ALBACORA

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Memory of

Daniel Merriman

Crew Member on
the maiden voyage
of the R/V Atlantis

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Trustee, 1944-64
Honorary Trustee &
Corporation Member,
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♦
Oceanographer, Writer,
Editor, Fisherman,
Educator, Mentor

Woods Hole
Oceanographic
Institution

Daniel Merriman.

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The Search for
the Giant Broadbill

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The Search for
the Giant Broadbill

by **EUGENIE MARRON**

Edited by Roger Kahn

Random House

New York

1989
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FOREWORD

The sport of big-game fishing holds a dangerous fascination that has only one parallel elsewhere in life. Getting involved in it is like falling into the clutches of a jealous lover. From the day the involvement starts, your time, your thoughts, your energy and your money must all be dedicated to a single consuming cause.

Once I devoted years to mastering techniques in painting and sculpture. Today I am a painter who does not paint and a sculptor who does not sculpt. I fish.

"It's terrible," insist my friends, and even my mother. From the walls where they hang, the characters in my pictures seem to point accusing fingers at me. But I am very happy. My husband, Lou, and I have found a way to follow our first love, the sea, not idly or wastefully, but for a purpose. Together we fish for science.

After a lifetime of hard work in the oil business, Lou became financially independent some years ago. But his final achievement of business success left him with neither an aim nor an outlet for his creative urge. Scientific studies of the great fish have helped satisfy both needs.

Fish safaris probably sound glamorous, but there is a good deal more to them than sheer romance. Ever since our first expedition, nearly everyone I meet has greeted me with the same opening line: "Oh, what a glamorous and exciting life you must lead. On your next trip couldn't you find room for a hairdresser?" (Or a doctor or a lawyer or a gin rummy partner, or whatever else the questioner thinks he does best.)

I have a standard answer. I say, "Glamour, no. Excitement, yes. Sorry, I can't use you."

But that first question is only a teaser. The tough ones follow fast. Where do you go? What do you catch? What do you do with what you catch? When? How? Why?

I am pleased and flattered that people want to know. I hope this story provides them with the answers.

ALBACORA

The Search for
the Giant Broadbill

CHAPTER

1

The ocean welcomed us without the dancing spray of whitecaps or the blinking of reflected stars. At four o'clock in the morning, as we set out to find the giant broadbill swordfish, the sky was dark and the sea was cold. All that the ocean offered the seven people who were gathered on our rugged fishing cruiser, the *Explorer*, was the strong and unmistakable odor of iodine. Yet that odor was inducement enough.

This was in June, but not like any June at home in New York City. The *Explorer* was running out of Iquique, a Chilean seacoast village almost 1,500 miles below the equator, which lies upon a barren strip of land, hard pressed between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. The seasons, of course, are reversed

in the Southern Hemisphere, and June in Iquique is raw and damp and cold.

I was shivering as I looked from the deck of the *Explorer* across the black and rolling sea. I had padded myself against the cold in a heavy checked hunting shirt, a hooded parka and even long red woollies, but the morning's bitterness had nothing to do with my shivers. It was the excitement of what I knew must lie ahead.

The *Explorer's* destination was the Humboldt Current, which carries cool water through the Pacific from as far south as Antarctica and harbors some of the most magnificent fish in the tides. Great marlin leap up from the Humboldt. The fighting broadbill thrives in its chilly flow. Within its current swims almost every form of marine life—from the smallest sardine to the largest whale. For thousands of miles the Humboldt is rich in oceanic life and at one point, along the Chilean coast, the riches flourish beyond belief. I believe that spot is the crossroads of the fishing world and, since I'm a "fishwife," who is delighted to match her husband's tremendous enthusiasm for big-game angling, I know it is the most exciting place I'll ever see.

I had been fishing from Newfoundland to Denmark for three decades at the side of my husband, Uncle Lou, known somewhat more formally in business circles as Louis E. Marron, Chairman of the Board of the Coastal Oil Company of New Jersey. We had set rec-

ords, won trophies, taken an active part in the growth of heavy-tackle big-game fishing, and helped light-tackle fishing grow into a major sport. We had gone from casual tuna chasing to high-pressure international competition. But in all of our experience the trip out of Iquique was unique. "Uncle Lou" and I had planned it to provide a meaning and a climax to our years at sea. The broadbill and the marlin promised exciting fights for both of us, but for the two scientists we had included in our party they promised a great deal more. The scientists wanted to study every game fish we could catch, and on this trip the *Explorer* was more a laboratory than a fishing boat.

To reach the Humboldt we had been sailing west. When I looked beyond the wake I saw tiny points of light flickering through the haze that sat about Iquique. Soon the lights and the haze disappeared, and our only contact with reality came from the rhythmic throbbing of the engine and the ocean slapping ceaselessly against the prow. I saw nothing but black night. I don't know how long I stood at the rail staring blankly, but when I finally looked up I was surprised. The sky was touched with pale gray streaks. Morning birds swept against the grayness. Sometimes hundreds of birds soared in a group, like airplanes on some bleak mission. Gradually, as the streaks of dawn rose further, the birds came by the thousands, twisting through formations too complex for me to grasp. There were all kinds

of ocean birds in the sky: somersaulting cormorants, swooping gulls, gliding pelicans; and, high up above the rest, stately white albatrosses were drifting. Far off, where the gray blotted out the horizon, shadowy waves slowly lifted and rolled toward me. It was then that I felt an overwhelming loneliness. Riding into that great sea was almost holy, like walking alone into a dark and ancient cathedral.

Dawn broke without warning over the Chilean mountains. Fiery holes burst through the huge black curtain, and the water answered with blazing reds and golds. Loneliness—and peace—vanished. “Hey, Genie,” someone shouted. “How about breakfast?”

Over eggs, Lou and Hedley Doty, the photographer we had engaged for the expedition, talked eagerly about this first day’s business. “How many cameras in all?” I asked, pointing to a pile of equipment that might have honored a photo studio and looked particularly imposing in the *Explorer’s* compact dinette.

“Eleven for stills,” Doty said. “Rolleiflexes, Contaxes and Leicas. Then we’ve got three cameras for movies.”

“Today’s show is going to start with the *WaWa*,” Lou announced.

Doty looked perplexed. “What’s a *WaWa*?” he asked.

“That aluminum skiff we’re towing,” Lou said, almost impatiently. “The natives around Iquique named our skiff ‘*WaWa*.’ It means baby. We want some action

shots and catching marlin from this skiff could do it."

"Well, that should be easy enough," Doty said.

"Now wait a minute," Lou said. "That just starts the excitement. Genie or I will jump out of this boat into the *WaWa* the minute we spot a big billfish. Then we'll hook the fish and try to land him. I'll call out and tell you where to point your camera."

Lou was not displaying ego. He has caught thousands of big fish and has come to know the patterns of their battle tactics. Still, Doty seemed doubtful about the whole thing. "You mean you're going to catch a big fish in that?" he asked.

"Sure," Lou said. "We know what we're doing. We'll get them. Don't worry."

Lou did not bother to emphasize how much real risk would have existed had we been any less skillful. If anything went wrong even six senses would be barely enough to save anyone in the *WaWa*. Without effort a broadbill can ram his bill through a strong man's chest. Not long ago one smashed his bill through a Danish beachwood hull that was two and one-half inches thick. Another split a thinner hull and drove on through the spine of a fisherman. Marlin have impaled themselves on boats bigger than our *WaWa*, thrusting their swords into one side and out the other. These fish are big, strong and tough, and they fight like gladiators.

"Today we aren't going to worry about the time ele-

ment," Lou resumed his instructions to Doty, leaning back from breakfast coffee and sounding like a seagoing Cecil B. de Mille. "For the movies, we aren't interested in boating the fish. All we want is to make them jump. We'll be giving them lots of line and letting them think they're free, and if we lose them . . ." Lou paused and gulped in an old fisherman's reflex action. "Then we lose them," he said finally with resignation.

Doty nodded. He would never have a better chance to take his pictures because in another day Luis Rivas, our chief ichthyologist, would arrive and start urging us to boat every fish in the sea for dissection, measurement and analysis. "We ought to get some pretty good stuff," Doty said.

"Pretty good," Lou echoed. "Listen. We're going to get the greatest films of fishing ever. You've got the run of the boat. Work anywhere you want. Topside. Harpoon pulpit." Lou pointed quickly toward an uncomfortable perch. "Anywhere at all. We're going to run this boat right over those fish and stay over them. Keep that camera trained on where I say the fish is coming up. You're going to see the wildest, bravest fighters in the world." Lou's enthusiasm at sea is boundless, but this time, at least, his words were to seem reasonable enough before the day had ended.

There were seven of us aboard the *Explorer* and there promised to be six battle stations. Walter Gorman, the *Explorer's* captain and an outboard-racing cham-

pion at one time, agreed to run the outboard on the *WaWa*. Mario, an Iquique villager, rode along to help with the leader used when the fish was brought alongside. Gus, Mario's brother, climbed to the crow's-nest of the *Explorer*, the better to look for billfish. Howard Thuet, our fishing guide, took the wheel of the big boat; Doty, of course, was to take pictures and Lou intended to tell him where, when and at what to shoot. I was the seventh member of the group and for all I could tell my permanent station was the galley. As the only woman aboard, I definitely did not want to make a fuss, but just the same I hadn't traveled halfway down the world to scrub coffee percolators.

When we were forty miles offshore, I heard Howard call. "Blue water," he shouted. "Looks good." The men rushed up the ladder to the deck. I rushed to finish the breakfast dishes, and I had just about reached the percolator when I heard another shout. "Hey," Walt Gorman was yelling. "Hey. Take a look at this sea." I couldn't look from the galley so I ran up the steep steps to the open stern of the *Explorer*. Before my eyes there stretched a scene of primal violence such as I had never even imagined.

