaster had wrought. In her great peril the ship was stricken dumb and could not summon aid. Her wireless was out of commission. She could send no call across the face of the waters to sister ships, bidding them to hasten to her succor.

MacKechnie's dismal prophecy was likely to be visited, not on Polaris Janess alone, but upon the entire ship's company.

In the pilothouse, with the gale screeching outside his windows, Lieutenant Everson bent above his charts; but he was helpless and well-nigh hopeless. Down in the engine room, its busy clamor stilled, MacKechnie sat and stared bitterly at the mechanism which he so loved. It was useless now, its splendid powers crippled, its fires dying away to embers. If the inward prayers of the engineer were fervent, the flow of Scotch profanity which passed his lips at times was far more eloquent. He, too, was helpless. He cursed the day when he had decided with Everson to round the Horn and take the eastern route. They had learned at Dunedin, in New Zealand, that the Panama Canal was closed by another Culebra slide, and they had thought that this was the quicker way to the port of home.

Better the delay than this!

On all the ship two hearts only were unshaken by the catastrophe. One was that of the stranger.

Freed of his armor, his body cleared and his scarred face and arms in bandages, he lay tossing in a bunk in one of the cabins. Dr. Marsey was unremitting in his care of the patient

whom the sea had given him. Hot gruel and small doses of brandy, administered alternately, had turned the ebbing tide of the man's vitality. He was gathering strength. But his consciousness still strayed beyond the powers of any tempest to disturb it.

Another who thought nothing of the gale and its accompanying terrors was Zenas Wright.

Coupled with his keen and scientific mind, there was in the old geologist the enthusiasm of a boy, and an overmastering curiosity to learn new things. Many and wild had been the guesses which had followed the finding of the red-haired stranger. That he had been shipwrecked was plain enough to all. But who and what was he?

Some star out of *opéra-bouffe*, said one, out of a job and reduced to the necessity of wearing one of his own costumes. A lunatic, another said, and found more to agree with him. But whence the armor and the mask?

Let guessers guess and tempests roar, said Zenas Wright to himself. He was on the trail of knowledge. So he slipped into the cabin where the stranger lay. He stood at the head of the bunk and looked down where the red hair of the derelict flared on the pillow. The impressions left by the straps of his mask had filled out, and the lineaments of the man were more distinguishable than they had been. It was an agreeable face, thought Zenas Wright; all of it that the bandages did not hide. There were distinct lines of humor at the corners of the straight mouth and tiny wrinkles at the base of the craggy nose—lines which said that the wearer of them was a hearty fellow, who oftentimes had laughed long



and merrily at jokes, whether of his own or another's making.

"But," thought Zenas to himself, "Marsey's been giving the fellow altogether too much brandy, or else he is in a rare fever." The geologist laid the back of his hand to the man's cheek. He found it cool. But it was ruddy to the ears, with the ruddiness that is associated with an intimate camaraderie with the wine cups.

At the touch of the old man's fingers, the stranger ceased his tossing. His eyes opened. One flash from them Zenas Wright caught, and he saw that they were sea-blue, bright and leaping eyes. Then their lids closed. The man shook his head wearily, and from his lips trembled what might have been a moan or a muttered word. The scientist bent hastily to listen, but the man made no further sound. As the old man watched him, his form relaxed and he lay apparently in a dreamless, voiceless slumber.

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From the floor, Wright took up the shining helmet, and from a stand the queerly fashioned mask. He was about to leave the cabin when his attention was arrested by the garb which the stranger had worn underneath his armor and which was flung across the back of a chair. One garment it was, even to the feet of it, like the sleeping suit of a child. It was of a soft, fine fabric, almost of the thinness of gauze, yet firmly and closely woven and warm to the feel. But it was neither of cotton nor of wool, nor yet of silk, or any other material with which the scientist was familiar.

He shook his head over it; and then, with the mask and helmet, he left the cabin.

Straight to the deserted ship's laboratory the geologist went, and shut himself in. And there, some time afterward, Polaris, threading his way through the swaying corridors with Rose Emer clinging to his arm, found him.

So busy with his work was old Zenas that he did not see or hear the entrance of Janess and the girl. For a time they stood in silence and watched him. They saw him spill drops from a vial on the surface of the helmet. Then he went at it with a small drill which he had fetched from the machine shop. That was a bit of hard work, for he puffed and mopped his brow. He collected with care the particles which fell under the bite of the drill. Those he tested with drops from another bottle, and then again, opening and discarding a number of chemicals. At length he got a reaction which appeared to satisfy him, for he chirruped gleefully and nodded his white old head.

Next Wright donned the mask and fastened its straps. Polaris and Rose heard the whistling of his breath through it. He then drew a bucket of water from a tap, set it on one of the laboratory stands, ascended a stool, and suddenly plunged his head into the pail.

