



***LUIS
SENARENS***

***FRANK READE
JR.'S SUBMARINE
BOAT; OR,
TO THE NORTH
POLE UNDER
THE ICE***

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CHAPTER I. THE NEW INVENTION.

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A report had gained extensive circulation that Frank Reade, Jr., of Readestown, U. S. A., had brought out a new invention.

This rumor spread far and wide, and created tremendous excitement.

Everybody to-day is deeply interested in the marvelous mechanical productions of this young prince of invention.

The son of Frank Reade, himself a noted inventor, Frank Reade, Jr., came honestly by his talent.

Almost a boy in years, the young inventor occupies a place in the annals of fame much to be envied by any of our progressive American youths.

Tall, handsome and affable, he was a conspicuous figure anywhere, and always popular.

Readestown was a handsome little town, merging into a city, and founded by the senior Reade.

Here Frank Reade, Jr., had established his shops and machine works for the special construction of his inventions.

But, as the opening lines of our story intimates, Frank Reade, Jr., had produced a new invention.

Yielding to inquiry, Frank Reade, Jr., vouchsafed the information that it was not like any previous inventions.

The electric air-ship had played its part, but this time Frank had decided upon a radical departure from his previous effort.

"And is it true, Mr. Reade," asked a neighbor and friend, "that you will take Barney and Pomp with you upon this projected new trip of yours?"

"It is," replied Frank, with a smile. "Indeed, I could ill afford to spare two such faithful fellows."

As it happened the parties mentioned stood by and within hearing.

One was a powerful black, short and sturdy, with a genial countenance.

The other was a genuine full-bred Celt, with broad mug and shrewd twinkling blue eyes, and hair as red as the glow of an autumn sunset.

"Begorra, I knew well Misther Frank wud niver lave me at home!" cried Barney, with a comical grimace; "there's the naygur, shure it moight be him!"

"Don' yo' flattah yo'sef, yo' big l'ish chump," returned Pomp, politely. "I jes' reckon Marse Frank pay mo' 'tention to me dan he eber do fo' yo'."

"Hurroo! Wud ye hear ther Afrikan talk!" cried Barney, derisively. "Shure, ye'd think Misther Frank cudn't invint widout him!"

"I jes' reckon dat de man wha' invented yo' neber did no mo' wo'k," retorted Pomp.

"To be shure av that, naygur," replied Barney, "'twas so good an' foine a job he niver cud betther it."

Everybody laughed at this.

Barney and Pomp were always digging at each other, though really the warmest of friends.

"Well, Frank," continued the neighbor, "when will you reveal to your friends the nature of your new invention?"

"Now," replied Frank, with a smile.

"Indeed?"

"I mean it."

The neighbor was surprised.

"What may it be, then? A new kind of flying machine?"

"No," replied Frank quietly, "it is far different from that. It is nothing more than a submarine boat."

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes."

"Where will you go with a submarine boat?"

"To the North Pole."

"Under water?"

"Exactly. As yet nobody has succeeded in reaching that coveted point. Now, I propose to attempt it in a novel manner. If I cannot get there over the ice, I shall go there under it."

His listener was astounded.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, with a deep whistle, "that beats me!"

"If you will step this way I will be glad to show you the new boat!"

"Of course I will."

The neighbor, whose name was Alexander Harmon, followed Frank through the big gate.

Across the broad yard they went to the high arched door of a long brick building or store house.

Frank threw open these doors.

Harmon beheld a wonderful sight.

There upon stocks was the submarine boat.

In all his life Harmon had never seen the like.

He had been a sea captain once himself, and knew the lines of a boat well.

But he had never seen anything more beautiful than this.

"Upon my word, Frank," he exclaimed, "you have outdone yourself!"

"I think the Explorer is built on good lines," said Frank, modestly.

"You are just right."

The Explorer, which was the name given the submarine boat, was a long, cylindrical craft, with a sheer-pointed bow, carrying a huge steel ram on the end, shaped like a knife.

"The hull is of solid steel," said Frank. "But, though strong and tough, not too heavy."

The submarine vessel tapered off in the stern to the shape of a fish, while upon the shelving deck or whale-like back were fins or plates of steel.

"The fins keep the boat steady under water," said Frank.

A platform, with a railing extended along each side of the craft, with a gang-ladder leading up to the hurricane deck and pilot-house, which was upon the vessel's bow.

Here a search-light was placed.

"Step into the pilot-house," said Frank, "and I will endeavor to explain to you how the boat's machinery works."

Harmon at once complied.

Frank closed the door behind him.

They were in a sort of vestibule made of plates of steel, with a curious shaped pump and lines of hose visible.

"When the boat is submerged," said Frank, explanatively, "and we wish to go out upon deck, we simply step from the

pilot-house into the vestibule, closing the doors. The water is then let in and we open the door and walk out. When we come in we enter this vestibule, close the door, and the water is pumped out. Then we can go back into the pilot-house safely.”

Harmon looked astonished.

“Ah, yes!” he cried, “but please explain how you can walk out on the deck while the boat is under water.”

Frank smiled.

“There are diving suits,” he said, pointing to several hanging up. “We put those on. The knapsack on the back is the storage reservoir for chemically manufactured air, which keeps us supplied for hours under water.”

They passed now into the pilot-house.

Here were the steering apparatus and the nautical instruments common to all vessels.

The trimmings and fitting of the boat were superb.

From the pilot-house they descended into the cabin.

This was a long compartment elegantly furnished with the finest of appointments.

Staterooms adjoined and electric lights were upon every hand.

A door led out into a vestibule as from the pilot-house and thence to the railed platforms.