The ocean was boiling with little fish, anchovies as far as I could tell, which were leaping and splashing and struggling to survive. From above, clouds of voracious birds attacked them, but the anchovies could find no safety diving deep. Whales, shaped rather like big

black submarines, were rising from below, devouring thousands of anchovies with tremendous swallows. It was awesome. "Talk about no place to hide," I said, as much to myself as to anyone else. But Lou was close enough to have heard me.

"Call this rough?" he wanted to know. "It's just the law of survival, Genie." Then he was off, shouting at Doty, "Take this, man. Get it on film."

To a scientist or to a bomber pilot, it might have been interesting to watch the different birds at work; but watching only made me want to shudder. The laws of nature are not tempered by mercy.

From way up, big albatrosses were diving like rockets, their six-foot wings spread wide to guide them down. Pelicans were peeling off from orderly, almost formal, V-formations. Cormorants—guani birds, the people of Iquique call them—were floating and plunging for their fish like surface divers. Ballerina birds pranced across the sea on tiptoe, scarcely scarring the surface in their dainty search for food. The fish were jumping ten or twenty times their own length in frantic efforts to escape, but all around the *Explorer* birds were rising from the sea with wriggling fish clutched securely in their talons. As I thought of what must have been going on below the surface, I felt sorry for the little anchovies. Even as I did, I knew that the feeling was unwarranted. I am certain that whenever anchovies

close in on their prey, whatever it may be, they are no different from the fiercest bird or cruelest whale.

It was hard to look away from that massacre but when I finally turned I saw something that provoked in me a different but no less acute feeling of horror. Doty was standing, fascinated, a movie camera at his side and no camera of any sort in his hands. "You'll never see anything like it again," I said. "This could be a colossal movie."

"No it couldn't," Hedley said quite calmly. "Not in this light. There's too much haze for movies; no matter what filters I use, I know the pictures just won't come out."

"How about still shots?"

"Maybe there's light enough," Doty said. "Maybe not. You won't get anything very clear."

I rushed down to quarters for my own camera, then back to the deck where I began to click full speed. By the time I had taken as many pictures as I wanted, two rolls it was, the *Explorer's* course was carrying us away from the anchovies and I was the only person aboard with a photographic record of what we had seen. The haze perhaps robs my pictures of sharpness and clarity, but some of the impact does manage to come through.

After my flurry of photography I wanted to pause for breath before slipping back into the galley again,

but the Humboldt Current is too full of life and death to allow anyone much time for rest. From the stern, I looked out at our wake and at the shiny teaser that was bobbing saucily fifty feet behind us. I was thinking about marlin and trying to breathe deeply when long snaky tentacles broke the surface and wrapped themselves around the teaser. Abruptly my deep breaths gave way to a gasp. "Oh, Walt," I cried. "That's a giant squid." Mario, with his quick eyes, had seen it, too, and he moved into the stern saying, "*Dos, dos.*"

As I stared, I understood. There was not one squid out there, but two, and two sets of flailing seven-foot tentacles were fighting to grasp the teaser, oblivious to everything except wild greed. We were all proud of our hand-made chrome teaser. Happily, it was absolutely indigestible, even for a squid, but that was small consolation when it disappeared amid the churning, thrashing tentacles.

"Can you handle giant squid?" Mario asked me. Before answering, I picked up a large set of tandem hooks. "This will fix them," I said.

Perhaps it was to square accounts for the teaser, or perhaps it was just to stay away from the coffee percolator for a few more minutes, but at any rate I decided that Mario and I ought to get ourselves a squid. Quickly, Mario and I threw baited hooks over the stern. Then, in spite of the speed of the *Explorer*, the squid closed in with rapid spurts, pointing their tentacles as they

moved, and clawing the bait. Other squid joined the battle. They were strange, unpleasant shapes that smacked of nothing so much as horror. They were ugly and dangerous and fierce. "One struck," I shouted in excitement. "I gaff him," Mario muttered intensely. "You bring him near, I gaff."

As the squid moved closer, I gently pulled the line from which the live bait were swimming, drawing the little fish closer to the boat. The squid followed and Mario repeated, "I gaff him." I continued drawing in the line, very carefully, and the squid continued following until both the live bait and the two squid seemed to be hovering alongside of our stern. The hovering did not last long. Mario suddenly lashed the water with his gaff and a small ocean shot up around us. The strike had been true and the gaffed squid was frantically working his jet syphon. A shower of ink splashed Mario and me; then came more ocean. I was drenched but absolutely unconcerned. Next to me, Mario was hauling a writhing squid onto the *Explorer*.

Stretched out on the stern deck, the squid ran almost fifteen feet from the tips of its tentacles to what passes for a head. In the iodine sea all squid seem ghastly white, but on deck this one was different. It was no color and all colors—first red, then white, then fading into countless other shades. Two monstrous eyes appeared to stare coldly from the big forward lump, and though I could not see it, I knew that buried some-

where in the snout was a black beak, sharper and more powerful than that of an eagle. Fortunately, Mario had done his gaffing skillfully. The fluctuations in the squid's color grew less pronounced before my eyes, and within minutes they stopped completely. The squid was dead. Lou slapped it with his open hand and the imprint remained as though inked on the creature. I felt almost enthusiastic about returning to my galley.

"Quite an ocean, Genie, isn't it?" Lou said, enthusiasm quite apparent in his voice, as he came down the ladder after me for a chat.

"Ocean?" I said. "This isn't an ocean out here. It's a three-ring circus."

Lou grinned. "The circus is only beginning," he said.

CHAPTER

2

When Lou and I first agreed to work with the University of Miami's Marine Laboratory four years ago I doubt if we even suspected how deeply science would eventually engross us. When Luis Rivas of the University first told us he needed billfish for his research, we had nodded but we may not have fully understood. Just overcoming the big broadbill within the rules of fishing seemed to be sufficient challenge at the time; just dueling the giant albacora for sport was our crusade.

"Albacora" is the word that resounds most often through all the dusty streets of the village of Iquique. It is Spanish idiom for broadbill swordfish—those ferocious monsters that are infinitely hard to hook, but

just as hard to hold once they have bitten. During battles, albacora combine the leaping fury, which has made striped marlin famous, with the fatiguing tenacity of bluefin tuna, specimens of which have fought fishermen for more than twelve hours at a time. Even as we sailed from Iquique that June morning, Lou and I were not so scientifically detached that we could really abandon our lifelong pursuit of Bosco, the fabulous king of the albacora.

Every fisherman in the world knows that Bosco swims somewhere in the ocean, defying the best of us to catch or even track him down. Boat captains have told me that the legend of Bosco originally sprang up in the Bahaman island of Bimini where the natives told outlandish stories of a mighty blue marlin. In most of the tales there was a vivid picture of Bosco, the angry marlin king, rearing up with his great rust-colored bill, smacking the bait, taking the bait and every inch of tackle with him, and then driving off again to freedom. But in Nova Scotia anglers paint a different image of Bosco. The hardy fishermen of Wedgeport near the Grand Bank are certain he is a bluefin tuna, too relentless a fighter for even the finest sportsman to outlast, who idles at a point called Soldier's Rip. At Cabo Blanco in Peru the old ocean guides vow that Bosco is a black marlin, sleek but bigger than any fish they have ever seen. Lou and I cling happily to another theory. We believe that Bosco roams the Humboldt near

Iquique. To us, at least, Bosco, the mightiest fish in all the sea, is an albacora.

There is some fancy in the legend and Lou loves to tell it, but on dry land Lou is without many fancies. He is a practical, level-headed businessman. The metamorphosis which occurs when he embarks on the sea is not surprising. Fishing has a special significance for my husband.

Lou worked hard and at thirty-seven, after having built up a solid and substantial business, the Coastal Oil Company, he suffered a severe coronary attack. It was a trying time, four full months before he was out of danger and able to think once more of the future. "Suppose I play a quiet game of golf from time to time?" he asked his doctor.

"Then I won't be responsible for what happens to you," the physician said.

"What about fishing?" Lou asked.

The doctor undoubtedly thought of catching sunfish from a rowboat or sleeping near a lazy country stream. "When you're all well again," he said, "you can go fishing."

As soon as Lou got back on his feet, he went fishing—but not exactly in a rowboat. That very year he went fishing on the high seas, pitting his skill and strength against giant tuna, tenacious bulldogs of the sea that sometimes weigh up to 1,000 pounds. For whatever medical significance it may have, Lou's heart has been

fine ever since. In fact, several years ago when the physician finally learned what Lou had meant by fishing, it was he who almost suffered the coronary.

Lou had always been an enthusiastic fisherman, but it took the heart attack to turn him into a single-minded one. As for myself, I think I caught the fever in the late twenties from my very first dose of fishing for tuna with heavy tackle. Then gradually I began to develop a knack for handling light tackle. Here at last was a sport in which I could match myself against Lou—a sport in which any woman ought to be able to match her man—for the whole theory of light tackle cries for skill and delicate technique rather than brawn. Some lines can stand 200 pounds of pressure before they break. Using them against fish has always struck me as being only one degree away from using depth bombs. Six-thread line, which snaps at twenty pounds of direct pressure, is more sporting. At that, light tackle does not leave you quite as helpless as it may seem.

Once an expert swimmer challenged the value of my favorite line so persistently that I could not resist throwing out a counter-challenge. "You're a pretty fair swimmer," I said. "I'll bet I could reel you in on six-thread tackle." I did not bother to point out that I'd seen this done before at a sportsmen's show in New York.

The swimmer started laughing. "You've got a bet," he said. He was still poking fun at light tackle when we met at a pool several days later. I had brought six-

thread line and the swimmer had brought a harness. He put on his gear, harness and line were attached, and then the swimmer jumped into the water.