Zenas had not stopped to figure out the displacement of the container of a well-developed scientific brain. It was considerable. Much of the water splashed out on the floor, and not a little of it went down inside the scientist's collar. Nothing daunted by the cold trickle of the inundation, he bravely kept his head in the bucket, from which arose at once a prodigious gurgling and bubbling.

The old man's shoulders shook as though a fit of coughing had seized him. One minute, two, three, passed.

Zenas stood so still that Polaris became alarmed. He stepped to the geologist's side and shook him by the arm. The only response he got was an impatient gesture of a hand, which seemed to say, "Go away and don't bother me."

Presently Wright raised his head from the depths of the bucket, and ludicrous enough he looked, with the odd snout of the mask projecting from his face, his white thatch of hair all plastered flat and the water running from his beard and making a mess of his cravat and shirt front. But above the mask his little dark eyes were triumphant. When he saw Polaris at his side, he could scarcely wait to unfasten the mask.

"There," he shouted, and he shook the thing above his head, "there is one of the greatest inventions of modern times. I don't know what is in the inside of it, or just what it does, but I'll find out. If that chap yonder is the inventor of it, he can take it to the United States, take out a patent on it and make a scandalous amount of dollars, and we can all become human submarines. How long was I down?"

"About five minutes, Daddy Wright," said the girl, who had taken a strong liking to the plucky old geologist and his bluff ways.

"Five minutes!" Wright's tones were awestruck. "And I took every breath regularly and naturally, except when I had to sneeze! And it was real oxygen I got, too. Not a drop of water came through this thing, and it was very good breathing. Well, I've made two discoveries."

"And those are?" Polaris questioned.

"That our friend yonder with the red topknot can live under the water like a fish, *and that he wears armor of gold*

*which makes a light in the dark.* Look here."

Wright took up the open helmet. Stepping to the switch, he shut off the lights in the laboratory.

Faintly at first, and then strongly and more strongly, the helmet glowed in the darkness. The light grew, until the two men and the girl, standing close together, could dimly see each other's faces.

It was uncanny, this strange metal headpiece with its fan-shaped crest, all luminous with a flickering and phosphorescent radiance.

"What does it?" Rose Emer whispered, the tempest for the time forgotten.

Zenas Wright turned on the lights.

"I cannot tell," he replied. "But if it's not radium, it is something that is closely akin to radium. The outer surface of the helmet is of gold. I've tested it with acids. The gold is laid—not plated, but laid on thickly—over an inner shell of steel. And finely tempered steel it is, too, as my drill will bear me witness. But the light comes from still another metal, which is inlaid upon the tracery in the gold here."

He turned the helmet in his hands. Over all of its surfaces were the fine lines of a design of twining vinery, with here and there small, conventionally shaped flowers. In the lines of the chasing was inlaid, as Wright had said, another metal. It seemed to be a reddish and rusty dust, which clung in the surface of the gold along all of the lines of the graven design. It was that which made the light.

"That chap over there is no actor, and he's not a crazy man," said the geologist earnestly; "but an enigma that I'm going to solve, if the good Lord will give me the time. We

had on this ship before he came two survivors of a history to make an archeologist weep tears of joy. Now we have a third, and, to my mind, more wonderful even than are they!

"Boy—" He turned and clapped Polaris on the shoulder. "I only hope that I shall live long enough to pen the 'finis' to the book that I'm going to write some day!"

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For seven days, fraught with perils through every passing hour, the hurricane belabored the staggering ship. South by southeast, the storm drove her on. The whip of the gale and the shock of the mighty waves which arose to meet its lash were incessant.

Past the Falklands, their rocky headlands dimly seen through the flying scud; past the Aurora Island group, and on past lonely Georgia, the hard-pressed *Minnetonka* fled down the raging sea path under the goads of the storm demons. Nowhere might she tarry. Candlemas Island and Saunders and Montague in turn were left behind, and then Thule, last link between the South Atlantic and the frigid wastes of the Antarctic Sea.

Off the adamant cliffs of far Thule the cruiser nearly left her bones. She struck a hidden rock, struck so fiercely that the massive steel ram was torn from her prow, and with it the triple rails, with which she had been equipped to withstand the ice-shocks, in her antarctic voyage, were stripped from her entire starboard side.

When Thule had disappeared in the murk, the swing of the tempest turned, and the cruiser was forced eastward in a whirling race of current and gale. Like a smitten thing that seeks a lonesome spot in which to die, the ship passed on

into the mysteries of the uncharted, treacherous seas which lie east by south from Thule.

Helpless still the cruiser rode. Unable to make repairs to her shafting, Lieutenant Everson did the only thing that he could do; he kept her head-on with the seas and let her run before the tempest.