Bull’s-eye windows were seven in number on each side of the vessel.

“But how do you make the vessel sink?” asked Harmon.

Frank led the way down in the vessel’s hold.

“Here are the dynamo rooms,” he said. “All the electrical machinery is here. Just aft there are large chambers which

we fill with water when we wish to sink, and when we wish to rise the water is expelled in a few seconds by the action of compressed air.”

A few minor points were explained by Frank, and then the inspection ended.

“Wonderful, indeed,” agreed Harmon, as they finally emerged into the yard once more. “I have never seen or heard of its like. It is all ready to launch, I suppose?”

“Perfectly.”

Just back of the building was a deep basin of water, connected with the river by a canal.

Large doors could be thrown open and the Explorer quickly launched upon the waters of the basin.

“When will you make your start for the North Pole?” asked Harmon.

“To-morrow,” replied Frank. “The launch will occur at nine o’clock.”

“All Readestown will be present.”

“I shall be pleased.”

“Ah!” said Harmon, with a sigh, “that recalls to my mind, Frank, that barely five years ago my brave boy Roger met his fate in that awful icy waste. May I ask of you a favor?”

“Certainly.”

“If you can find his bones there will you bring them home to his sorrow-stricken father?”

“Of course I will!”

“God bless you!”

Frank knew that Alexander Harmon had set his life upon his handsome son, Roger.

He knew well the story of the lad’s fate.

He had gone to the Arctic on a two years' whaling cruise with his uncle Ezra Barton, in the ship Solitaire.

One day while out in the whale boat with four of the sailors Roger Harmon had lost the ship.

A fog shutting down prevented his finding his way back.

That was the last seen of Roger Harmon and his companions.

All efforts were of no avail.

Five years had passed.

He had not returned, and his father had given him up.

Frank knew this story well.

"Let me give you a ray of hope, Mr. Harmon," he said, with feeling. "I may be able to find your son alive."

But the old man shook his head.

He did not credit that.

"Five years have gone!" he said.

"Ah, but that is nothing," declared Frank. "In that mighty unexplored wilderness he might be ten years in getting back to civilization."

Far and near had spread the report that the Explorer was to be launched upon the following day.

At the appointed hour a great crowd was on hand.

Frank's only companions and crew on board the Explorer were Barney and Pomp.

He took a fond farewell of his wife, and stepped upon the deck of the submarine ship.

Then he gave the sign to the workmen.

CHAPTER II. NORTHWARD BOUND.

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The stays were knocked away, and the submarine boat shot down the ways.

Into the waters of the basin she plunged and floated.

A handsome craft she was, revealed to the gaze of the interested spectators.

Cannon boomed and the people cheered.

It was a great day for Readestown.

Frank waved the United States flag and Barney in the pilot-house set the course of the Explorer out into the river.

First, however, the Explorer was allowed to plunge beneath the waters as an experiment and an exhibition.

She was a success in every point of view.

Down the river she glided and soon left Readestown far behind.

The course to the sea was uneventful, and we will pass over a lapse of time to find the Explorer forging along at a rapid rate of speed through the Atlantic off the coast of Newfoundland.

Barney managed affairs in the pilot-house.

Frank looked after the chemical air supply reservoirs and the electrical apparatus.

Pomp, of course, was the master of the culinary department.

But the darky was well qualified in other branches, and was ever ready to relieve Barney or Frank either.

The Explorer was a fast sailor, and cut her way through the waves at the rate of twenty knots an hour.

Many sailing craft were encountered, and all were seemingly amazed at sight of the curious boat.

One day a terrific storm came up.

The waves ran mountain high, and the wind blew terrifically.

An ordinary vessel would have had enough to do to live in such a sea.

The Explorer was a fine sea boat.

But Frank Reade, Jr., did not like the idea of being tossed about so violently.

“Open the air-chamber, Barney!” he cried. “We’ve had enough of this!”

“All roight, sor!” cried the Celt.

He proceeded to obey with alacrity.

The Explorer instantly sank.

The water was not more than fifty fathoms deep here, but as the submarine boat touched the bottom not a particle of the rude storm going on above could be felt.

The search-light was turned on, and a startling sight was revealed.

All about was smooth, white sand, and deeply buried in this, not one hundred feet distant, was the dismantled hull of a vessel.

“‘Clar to goodness!” cried Pomp. “Does yo’ see dat, Marse Frank?”

“Ah, there are many such monuments as that in these waters!” said Frank. “These are the fishing banks, and just such storms as the one going on above have sent many a craft to the bottom!”

“Begorra, that don’t luk much loike a fishing vessel, sor!” said Barney.

Touching a lever, Frank caused the Explorer to glide forward a little ways.

The search-light was full upon the wreck, and every detail of the craft could be plainly followed.

Frank saw that Barney was right.

The craft was far from being like that of the fishermen.

Its queer shaped hull and high decks fore and aft showed it to be of the Spanish galleon type.

There was no doubt but that this was an old-time ship which had lain here perhaps for a century.

Frank was at once interested.

“Well, here is a find!” he cried; “for aught we know this may be one of the treasure ships!”

“Massy sakes! Jes’ let dis chile git on him armor!” cried Pomp. “I done fink dat I laik fo’ to visit dat ship!”

“Begorra, I’ll sthay an’ watch out fer sharks if yez want to go,” said Barney to Frank.

The young inventor very quickly made up his mind.

“Upon my word I’ll do it!” he cried. “Get ready, Pomp. Perhaps we’ll make a find.”

The darky was delighted with the prospect.

He was quickly ready.

Going into the vestibule both put on their diving suits.