After ten minutes of struggling against my line, the man was quite close to collapse. He was dragged out of the water, and not before a few substantial shots of brandy was he restored. Twenty pounds of pressure, applied correctly, can be an almost irresistible force.

My own affection for light tackle is undoubtedly connected, too, with an affliction similar to arthritis, but never conclusively diagnosed, which affected my hands for several years. With my weak hands heavy tackle was out of the question, but light tackle enabled me to continue fishing until the condition finally disappeared. By that time, of course, I had come to prefer light tackle over anything else. The whole subject of light tackle still fascinates me. That morning running out of Iquique, with the big and varied scientific job ahead of us, I must confess I was looking forward more to whatever chances might arise for light-tackle fishing than to unraveling the mysteries of the sea.

Off the stern, behind the *Explorer*, we had placed several tows (resembling oversized cornucopias) in order to gather plankton—tiny living matter consisting of larvae, eggs and such—which is the basic food of the ocean, and since the feeding cycle begins at sea, the fundamental food of all life. Our goal was to sift plankton from the sea; enough plankton to occupy two

scientists at Miami University for a full year. There is a real and exciting possibility that a palatable and nutritious substance eventually may be created from plankton. When that day comes the world's food problems may be solved. For Lou and me in the *Explorer*, though, more immediate problems lay at hand. Captain Walt Gorman suddenly sniffed a few times and announced, "I smell broadbill." Lou started sniffing. "By golly," he said, "so do I." Then Mario pointed ahead of us and shouted, "Albacora!" A great black sickle cut the surface. During the six weeks of our expedition, we sighted ninety-six albacora. None was as thrilling as the first.

"Hedley," Lou called. "Get those cameras into action. Come on, man." Then, in the next confusing moments, Lou seemed to forget his intricate plans for shooting movies. Walt Gorman stayed at the wheel of the *Explorer*. No one moved toward the *WaWa*. "Come on," Lou shouted up at Walt. "Let's close in on that fish."

I had been standing topside when Mario spotted the albacora and I tried to hurry down the same route that the men take when they are in a hurry. Passing up the chrome ladder, I planned to hop onto the bait box, then step onto the lower deck. Since the boat was pitching considerably, I lay down on my stomach before sliding my legs over the topside. Unfortunately, my legs could not reach the bait box. Stomach down, fanny up, I was

stuck. My legs thrashed and my stomach hurt and I screamed. "Help," I pleaded. "Lou. Anyone. Get me down." I might just as well have held my breath. With albacora near, no one had time for a lady in distress.

Eventually, it was Mario who condescended to rescue me. He grabbed me around the middle and tugged. I landed safely on the bait box. Then Mario turned his attention back to the fish. "There," he said, pointing ahead of us. "See, there." Knifing through the bright blue water, about 100 feet in front of the *Explorer*, a dorsal fin and a tail showed clearly. They were a good distance apart but they were both part of the same fish. It was a giant albacora.

Knighthood never flowered on a fishing boat, and even under less dramatic conditions I would not have been overly shocked at Lou's neglect of me. What with the albacora, I could not blame him at all. If he had been stuck and I were pursuing an albacora, Lou probably would have had to holler for a good long time before I'd have been willing to drop the fish and go to my husband's aid.

As it was, everybody was watching Walt Gorman maneuver the boat around the fish. Slowly, the *Explorer* circled toward the broadbill while Hedley prepared to start shooting. There was majesty in the graceful weaving movement of the great fish, but Hedley was waiting for a strike—a strike that never came. Suddenly the fins disappeared beneath the surface. We knew what

that meant. The fish had spurned our bait. He was sounding, diving deep below the surface. There was nothing left for us but to wait and hope that the fish would rise again. Sometimes we had waited an hour before a fish surfaced or we stopped hoping that he would. Mario, high in the crow's-nest, scanned the sea, but the big fin never came back into view.

"Never mind, we'll get another one. They're here. That's what counts," Lou insisted, trying to raise our spirits.

Soon Mario was shouting again. "*Marlina*," he yelled. "*Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco*." "Doty," Lou shouted at once, "train your cameras on those babies. Let's get some real action this time."

If nothing else, the albacora's escape seemed to have impressed Lou with the importance of following his own prearranged plan for getting the pictures. All he allowed himself was the luxury of one single ad lib. With marlin at hand, Lou moved to Doty's side, as he had intended, and started to bark out directions. But abruptly Lou changed his mind. "I'm not a camera director," he yelled. "The hell with this. Walt, come on into the *WaWa*. Let's get those fish." Howard took the wheel of the *Explorer*. Gorman, a tall, powerful man, and Lou, not as tall but no less massive and muscular, jumped into the tiny *WaWa* at the same time. The *WaWa* bobbed but stayed afloat. Walt threw out the towline and started the outboard motor. The skiff can go twenty-five

miles an hour; it jumped away from the *Explorer*, riding up to the crest of an enormous blue swell. Within seconds, it was half hidden behind huge rolling waves. If Lou was going to play tag in the skiff with a school of marlin, I felt I had a right to some fishing too. I made one concession, though. I stayed away from very light tackle and selected a rig of stronger line that tested at fifty pounds of pressure. I was anxious to fish but this was no time to match light tackle against some heavy adversary. As I scooted to the stern of the *Explorer*, lugging my fifteen-thread outfit, I expected only to haul in fish one after the other, or, possibly, simply to beat them off with a club. Lou's situation was entirely different.

Our stern was low in the water and sometimes a swell completely cut the *WaWa* from my sight. Hedley, standing with his legs set wide apart on the bridge and shooting pictures at a furious clip, could see the *WaWa* continuously, but I could only spot it often enough to get a vague idea of what Lou was doing. Walt had sped the *WaWa* out ahead of the five biggest marlin and Lou was trolling, trying to make the marlin see the bait. He trolled successfully. All five of the marlin saw the bait at once and lunged for it with fierce swipes of their bills. After the marlin struck, Lou dropped his bait back toward them, which was the only thing he could do.

There is a real trick to baiting billfish. Usually, when one of these monsters attacks, he first strikes out with

his bill in order to stun his victim. Then, after some seconds pass and the victim seems to be stunned, the billfish moves in again. The ordinary reactions of a trout fisherman, trained to reel in just as soon as he feels a strike, are quite valueless at sea, for a quick reeling in generally nets battered bait and nothing more. The billfish expert lets line run out after the first strike so that the bait appears helpless as it lies in the water. Only later, when the billfish grabs the bait and runs, does the angler strike and set his hook. There is no firm rule on how long to wait before setting the hook, since each strike is different from every other. These are questions of judgment—matters of individual skill and talent. That is the sport.

At any rate, there was Lou, who is certainly a skilled and talented fisherman, with these five fish; Howard at the wheel of the *Explorer* trying to keep the boat close to the fish; Hedley trying to keep his footing and take pictures; and I trying to watch all that was going on and catch what fish I could on the side. In almost no time a marlin whammed his bill against my bait. I waited. The marlin struck again. My timing was fortunate and I hooked him securely. As soon as he felt my hook in his mouth, he took off so fast that my reel smoked. Everyone was watching Lou in the *WaWa* and suddenly I realized that I might wreck the plan and ruin the movie. "Suppose," I reasoned, "my fish cuts

Explorer—Looking from stern to bow

OPPOSITE: A surfacing striped marlin appears wild eyed

The fighting chair of the *Explorer* with view of the trap door and roller for hauling in of giant fish

One of Mrs. Marron's many records. A 321-pound striped marlin caught on six-thread line, June 8, 1954, off Iquique, Chile

Still the world's record. this broadbill swordfish was caught by Lou Marron on May 7, 1953, off Iquique, Chile

over to where Lou is. Suppose our lines get tangled up." That might lead to a two-reel comedy, but what the University of Miami had requested was something more dramatic: fighting fish and screaming reels over the Humboldt.

If any trouble loomed, I decided, I'd simply have to cut my line and let my marlin go. As it developed, it was not my fish that caused the trouble.

Lou had hooked one of the five eager marlin, and as he played out his line, the fish ran wild. Thinking of the movie, Lou let him race wherever he wished and after a while, for no reason anyone knew, the marlin started bearing down on the *Explorer*. He moved as swiftly as a destroyer and it was only seconds before he was flying upward over the stern, bill pointed straight at my middle.

"Howard," I shouted. "Look out."

Howard had seen. He spun the wheel hard, but he might just as well have dodged a bolt of lightning. The marlin rocketed in and then leapt straight across the corner of the stern where I was standing. I ducked, face up, and for a flash, one of the marlin's huge red eyes was glaring at me. I could have touched it. Then he was back in the water again and I was thinking of the marlin's bill. It could have rammed through me with the greatest of ease.

After the leap, Lou's marlin went into a deep dive

that seemed to carry him directly under the *Explorer*. Aside from being skewered on the marlin's bill, nothing could have been much worse for me. The maneuver made it seem almost certain that Lou's line and mine would tangle. I leaned far over the low transom of the *Explorer* and plunged my rod deep into the water. There was a chance I might keep my line from fouling Lou's if I could keep my own line deep enough. My reel was in free spool—running out without resistance—and I kept my rod in the water for two minutes, not knowing where my own fish was or what he was doing. Finally, Lou's fish cleared away and I scrambled back, red-faced, to a normal fishing posture. Then I looked at my spool. There was still line on it, but was there a fish on the end of the hook at the end of the line? I started reeling in. My line went tight. The marlin was still out there and I had a fighting chance.

All the way from the *WaWa* Lou's frantic roars carried to the *Explorer*. "He's probably worried sick about me," I thought, "the way his marlin leapt over the stern of the *Explorer*." I cocked an ear to listen closely and I could make out every word Lou said.

"Hey," he was bellowing, "Doty. Did you get a good picture of that marlin? Did you get that terrific jump?"