Through all those days and nights of peril the stranger lay in his cabin. His consciousness had returned, and at times he sat up and gazed curiously at those who visited him; but he seemed to be in a mental haze. He ate heartily of what was given to him, and his strength grew. He spoke to no one.

Among the men on the *Minnetonka* were those who, one or another, were conversant in nearly all of the languages of the civilized world. One by one they were called in by Zenas Wright to try their tongues on the stranger. He met them all with blank looks, sometimes with smiles; but he answered none. He seemed to comprehend none.

Polaris visited the cabin often. His liking for the man grew. He imagined that the stranger was more cordial to him than to any of those who attended him. Once or twice the son of the snows surprised a wistful regard in the bright blue eyes of the man, an expression that was lost almost as soon as perceived. And once the stranger reached Janess's hand and held it with his own for a moment, turning it and feeling of its wonderful thews with his fingers. It was then that he seemed the nearest to speech. Presently he let the hand fall with a smile and a flash of white teeth.

It was after that last disaster, off the hard coasts of Thule, that Engineer Ian MacKechnie went quite daft.

What had come upon the ship had seemed to numb the Scotchman. By day and by night he sat in his silent engine room beside the lifeless boilers, his cold pipe clenched between his set teeth, his lips working. Occasionally he stumped heavily up the steel stairways to the decks. His stays above were brief always, and always he returned to the engine room. When he slept at all, it was only to nod in his chair. Before his bloodshot eyes strange fantasies played themselves through, and were sequeled in his fitful dreams. Always, they had the same grisly climax.

In one of the night watches the old man appeared on the cruiser's bridge. Everson, almost as sleepless as the engineer, was in the pilothouse. The fury of the gale had subsided somewhat; but it still roared on with a vigor that chilled the strong heart of the commander. He saw the engineer as he came onto the bridge, and went out to speak to him.

"Meester Everson," MacKechnie said, raising his voice to a shout to cope with the shrieking clamor of the storm, "Meester Everson, wull ye do a strange act and save the bonnie ship and a'?"

"Why, what is it, Mac? What do you advise now?" the lieutenant asked.

"'Tis you mon that the laddie plucked from the sea," replied MacKechnie. "Wull ye no gi' orders to cast him o'er the side again, and save the ship?"

Everson answered with a short laugh. "This is a poor time for joking, Mac," he said.

"'Tisna' jokin' wi' me, Meester Everson," MacKechnie said. His tones were deadly earnest. "Yon's no' a proper mon,

whatever. He's one that has sorely angered the big sea, and the deep rages mightily for him. If ye dinna gi' him up, we'll all be ganging our way wi' him, down to auld Davy Jones." His voice rose shrilly. "I'm fey," he cried. "I'm fey, and I hae the secon' seeght! Heed me, mon!"

Everson shifted his position so that he got the light from the pilothouse full on MacKechnie's face. It was drawn and wild-eyed.

"You're a superstitious fool, Mac," the lieutenant said. "You had better go below and turn in. You look as though you had not had a wink in a week."

"Supersteetious! Aye, mon, maybe, and a fu' to bootie," rejoined the Scot. "And I've been havin' no sleep, I grant ye. Ma certes, how can a mon sleep wi' *him* glarin' and glommerin' yonder i' the engine room? Heave him o'er the side, I'm tullin' ye, Meester Everson, as was done wi' the prophet Jonah. 'Tis the only way whatever to save the ship.

"Supersteetious! An' are ye no supersteetious yer ain sel', Meester Everson? Haven't I seen that ye always throw the deuces fra' yer hand when ye play for siller at poker? I tull ye, yon's a deuce-mon. He mustna' remain. Think it o'er, laddie; think it o'er. When ye hae seen what I hae seen—"

He turned away, and the rest of his words were lost in the skirl of the wind. Suddenly he backed up, clutching at the bridge rail and colliding violently with Everson.

"See! See!" he screamed. "He's comin' for me the noo! I lockit him fast i' the great kist i' the boiler room; but such as him are na' held by bolts or bars. He's comin' for me!"

Moaning in abject terror, MacKechnie went down on his knees. He pointed at the decks below with a trembling arm.



Everson looked in the direction indicated by the shaking finger of the Scot.

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A light hung at the foot of the bridge ladder. In the patch of radiance it made, stood the stranger. He was dressed from head to foot in his golden armor. His helm was on his head, and the whole flashed and shimmered in the rays from the lamp.

As Everson stared at him, the man turned away from the foot of the ladder and walked to the rail of the ship. There he stood gazing out into the darkness and the storm.