"I think so," Doty shouted back.

"That's the way," Lou called. "Keep it up."

"I'll try," Doty shouted.

"Right," roared Lou.

"Anybody worried about me?" I cried.

Both Lou and I landed our marlin. Mario gaffed mine and hauled him aboard. Later on we weighed him in at 318 pounds, the heaviest marlin any woman had ever caught with fifty-pound test-strength line. There seemed to be no end to my adventuring on this three-ring circus day, but a runabout in the *WaWa* was the one thing I wanted most to try. While Gus was cleaning the marlin blood off the stern deck, Mario again cried out, "*Marlina!*" About a hundred yards to the north, I saw a set of marlin fins. I caught Walt Gorman's eye, then glanced at the *WaWa*. Walt understood. Without a word, I grabbed a nine-thread outfit, which could withstand thirty pounds of pressure and which Lou had used to get his marlin when he was in the *WaWa*. Then I hopped into the skiff. Walt followed, Gus grabbed the towline and we were off. Walt gunned the outboard and I could feel the power throb.

We sped toward the sleek marlin fins, over the rolling ocean forty miles off the Chilean shore, borne up only by a flying peanut shell. It was fascinating and frightening. First a wave lifted us high, and then we went skidding down into a trough where indigo walls of water closed out all the world. Again we were up on another wave, riding up to the pinnacle now, with the rim of

the world suddenly opening out before us. In the distance the beckoning horizon, the fisherwoman's wedding ring, lay still, steadfast and enduring. No, this was not frightening after all. It was exalting.

But we had come out for marlin, and as Walt slowed the little boat, I set about preparing my fishing rig. Walt turned us into a fine trolling position, where the bait would be certain to cut across the marlin's line of vision. The marlin were behind us now, their sharp fins cutting clean and straight through the busy waters. Walt Gorman is not an emotional man, but something moved him very deeply for that moment.

"Lord," he said, and his voice was a little strained. "What a sight!"

Occasionally well-fed marlin make themselves difficult by spurning bait, but these fish must have been starving. I never even had to drop my bait back after the first marlin struck it. He tore off with it at a breakneck clip. My hook was a spur to fury in his mouth, and he rocketed off so swiftly that I had to loosen the drag of my reel to keep my line from snapping. He leapt high, cutting across the hazy sky in a long, graceful arc, his body lustrous blue and silver under the pale winter sun. I watched the marlin jump and jump again. He burned up the reel and we burned up the motor. Then I tightened my drag and went to work.

As I rode in the *WaWa*, I was perched so close to the water that I might just as well have been riding a slab

of plywood. "What happens if he runs at us with that bill?" I shouted to Walt Gorman as my battle with the marlin began.

"We dodge," Walt shouted back. "We're the ones with the motor."

At first the marlin seemed to want no part of us. He leapt repeatedly, greyhounding and tail-walking. Then, running out the line, he sounded. I reeled in with as much force as I dared exert on that nine-thread line. The fish suddenly went wild. Rising out of the sea three hundred feet astern, he shot into the air, rocketing straight up more than twice his own length. He hurled himself so high so quickly that he could not bend in time to arch back into a dive. His body hit the ocean with a tremendous splatter. "My God, Walt," I called. "That was a bellywhopper. We've found a bellywhopping marlin."

Again the fish leapt up beyond all reason and again he hit the surface with a splash. He was closer now and jumping like no fish I had ever seen. Then the marlin came at us.

"Walt," I shouted. "Dodge. Come on, man. Dodge!" Down low in the water I knew that we were helpless against the powerful bill. All at once I thought of every story I had heard of anglers rammed to death by angry fish. The marlin came closer, closer. "Gun it," I shrieked. "Walt. Get us out of the way." But Walt Gorman made no move to gun the motor. The marlin leapt

out of the sea, his bill aimed at our boat. Still holding my reel, I ducked.

Both Walt and I were lucky. Our bellywhopping marlin misgauged his jump, sailed over the bow of the *WaWa* and hit the water on the other side. I was sweating now. "Let's get moving," I said to Walt.

To my amazement, Walt was laughing. "He damn near landed in your lap that time, Genie," Walt said. "Let's hope Doty got that shot."

"Next time he'll probably split the boat in half," I said.

"He won't get the chance," Walt said.

Well, he had the motor and I had the rod, and I suppose that ought to be enough for any fishing party. We were working for good pictures, and what better ones could there be than those of a small boat battling a big fish? I looked back toward the *Explorer*, feeling a sensation of pride. I was concerned and curious about Lou's reaction to my unexpected getaway in the *WaWa*. The look I took at the big boat was long, careful and disappointing.

"Walt," I said. "They aren't watching us at all."

"I know," Walt said. "They've spotted something else." He was turned toward the *Explorer*, too.

"An albacora."

"No," Walt said, looking hard. "It seems as if they're running right abreast of a whole school of whales."

"Not again," I said. "No more whales."

"They look like fifty-footers," Walt said, just as if

he hadn't heard me. "You know there have been some whales around us ever since we left that mess with the birds and the anchovies a long while back."

"Well, just steer clear of them, will you please," I said.

Walt was finally beginning to sympathize with me. "All right," he said, "we'll keep our distance." Then I saw the whales myself. There seemed to be hundreds of them all over the ocean: big, black storage tanks in blue water. They really frightened me, but had no effect whatsoever on the marlin that was jumping on the end of my line. The marlin dashed right into the middle of them, leaping and twisting wildly.

Walt looked at me, but said nothing. We both knew it was either follow the whales or lose the marlin. "Let's get after him," I said, with more enthusiasm than I felt. Walt smiled and nodded. I realized that it was unlikely any whale would come up directly under our skiff, and except for that we were safe, since Walt with the outboard could navigate far more speedily than any whale. We took off into the school of monsters, and though the three-hundred-pound marlin now looked like a midget, he continued to display a giant's strength. He tore out my line and made Walt keep the *Wawa* flying. The whales were oblivious both to our *Wawa* and to the marlin that was fighting for his life, but there was that awful danger that one might rise under us or lash us with his tail.

Walt Gorman was now all business. Watching for

whales every instant, he ran a zigzag course. I free-spooled just enough to keep my marlin on the line. Carefully Walt picked our path through the whales. My line spun out crazily. Then suddenly we were safe beyond the whales and riding not very far from the *Explorer*. I tried to pick up line but there was such a belly—or sag—on my line that I made no headway. Walt gunned the motors full. It was fifteen minutes before I had complete control of the marlin again. "Let's stay away from the whales," I said to Walt. Within a minute we both heard Lou's voice from the *Explorer* bellowing a directly opposite command.

"Get right on top of them," Lou roared at Howard Thuet.

"Right on the whales?" Howard called back, his voice just as loud in his surprise.

"Sure," Lou shouted. "Doty, get into that harpoon pulpit. Can't miss from there."

Hedley Doty had been a full commander in the Royal Canadian Navy during World War II. He had seen action both in the North Atlantic and the South Pacific. But his wartime experiences could not have been more trying than the next few minutes. From the *WaWa*, both Walt and I had a perfect angle on Doty's ordeal.

Obedying orders, Doty crawled out on the harpoon pulpit, a projection forward on the boat, and gradually worked his way toward the end of it. When he had arrived, his legs straddled the boards as frantically as a

cowboy's legs would straddle a barebacked bronco. His left arm was wrapped around a stanchion. With his right arm, Doty held the camera up in front of his eyes and began cautiously clicking away. The *Explorer* pitched and rolled in the surging sea and once or twice Doty seemed to slip. A fall into the teeming ocean would have been no joke, and each time Doty fought desperately until he had regained his balance. He was right on top of the whales, as Lou had wanted, and was doing a gritty and determined job. Then one of the whales rolled directly under the *Explorer*. The boat lurched upward. The bow came completely out of the water. Hedley's uncertain perch was suddenly twenty feet over a whale's gigantic back. I think I screamed, but Lou somehow managed to keep thinking about the pictures. "Shoot it, Doty," he yelled. "What a terrific shot!" For the time being, though, Doty had abandoned photography. As the bow rose up and that monstrous whale appeared beneath him, Doty grabbed the stanchion with both his arms, clung to the camera with no more than a thumb and abandoned all ideas of taking pictures. He hung there, staring at the whale and probably at a series of vignettes covering his entire life as well, for what seemed like an age. Then the whale slipped off to one side. The *Explorer's* bow slapped against the surface and Doty, shaken but unhurt, was safe again. My mother in her home on the New Jersey shore probably heard my yell of relief when that whale slipped away.

Walt Gorman was laughing wildly. Lou's bellows carried clear from the big boat. It was a hysterical moment for everyone, but how completely hysterical only Doty can say.

Strangely, perhaps instinctively, I managed to keep the marlin on the end of my line throughout the frenzy. From my low vantage point, I had been able to see my fish, the whales and Hedley, all in varying degrees of activity and excitement, with almost every glance. I had to gear my own emotions down abruptly when my marlin stopped jumping and went into a sulk.

Like a human being who has had enough of a bad thing, a fish sulks on occasion. My marlin sulked after chasing himself all over the sea and then dove down some hundred yards. With light tackle, there was no way in which I could force him to the surface. "Cut the motor," I said to Walt. "This may take a while." When the motor silenced, the marlin was swimming aimlessly about down below. I tightened the drag and let him tow the boat. Tugged along by the line, we rode silently and before long I was convinced that the marlin was not as aimless as he had seemed. He was taking us further and further from the *Explorer*.

"When do you want to call it quits?" Walt asked me.

"At the Panama Canal," I answered.

Only ten minutes later the marlin surfaced and began making a reverse run, rushing straight toward the stern of the *Explorer*. As a recent target of an oncoming

marlin, I felt sympathy for anyone who might be lolling in the stern of the boat. I remembered the red eye and the enormous bill quite clearly. Fortunately, no one else came away with quite the same memory, because my marlin changed his course enough so that the run carried him across the wake of the big boat but did not bring him very close to the stern. Still, even this was no bargain. Lou had a line out from the boat with a fresh marlin hooked onto it. As my fish plunged across the wake of the *Explorer* it seemed inevitable that he would tie Lou's line and mine into a whole series of knots.

"He'll shoot us, Walt," I shouted, as we were dragged past the stern of the *Explorer*. "If we tangle his line, we'll be shot."

"He'll gaff us," Walt said. "I don't think he has a gun."

We both waited for the momentary tug on my line that would herald the snarling of lines.

"I suppose we can swim for it," I said.

"Sure," Walt said. "Lou will forget about the whole thing in a year or so."

Fortunately, this was a miserable day for marlin. I'm not the smallest target in the world, but two of them had missed me so far. Now, my marlin and Lou's marlin failed to get together on their signals. After we had waited for more than a minute, both Walt and I felt free to exhale. We were not tangled with Lou's line after all. Back and forth my marlin dragged the *WaWa*,

twisting through a frenzy that no living thing could sustain for very long. My line was taut and my nerves were even tauter but I knew it was only a matter of minutes. The marlin exhausted himself before he exhausted me, and in a surprisingly short time I had him right alongside the *WaWa*. He was tired now, his sleek body shining and glistening in the blue water. "What a beauty," I said to Walt. "Isn't he something?"

"Damn right," Walt said. "This is one baby we're not going to mark. We won't have to bother to gaff him."

"What do you mean?" I said.

Instead of telling me, Walt showed me.

He grabbed the marlin's bill and tugged with every bit of strength and leverage he could command. The fish, all 287 pounds of him, came up across the *WaWa*'s bow. Almost all of the marlin landed squarely on me. I went down to the bottom of the *WaWa*. Walt looked at me and laughed. "Help me," I cried. Instead he started the engine and sped over to the *Explorer*. There, everyone was waiting, and this one time everybody noticed me, or as much of me as was visible around the edges of my fish.

There is nothing really funny, glamorous or even faintly romantic in being underneath a flopping fish. After strong hands had separated the fish and me and I had climbed back aboard the *Explorer*, I longed for a few moments to catch my breath. From the stern I limped toward the cabin.

"Was that you catching a fish or was that a fish catching you?" Howard said. I kept on walking.

"That marlin sure pinned you easy," Lou said. I did not permit myself so much as the hint of a smile.

"Never mind, Genie," Walt said. "Next time you'll probably pin him."

I thought I would never reach the cabin. The men could joke, but only I had been underneath that fish. My body ached and my nerves were screaming. I gathered all my remaining energy, and without looking, I blissfully hurled myself onto the couch. Then I shrieked. In some unknown reservoir of my body, I found the strength to jump back to my feet. I stared at the couch. Stretched out on it were five raw and bloody steaks. One of the boys had put them there for defrosting without bothering to notify me.

It was almost two o'clock, and now that I had been forcefully reminded of food, I realized that everyone aboard must feel famished. With the sort of sigh I had learned to master in the first years of marriage, I abandoned my dream of peace, gathered up the steaks and walked down three steps into the main galley. My first job was lighting the stove, a routine action back home in New York but a remarkable achievement on the *Explorer*. Secretly included in the design of the *Explorer* I suspect there must be a match-wetting device, known only to Lou. At least I don't believe I have ever seen a dry match anywhere on the boat.

The galley on the *Explorer* cannot possibly be mistaken for a Hollywood kitchen. It contains a small stove, a small sink under a small porthole and a small icebox. It is, let me emphasize, a small galley. From this room a passageway leads into the head, and when the head door is open it takes only one pitch of the boat to shift you from kitchen to head. To get canned goods out of the galley, you have to go down on your knees and open a cabinet under the sink. Then, when the boat lurches to starboard you probably bang your head against a pipe, and as it lurches to port you fall backward into the head, with nothing to protect you from the roll. It would be wrong to imagine that the *Explorer's* galley has no compensations, though. Working in it is a constant challenge and cooking a meal there always produces an irrepressible sensation of conquest. Steaks are a good case in point.

We use propane gas for the cooking, but somehow the burners never seem to get quite hot enough to sear the steaks properly. Part of the challenge of the *Explorer* is in meeting situations like that, and the steaks really posed no problem. I put them in a pan on the cool fires and continually mop the pan with paper toweling. That way the fat and juice that oozes out of the steaks is mopped up and the steaks, flush against the hot metal of the pan, cook a rich, even brown. It is not like cooking over a charcoal fire—this business of lifting the steaks, mopping the pan dry and then putting the steaks back

until they have cooked—but when I finish the process the results are usually worth the effort.

“Lunch,” I shouted, cheerily, after I had set the five steaks out on the table in the dinette. Then I got ready to duck.

“Lunch,” I shouted again. “Come and get it, everybody.” No one seemed to have heard.

“Steaks,” I bellowed. “Steaks on the table.” Then I climbed up to the deck. Lou was fighting another marlin. Doty was taking pictures. Everyone was busy. Only two hours, and two fish later, did we finally sit down to eat the steaks. By that time they were cold and dry. Probably they would have been better raw. For once, no one complained about the food and not merely because I was waiting to strangle the first man who said, “Kinda dry, aren’t they?” On the sort of fishing day everyone was enjoying, it would have been graceless to complain even about hard tack and salty water. This must have been the finest single fishing session any expedition anywhere ever had. Five striped marlin lay in the cockpit of our boat. Not one of them weighed less than 285 pounds and there were at least two world records in our haul.

At four o’clock the sun was lowering, and twelve hours after we had put out to sea, we turned and headed home. Lou and I slipped below decks. I was numb and fatigued from excitement. “I can’t wait, Lou,” I said. “I just can’t wait to get to weigh them in.”

Lou reached into a cabinet and produced a deck of cards. "Let's try a little gin rummy," he said. "That'll make the waiting easier."

"Fine," I said. But during the game I had to keep looking out through a porthole. Birds were following us in—hundreds of birds—hoping perhaps that we would dump some food into the water. They swarmed through the sky around us and, over the pulsing of the engine, their raucous cries came, harsh and clear.

"Lou," I said, quietly, "how do the birds know that the boys are cleaning up? Before we even throw the old bait overboard they follow us in droves."

Lou looked up from his cards. "What?" he said.

"The birds, Lou. They make me feel as though we're a kind of garbage truck. Aren't they bothering you?"

Lou shrugged his shoulders and smiled across the table at me, a smile full of warmth and love and friendliness. "Gin," Lou said.

CHAPTER

3

Lou and I were not the only American couple on that June expedition to Iquique. Jo and John Manning, two internationally-known anglers from Southern California, were in our group although they fished for the most part from another boat. Lou and I had arranged with the Grace Line for shipment of the *Explorer* from Brielle on the New Jersey shore all the way down to Iquique. Still, since the fishing was so extraordinary, we decided to charter a local boat so we could both fish at the same time. The boat was called the *Marlin*, which came complete with a Chilean captain named Santiago.

The Mannings are old friends, and fishing from two different boats inevitably led us into friendly competi-

tion. After we landed our five marlin, Lou wasted no time barking the good news into the *Explorer's* radiotelephone so that the *Marlin* would find out about our luck. Marlin are not as difficult to catch as albacora, but boating five in one day is almost incredible, even on the waters of the Humboldt.

"How are you people doing?" Lou barked into the radiotelephone, after he had contacted the *Marlin*.

"Not bad," John Manning's voice came back. "We've got a couple of marlin."

"Say," Lou said. "That's pretty good. A couple of marlin, eh. Nice going."

"Yeah," Manning said, "it's been a pretty good day. We're heading in. We think we've done all right, Jo and I. The marlin ought to run 200 pounds apiece."

"Well," Lou said. "That's really nice, John. Congratulations."

"Thanks," Manning said, "and by the way, Lou, you and Genie got anything big? Got any albacora?"

"Not a one," Lou said.

"How about marlin?" Manning asked.

"Oh," Lou said. "Marlin. We've got a few. They look as if they all weigh about 300 pounds."

"What?" Manning shouted.

"Yeah," Lou said. "About 300 pounds. We've got five of them that size. I said five. See you ashore." Then Lou rang off. He had topped Manning but he wasn't

fooling me. The marlin were fine, but we'd come out for albacora.

People who are only casually acquainted with deep-sea fishing usually think that marlin are the finest of big-game fish. In action, the marlin is an eye-catcher.

On the sports pages of the Sunday newspapers and on television sport shorts, the angler in the picture almost always struggles with a high-jumping, back-flipping marlin. Nowhere in the ocean is there an acrobat to match the marlin, but actually there is a great deal more to outmaneuvering an angler than mere jumping. The marlin is the flashiest of fighters and pound for pound one of the most determined. However, he is usually a surface fighter and often helps the fisherman by jumping himself into exhaustion. Men and women who have roamed the fishing waters of the world never scoff at marlin, but neither do they hold the fish in awe. To the oldest fishing pros and to the smartest fishing amateurs, albacora, the broadbill swordfish, is the prize of all prizes. Hooking and catching an albacora is an art set apart. It is the most involved, complex and intricate feat in the whole great sport of fishing.

Generally, the man in the crow's-nest spots the broadbill first as they swim just under the water's surface, dorsal and tail fins sticking up above the waves like sickles. After one shout of "Albacora," the crew of a fishing boat flies into frantic activity, perhaps as whalers

scurried upon hearing, "There she blows," or even as sailors raced after the warning of an approaching submarine. When albacora has been sighted, a fishing boat goes wild.