Unnerved by the sudden appearance of the object of their discussion, Everson hesitated for a moment. Then he started for the ladder to descend to the deck. MacKechnie, his teeth chattering with fright, laid hold of the lieutenant by the leg, but Everson shook off his grasp and went on. As the commander set foot on the ladder, the stranger quit the rail and came back toward the bridge.

Everson, half-way down the ladder, called sharply as the man came opposite him. But the stranger did not pause or look up. He passed the bridge with steady steps and crossed the deck toward the main companionway. The lieutenant was about to proceed to the deck and follow, when a wild and wailing cry behind him, piercing above the booming of the seas, halted his step. He turned.

It was MacKechnie who had screamed. He was on his feet and coming along the bridge. In the set face of the Scot was a look of such frozen horror that it shook the lieutenant. With eyes glaring straight ahead, the engineer passed Everson by as though he did not see him, descended the

ladder to the deck, and walked to the rail. He paused where the stranger had stood only a moment before. He raised his hand as if to strike at some shape visible to him alone. Again he cried out wildly.

Before Everson could move to stay him, the Scot climbed the rail and threw himself into the sea.

Shouting to the men of the watch to fetch lanterns, Everson ran aft along the side. It was useless. The crazed MacKechnie, whirled away in a raging swirl of waters in which no man could live, was gone beyond their ken. No cry came back to his fellows from the blackness. Only the wind roared and the tortured waters thundered. In the plight of the ship it was impossible even to attempt to pick up the lost man.

Far aft Everson clung to the rail, dazed, stunned at the suddenness of his old comrade's taking off. Knowing that he could do nothing to save the mad Scotchman, the lieutenant at length turned back and went below, to the cabin of the stranger. He threw open the door. The cabin was dark, except where the curious armor shed its glow along the floor. For that phenomenon Everson was prepared. Zenas Wright had told him of the luminous metal. What did surprise the lieutenant was that the armor lay on the floor. And so recently he had seen it on the cruiser's deck, and its owner inside of it. To that he could swear. He turned on a light.

The stranger lay quietly in his bunk, apparently in slumber, his broad chest rising and falling regularly. Not the flicker of an eyelid betrayed that he was conscious of the keen scrutiny which the commander bent upon him. Almost

then did Everson give way to the superstitious imaginings of MacKechnie. Then his searching eyes saw the gleam of drops of sea water which beaded the golden corselet and helm. He drew a long breath of relief; for he knew that he had not dreamed. Pursuing his investigations no further, the lieutenant returned to his vigil on the bridge.

Next day, to the gratification of Dr. Marsey and to the general surprise of the others on the ship, the stranger left his cabin. Clothing had been provided for him, but he would have none of it and appeared on the deck clad in his armor. He proved to be an exceedingly curious man, the stranger. He went everywhere about the ship, apparently in fear of nothing, although the gale still ran high. He watched all of the operations of seamanship with the closest interest, but was careful to get in the way of no one.

His ruddy face and flaming hair, with the outer trappings which he wore, made the man the object of much comment on the part of the sailors of the *Minnetonka*; comment which was not untinged with awe. All of that he heeded not at all. In the full possession of his faculties, he still was speechless. What communication anyone on the ship had with him was by means of signs, and that necessarily was limited. He took his meals with those who shared the officers' mess. Although it evidently was unfamiliar to him, he was quick to observe and to imitate the table etiquette of his companions.

Only Everson was not surprised at his appearance. The lieutenant kept his counsel and waited.

Word of the mad act of MacKechnie went abroad through the ship, spread by the men of the watch. Among the

sailors, superstitious after the manner of their kind, grew a hostility to the strange man, an enmity that became more and more pronounced as the hours brought to the cruiser no relief from the battering of the elements. So strong did the feeling grow that Lieutenant Everson feared for the safety of the man, and told Polaris of it. Thereafter the son of the snows constituted himself a bodyguard for the stranger in his wanderings about the ship, and remained with him as much as possible. Zenas Wright, too, watched over his prize with the jealous zeal of a proper scientist.

Not for worlds would the explorer allow this living conundrum to come to harm until he had solved him. The old man continually plied the stranger with English words, pointing out to him their equivalents and seeking to encourage speech. For, unless the man might be taught to talk, Zenas felt that his chances of learning more of him were slim indeed.

To all of those advances the man answered with smiles only. He was very courteous, extremely good-natured, but beyond the ring of silence which he had drawn about himself, he would not or could not go.

Everson was little surprised, although he was mightily angered, when, on the third day following the death of MacKechnie, he was waited upon by a delegation of his sailors with a demand that the stranger be sent from the ship. They did not ask his death—merely that he be set adrift in one of the cruiser's small boats. A sea was running in which such a craft could not survive for two minutes.

Shamefacedly, but sullenly, the men listened to the stern rebuke of their commander. When they had left him