Initially, the angler's problem is arousing the albacora's interest in the bait, usually small active fish swimming at the end of a 150-foot line. Most fish are extremely near-sighted, judged by human standards, and albacora are not an exception. It is no small trick to maneuver small bait fish across an albacora's line of vision, while at the same time keeping far enough away so that the boiling wake of the boat does not make the albacora plunge down deep below the surface. After many trials and many, many errors, I have concluded that albacora are most likely to notice bait brought twenty-five feet in front of them at a point just underneath the surface of the ocean. But time and time again I've been on boats in which the captain carefully steers a course to bring the bait close to an albacora when suddenly the fish decides to turn. Then the bait trails past the albacora's tail and the whole careful procedure has to be started all over again.

Even when everything works perfectly the baiting operation is a stern test for all hands. The fisherman or fisherwoman works from the stern of the boat, holding the 150-foot bait line in one hand and a reserve loop of fifty feet of line in the other. When a hungry broadbill sees the bait, he dives toward it, going under

with a splash of his tail fin. The boat must move slowly now and the reel must be in free-spool so that the bait meets no resistance as it swims. The albacora whams out with his bill. "Strike," the fisherman shouts and quickly throws his loop into the sea. Now the angler sits at attention, watching the reel and waiting for the big fish to pick up the bait. Again the albacora whams, but he is more a killer than a feeder. The boat is out of gear, just sitting on the surface, waiting, and the albacora lashes at the bait, occasionally toying with it, or torturing it, if you will. The boat is stonily silent. Everyone watches the angler in the stern. Slowly line runs from the reel—ten, fifteen, twenty-five feet. It is too early for the angler to know whether the albacora is on the hook. More line runs off, still slowly. The quiet grows heavy and the fisherman waits. Then the line starts to run out in swift, erratic bursts. The reel whirls round at a suddenly faster speed. Now the angler knows. "Strike," he cries. The albacora is making a run. The captain throws the boat into gear and starts to move full speed ahead. The fisherman's line grows taut and he strikes again and again with all his strength. But the albacora has felt the taut line. He realizes he is hooked. All hell breaks loose.

Since albacora would rather kill than feed, it is almost impossible to hook one in the mouth. When the albacora whams at the bait with his bill, hooks often snag him in the fins or in the tail. Fish hooked like this

are called "foul-hooked," and they are far more difficult to keep on the end of a line than one that has bitten at the bait. Ninety per cent of all the albacora that have been caught are foul-hooked, which is why so many of them are never caught at all. Even alongside the boat just before gaffing, foul-hooked albacora have managed to break free.

It is a humbling thing to consider the tenacity and the courage and the brave hearts that albacora show in mortal battle. My ribs have been cracked and my hands have been rubbed raw in fights against them. Without a doubt they are king of all the deep-sea game fish.

Before we docked, we knew that John and Jo Manning would be waiting. But someone in the village of Iquique had heard Lou's radio message, too. Forty thousand people live in Iquique. From the *Explorer*, in the fading afternoon, it seemed that every one of them and several carloads of their country cousins were gathered at the dock to meet us. The Mayor was there leading a delegation of the local brass. No Roman legion coming back from Gallic victories ever received a more impressive greeting.

But as we reached the Iquique dock, I wanted neither greetings nor a crowd. My wants were three: a bed, a bath and, if someone forced my hand, a Scotch on the rocks. The boat pulled under a towering crane which we used to haul fish and fishing equipment twenty-five feet

up to the wharf. Unfortunately, the crane is not an elevator service for tired ladies.

"C'mon, Genie," Jo Manning called down from the dock. The *Explorer* bumped to a stop. "Come up here and face your public."

I was aching all over and I said nothing. I began climbing a perpendicular ladder in the sea wall, remembering with each rung that I was old enough to be a grandmother. In fact, I aged ten years with every step. Near the top, I felt a hand come to my aid. I looked up and saw that it belonged to Luis Rivas. He had arrived just a few hours earlier.

"Did you get specimens for me?" he asked eagerly. "Did you and Lou bring in any billfish?"

"Wait and see," I told him. "Watch the crane."

Rivas' eyes went wide as my 318-pound marlin came into view. By the time he had seen all the five marlin his eyes were bigger than saucers.

"No albacora, Luis," I said. "I'm sorry."

"We saw a big one, Rivas," Lou said, "but that was early in the morning. He sounded, and after that there were only marlin and whales."

"Are you apologizing?" Rivas said, surprised.

"Well, we saw Bosco but he sounded," I said. "We didn't even come close to catching him."

"Don't you know what you have here?" Rivas said. "Why, I'll be measuring and categorizing and working over these fish until two o'clock in the morning!"

"Fine," Lou said, grinning, "and don't bother about going to sleep. As soon as you're through, come back to this dock and we'll be ready to take off again."

Rivas laughed, the Mayor moved in to start congratulations, and Walt Gorman began setting up a cross-beam on the dock so that the five fish could be hung for a big picture. I left them all at the dock and hurried down the pier toward the town.

Iquique, an ideal port, had flourished when the demand for nitrates was higher some twenty years ago, before synthetic fertilizers were developed. It languishes somewhat now, although it does have a splendid fish cannery called Pescadora d'Iquique, which is partly owned by an American company. The streets of Iquique are showing signs of renewed life. Walking the few blocks uphill to our hotel, I passed a good many people, but I was thinking only that I wanted to sleep and wanted to do a lot more fishing. I was feeling very happy. Luis Rivas' enthusiasm was strong enough to make me feel that I had helped accomplish something that might really be worth while. I didn't delude myself. I'm a fishwife, not Madame Curie, and science or not, the bigger the fish I catch, the better I like it. But it was pleasant to believe that all the years I had devoted to a sport were bringing forth at least a little fruit. The next six weeks, I hoped, would be rewarding.

At the Hotel Prat, I ran up the stairs to what was

called a suite but was no bigger than a full-sized American bathroom. I hurried in and slammed the door. After one step, my feet flew out from under me and I fell heavily. Something exploded in my hip. I was too stunned to scream. I twisted over on my stomach. Pain knifed through my whole body. I groaned a little and then I muttered to myself between clenched teeth. "Damn it," I said. "There goes the fishing."

I was lying little more than a step away from the door, so by fighting against the pain and forcing forward on my stomach, I moved myself close enough to reach the door. Then I rested, trying to breathe deeply and wondering where "Uncle Lou" was, and if he was going to linger all night on the dock with Luis Rivas.

Standing as straight as I possibly can manage, I'm only five feet tall. Fishing has put muscles into my back but it has not lengthened my arms. When I reached up toward the doorknob, it was beyond me. I tried to rise, tried to draw my knees under me. The pain was maddening. I had to lie still for a long time fighting against it. Then I tried for the doorknob once again. Still it remained past the limit of my reach.

"God," I thought, "where are they all? What's keeping them? Where's Lou? What could hurt me as much as this? What have I done?"

I forced myself to keep reaching for the doorknob. The pains turned unbearably fierce whenever I moved, but I had to get help. I don't know exactly how long

it went on—these terrible waves of agony radiating from somewhere deep within my hip—but I think it was forty-five minutes after I had fallen that I got a hand up to the doorknob. I turned and twisted it and the door swung open, dropping me back in a heap. I had not screamed from any of the earlier pain but now, with the door open, I stopped fighting. I yelled so that my voice must have carried clear to the Humboldt Current. Within seconds Walt Gorman was bending over me, asking what was the matter.

“My hip,” I said. “I think I’ve broken it.”

“Wiggle your toes,” Walt said. “Can you wiggle your toes?”

I tried. “Yes,” I said. I made another test. “Yes, Walt,” I said, “and I can wiggle my kneecaps, too.”

Walt picked me up and put me on the soft bed I’d been thinking about all that afternoon at sea.

“I know I’ve cracked up something, Walt,” I said. “It hurts terribly.”

“There’s a local doctor named Sirvasi,” Walt said. “I’ll get him.”

I did not want to spend any more time alone. “Wait, Walt,” I said. “Where’s everybody else?”

“They’ll all be along soon,” he said. “I left the dock quick after I oiled and gassed up the *Explorer*. I was just going in to wash when I heard you.”

“I hope I can go out tomorrow,” I said. I started to get up. The pain came back again as strong as ever.

"I'm going to get Sirvasi," Walt said.

Getting the right doctor at night can be a problem for someone in the heart of New York City. In Iquique, Chile, I imagine it's impossible. Dr. Sirvasi was a very pleasant man. He looked at my hip and my leg, moved my leg a little, hurt me a lot, and probed and prodded with real interest for a considerable time. Then, he said sadly that he could not make the diagnosis. For one thing, he said, he had no X-ray. For another, he was a pathologist. But tomorrow morning, Dr. Sirvasi said, he would have just the man for me, Dr. Lombardy, the great surgeon.

"Surgery?" I said.

"Dr. Lombardy," said Dr. Sirvasi, stiffly, "is the foremost surgeon in all Iquique."

"Oh," I said. When Sirvasi had gone I shuddered, but not violently. Any sort of motion seemed to hurt.

Both the walls and the ceiling of my little hotel room were painted an even shade of green which had been inspired, I am certain, by the painter's abiding love for dill pickles. The only other place where I have ever seen a green like that is inside a pickle jar, and as a backdrop for a bed of pain, dill-pickle green is spectacularly unsuitable. But there was one thing to be said for that pale, ugly color. If nothing else, it matched my mood.

It is never easy for an active person to adjust to resting in bed, and for me it was particularly difficult. Not only was I fresh from the most exciting fishing day I'd ever known, but I was also disturbed by the knowledge

that the expedition was going to continue searching the Humboldt for huge albacora without me.

"If you can move your leg around, then nothing's broken," Uncle Lou was saying, long after Dr. Sirvasi had left. "Don't worry about it. It'll come along."

"What about tomorrow?" I asked.

"We're getting one of the chambermaids to come in and take care of you," Lou said. "Then this Dr. Lombardy will be around. The rest of us will be leaving at four A.M., same as we did today."

"You'll have to get someone else to cook steaks for you," I said, a little desperately.

"We'll manage," Lou said.

"I know," I said. "That's what I'm afraid of."

Jo Manning came in then, looking at me sadly and holding a small package in her hands. "A trophy for you, Genie," she announced. "A prize for catching the marlin."

I opened the package quickly. Inside was a bar of facial soap—a rare commodity in Iquique. I looked up in surprise. Jo was laughing and I started laughing, too. Silver cups are unavailable in Iquique. "That's the best soap," Jo said, "that Elizabeth Arden makes."

Jo is tall and dark and slender. I'm short, light-haired and compact. "Together," Lou had told us once, "you look like the long and the short of it." Jo has a way of making happy-talk, and within minutes she was able to get my mind off the pain in my hip, the pickle-green

walls and the fish I was not going to be able to catch. First it was soap, but before long we were all talking of old catches.

"Every so often," Lou said to Jo and me, "I like to have a battle with a tuna."

"Not me," I said. "I don't care for long fights. I know a man named Harry Ross who once spent a whole night bringing in a tuna. The tuna weighed 567 pounds from start to finish, but when the struggle was over Harry was seven pounds lighter than he had been when he started. I'd rather try a high-protein diet myself."

Lou laughed. "After the marlin," he said, "tuna are a wonderful change of pace."

"Change of pace?" I said. Then I turned to Jo. "He once foul-hooked a tuna near Bimini," I told her, "on a day when the tropical heat was terrific. He was using heavy tackle and the tuna, we later found out, weighed 600 pounds."

Lou interrupted. "It weighed 662 pounds," he said.

"Anyway," I said, "the fish went deep and Lou had to raise him up with brute force. He strained so hard the cords on his neck were standing out like hawser ropes. That was the only time I can remember being afraid to watch Lou fish. Then the rod snapped off and Lou had to hand-line the fish. The tackle cut and burned his hands but he kept at it. I think it was well over two hours when he finally whipped that tuna and, frankly, I don't think it was worth the struggle."

"You didn't catch the fish," Lou said.

"Any fish I don't get in two hours," I insisted, "deserves to get away. I'll cut him loose and go for another fish."

"Have you ever cut a fish loose?" Lou asked.

"No," I said.

Jo Manning and Lou started laughing all over again.

Soon Jo left to get a good night's sleep, Lou began getting ready for bed and I suddenly found myself shivering. Not until my teeth began chattering did Lou finally turn around.

"Hear something clicking?" he said.

"Yes," I said. "My teeth."

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I'm cold. This room is like a camp on Mount Everest." Then I stopped talking and went back to freezing to death.

"If there's one thing I can't stand," Lou said, with a wide grin, "it's clicking noises. I think we'll have to do something to warm you up."

"Lou," I said, quickly, "I may have a fractured hip."

He kept grinning and walked over to the dresser that I had been using. "Relax," he said, "it's been a wearing day for me, too." Then he began searching through the drawers.

"What do you want?" I said. "Just tell me what you want and I'll tell you where to find it."

"Got it," Lou said, proudly. "Got it all by myself."

I was wearing a nightgown with a frilly top that fit in perfectly with the bedroom décor of our duplex apartment on East 57th Street. Unfortunately, it also fit in with another aspect of our duplex: the central heating system. Turning from the dresser, Lou advanced on me, eyeing the nightgown and holding a crumpled conglomeration of clothing in his hands. "That stuff isn't warm enough," he said and suddenly he had my nightgown off.

"Ice," I shouted. "I'll turn into a cake of ice." But then he had a long woolen nightgown on me.

"There," he said loudly. "Is that better?"

"A little," I admitted. Then Lou went to sleep and I stayed awake amid roaring pain, raising my leg, twisting my body from waist to knee, twitching my toes and wondering whether my right hip would ever be the same. Shortly before four o'clock, when Lou and all the others awakened, I was wide awake, too. The difference, of course, was that I had not yet fallen asleep. But there was one consolation. While Lou prepared to rush off to the Humboldt, a maid arrived, apparently determined to cure me. This maid came complete with an electric heater, small, feeble, and yet, under the circumstances, absolutely priceless.

"Her name," Lou told me just before he left, "is Nervous."

"That can't be right," I said. "Nervous!" My voice had been quite loud. The maid turned around. She was a Chilean of part Indian descent—large and motherly.

Walt Gorman, second from left, Mario on Gorman's right with Gus. One of the scientists, extreme left, also lends a helping hand to board fish

Mrs. Marron. with Dr. Walton Smith and Howard Thuet.
fishing guide, taking a bathythermograph

Some young neighbors of ours at Puerto López, Ecuador

Market at Puerto López, Ecuador

Jo Manning with black marlin she caught

"Sí?" she said.

"Lou," I said, "I just can't call her that. Suppose I call her something more delicate, say, Nervious."

The woman looked at me again, her broad, open face wreathed in smiles. "Sí?" she nodded happily.

"It can't be, Lou," I repeated, "but it is."

"Take care of yourself, Genie," Lou said, almost gaily. "I'm sure the hip is going to be all right. I'm positive it isn't broken." Then he was gone and I was left alone with Nervous-Nervious, who spoke no English but was warm and comforting, and brimming with the best intentions. I addressed her by name as little as possible. Months later I learned that she had been christened Nieves, a beautiful Chilean word that means "snow," but by then it was too late. To us she had always been "Nervious."

Nieves called me "Niña" when she gave me breakfast and sponged me and got me ready for the coming of Dr. Lombardy. She definitely approved of both the sponging and the breakfast, but of Dr. Lombardy she was not so certain. Since she spoke no English, offering me medical advice presented a problem, yet she eventually got her ideas across. With great agitation she pointed to my hip and then to a wide brass bracelet which circled her own forearm just above the elbow. Then, straining a little, she moved the bracelet down so that I could see how it had left a black residue over her dark reddish skin.

"That's interesting," I said, with as much enthusiasm

as I could muster. "That certainly is an interesting piece of jewelry."

Again Nieves pointed to my hip and to the bracelet. I had no idea what it was all about.

Now she was growing quite excited and she actually poked my hip. "Ow," I hollered. She pointed to the bracelet and to her right hip. "No ow," she said.

"Yes," I said, "no ow. Why yes, yes, of course. Lucky you."

Nieves pointed to her other hip, then to her back, then to the bracelet. "No ow, no ow," she said, with what I finally understood was native pride. The bracelet must be some kind of native charm. Nieves extended her pantomime to imitate the walk of one suffering from rheumatism, and as she did she pointed at the bracelet in a concluding burst of passion. "No ow," she proclaimed for the final time.

"I understand," I said, aloud. "The bracelet is a charm against rheumatism. As long as you wear it, rheumatism will never strike you." I nodded graciously at Nieves and accepted the armband. As I put on the bracelet, her pantomime came to an end. It was true that Nieves had not the slightest trace of rheumatism or arthritis, but I doubt if her bracelet will banish the manufacturers of cortisone from the field. Even if the bracelet always worked, there would be one overwhelming drawback. With sleeveless dresses that black ring on the arm would be certain to show and have a dread-

ful cosmetic effect. But dear Nieves certainly was a comfort.

Later in the week Jo Manning and Walt Gorman were to learn of Nieves' skill in remedying a universal intestinal complaint, but that morning I was frankly delighted to have Dr. Lombardy take over, despite his ominous advance billing as "foremost surgeon in Iquique."

Many of my friends who are physicians tell me that patients are in the worst possible position to judge the skills of their doctors. Certainly when Dr. Lombardy worked his hands across my hip, I did not have a bird's-eye view of his professional technique. But there is a certain manner some physicians have that invariably inspires confidence. Perhaps some poor physicians can affect this manner, too, but I've found that I can often come to the correct conclusion about a doctor's abilities from the impression he makes on me. Dr. Lombardy at once seemed competent enough to cheer me even in my chilly pickle-green prison cell.

"I am certain that the hip is not broken," he said, when the examination was over, "but I think we should have X-rays to be sure. The ligaments are badly twisted and I want to be positive that nothing else is wrong."

"X-rays," I said, "in Iquique?"

"Yes," he said. "Perhaps not as good a machine as you find in New York, but one that we are grateful to have at all." Then Dr. Lombardy left to arrange for the

X-rays, and despite Nieves' continued skepticism, the prompt arrival of two men to carry me down the stairs was something that delighted me. Outside the hotel, the men put me into a taxi which I think was either a 1934 Ford or a 1933 Plymouth. The secret of surviving a ride in the rattletrap taxis of Iquique lies in holding on to the sides of these antique autos. Otherwise each bump may bash your head against the roof. The only danger in this system is that the sides of the taxis occasionally fall off, but I suppose that there is very little one can do anywhere on this earth that does not involve some element of risk.

The houses of Iquique are flimsy wooden frames last painted when the nitrate business boomed some time in 1939. But after a bleak and bumpy ride down many barren blocks, I suddenly saw a massive building, spotlessly white, which might have been a major hospital in America. It had been built for the people of Iquique by the government of Chile, but unfortunately the government had run short of funds once the exterior of the hospital was completed. The gleaming elegant building was woefully short of equipment inside. Still the X-ray machine looked like all other X-ray machines, and the presence of Dr. Lombardy was comforting.

I was hoisted to a large white table and my hip, so often aired, exposed and probed during the last few hours, was aired and exposed once again. Under Dr. Lombardy's guidance, a technician moved the big machine into place and speedily zeroed it in on target.

Then there was a buzzing sound, not unlike the buzz I had heard come out of other X-ray machines, but then again not exactly the same. This buzz seemed fainter and more distant. The machine buzzed perhaps four or five more times, still in that strangely feeble way, and then while I dressed as best I could Dr. Lombardy and the technician began developing the X-ray plates.

I don't know precisely how long it was that I lay there before I heard Dr. Lombardy cry out, but when he did I could not help but cry out myself. "Oh," I shouted. "It's broken. I could tell it was, from all that pain."

"Mrs. Marron," Dr. Lombardy said, "I am sorry. I cannot tell."

"What? Can't you read the X-ray?"

"It is not that, Mrs. Marron. I am embarrassed to say that there is nothing for me to read."

I felt a quick touch of terror which must have been evident on my face.

"It is nothing wrong with you," Dr. Lombardy said at once. "No, Mrs. Marron, it is not you at all. You see, Iquique is not New York. We have trouble here with electricity, with the power plant. The way the power plant is and the lines are, sometimes the hospital has enough electricity and sometimes it does not. Today I am afraid that it does not. The X-ray cannot take a deep picture and so I cannot tell if you have broken your hip."

Terror must have shown quite clearly in my face

again. "When will you be able to take an X-ray?" I asked.

"Right away," Dr. Lombardy said. "Don't worry. There is another X-ray machine at my friend's house, and he lives near the power plant. It is a smaller machine but the electricity will be strong enough." After another rocky ride the X-rays were repeated, and while his assistant worked to develop the second set of plates, I began wondering about Dr. Lombardy.

"Do you do very much surgery?" I asked him.

"Quite a good deal," he said.

"What kind of surgery?"

"Heart operations, brain, lung, abdomen, all kinds of surgery. One cannot be so specialized here as in a big city like New York or Santiago."

"How do you manage under these conditions?"

Dr. Lombardy smiled. "You do not ask how do you manage," he said. "You simply manage, and it is not so difficult as it would seem."

I nodded and Dr. Lombardy turned his attention to the X-rays. He was so unassuming that one might easily overlook the fact that he was a profoundly dedicated man who had chosen to practice medicine amid shocking poverty and pestilence. It was much more than an hour before my X-ray plates were finally ready for reading. Dr. Lombardy studied them carefully before announcing anything. "There is no break," he said, after what had seemed like half an eternity. "The ligaments are

sprained and you will need hot compresses for a long time, but the hip has not been broken."

"Thank goodness," I said.

"Here," Dr. Lombardy said, holding a plate out in front of him. "You can see for yourself. There is no break."

I am no expert in skeletal structure but I have a layman's knowledge of the human leg and pelvis. I saw a healthy leg and pelvis in the picture, but I also saw something else that looked ominous. "What in the world is that?" I asked Dr. Lombardy.

"You mean that massive shape?" he asked.

"Yes."

"That," Dr. Lombardy announced, "is part of the table on which you were lying."

"I don't understand," I said.

"At the hospital," Dr. Lombardy said, "there is not enough electricity for a deep picture. We were far from the power plant. Here we are close to the power plant and there is too much electricity. So we get too deep a picture. Too much X-ray, too little X-ray, that is the way things go here. You will get used to it."

My first inclination was to say, "You wanna bet?" But on second thought, I merely smiled and told Dr. Lombardy how grateful I was for all his attention.

Back in bed at the hotel there were more hours of waiting for everyone to return from the sea before I

could tell them the comparatively good news. Torn ligaments are intensely painful but they are not nearly as serious as a broken hip and now, with Dr. Lombardy out of the way, Nieves felt she could really take over. For some reason which no one at the hotel seemed to know, the water was not running in the bathroom. Nieves got water from downstairs, boiled it and trudged up to my room carrying two huge steaming kettles. She used one kettle to make hot packs, which eased my aching hip considerably. She used the water in the other to give me a bath, and I was actually feeling cheerful by the waning hours of the afternoon.

Then Lou came in. "I've got news for you," he said. "Your marlin record lasted the shortest time of any record I ever heard of."

"What?"

"Jo Manning," Lou said, "just caught a bigger one on fifteen-thread line. Much bigger. 345 pounds."

"Well," I said, trying to sound delighted. "That's what records are made for, you know. They're made to be broken."

Possibly my joy appeared confined. "Don't worry," Lou said. "You'll be up and fishing soon."

Shattered record or not, this was a time for sportsmanship and I made Lou bring me the bar of Elizabeth Arden soap. He had set off to invite Jo to a formal presentation ceremony when the door opened again. Mario and Gus entered side by side, smiling and ex-

cited and trailed by a strange procession of humanity. Mario and Gus were brothers. With them this time were four small children and one little woman, not much bigger than a child herself, who was obviously the mother of the *niños*. For a moment I wondered about relationships, but soon it was very clear that Gus was unmarried and that this was Mario's family. He had gotten halfway through with the introductions when Jo arrived. Mario stopped, beamed and waited.

"I hear you caught a fish, Jo," I began.

"Sí," Mario interrupted enthusiastically. "*Marlina. Grande marlina.*"

"I think there should be a prize for Mrs. Manning," I said.

Mario nodded violently. His wife and his four children nodded, too. Gus merely smiled and looked confused.

"Step forward, Jo," I said.

Jo grinned. She saw what was coming. "For catching a record marlin off Iquique," I announced, "we proudly present you with this valuable trophy." I offered Jo the soap.

"I am speechless," Jo said, stiffly, "and very touched." Mario's grin was enormous. The grins on the faces of his wife and children were enormous, too.

If I had let it go with smiling back at Mario, all might have been well, but I soon committed a social error. Thinking of the barren little houses I had seen on

the way to the hospital, I turned to Mario and asked him where he lived. At once his wide smile vanished. The smiles on the faces of his wife and children vanished, too. I had the uncomfortable feeling of having fed him a straight line. As Mario prepared to answer, I prepared to flinch.

"Soon me no house," Mario told me readily. He pointed toward his wife's considerable stomach. "Soon me *cinco niños*. Me wife, me brother, me mother-wife live with me. No house soon. *Muy malo*."

"Mother-wife," said Jo Manning, "that must mean mother-in-law."

"Is it a big house?" I asked him.

"No big," Mario said.

"How many rooms are in it?"

It took a while before Mario understood, but when he did, he told me that there were just three rooms for the seven of them. The problem, he explained at length, was this: the landlord wanted cash and so had put the house up for sale. Mario could not afford to buy the house. In Iquique, since business had been bad, so many houses had been permitted to fall apart from sheer rot that there was a severe housing shortage.

In what I hoped was intelligible Spanish, I asked Mario, "How much costs *la casa*?"

"Twenty thousand pesos," he said, hurriedly, like a man who has been waiting impatiently to deliver a sure-fire punch line.

I did some mental arithmetic involving the exchange rate. "Twenty thousand pesos," I announced. "Why, that's only two hundred American dollars. Why, we . . ."

From across the room, Lou anticipated me and flashed a devastating look. I caught myself and let the sentence hang.

"Jo," I said. "I've been married to this man for twenty-seven years, through good times and bad, but this is the first time that I've ever seen him as he is. Lou has a mean streak in him. Lou is a miser."

"Nonsense, Genie," Lou said. "Two hundred dollars is a fortune down here. If we gave it to Mario, there would be a line outside this hotel in ten minutes, like the lines that used to form when John D. Rockefeller handed out dimes."

"You see, Jo," I said. "He'll let Mario and all Mario's people end up destitute in the street. I should have suspected something like this."

"The way to handle the situation," Lou said, "is the way you handle any difficult problem. You make a business proposition. Now, let's see what sounds reasonable to both sides."

Almost thinking aloud, Lou began to offer business terms to Mario. "First," he said, "I'll double your salary." Mario had been getting one dollar a day so this was not as staggering a gesture as it sounds. But neither was it miserly. In Iquique, a dollar a day goes

a long way and puts one well up in the middle class. "Then," Lou said, "to make sure you keep on the job, I'll give you all the fish we catch. From now on all of the money the fish are worth, after Mr. Rivas is done with them, goes to you. You are now a capitalist. You'll own your own home inside of a month."

Lou, of course, kept talking, mixing a few Italian words he knew with English until the boys somehow understood exactly what he meant. Then Mario extended his hand, Lou shook it and Mario started laughing. Then Gus, the woman and the four *niños* started laughing, too. After a while, Mario began singing a Chilean song, in a voice which made up in enthusiasm what it lacked in quality. Gus and the women and the children all sang along with Mario. The noise was thunderous, but none of us had the heart to ask them to be quiet. Then someone rapped heavily on the door and we had the silence that we wanted. "The manager," I said. "Now we'll all catch it for sure."

When the door opened the biggest Chilean I had ever seen filled the doorway. "Hi, Mario," he announced, ignoring Lou, Jo and me. "Hi, Gus."

"What's this," Lou asked, a little loudly.

"I am called Carlos," the Chilean boy said. "I want to work for you, please. I help Mario and Gus because I speak much English." He grinned, exposing three—and only three—large white teeth. "It is two years I

work in New York," Carlos said. "Mario and Gus say I come help you on boat."

"You worked in New York City?" I said.

"Sí," he said. "In New York." Carlos rolled the letter "r" around in his mouth, making "York" sound like a gargle.

"Did you like America?" I asked. "Did you like New York?"

"Sí," he said. "Verrry much."

"What did you like best?" Lou asked.

"I like Thanksribbon," Carlos said, promptly.

"What?" Lou asked.

"I like Thanksribbon. You know, turkey and scruberry sauce."

Lou was not really a miser, I decided. Our boat was full, but Carlos was hired to work for the Mannings.

CHAPTER

5

~~22~~ The week I spent in my hotel room had compensations. I had a chance to be a first-hand observer of life in the village of Iquique.

One sample of its oddities and oddments was seen near the pier where the *Explorer* docked. On a small plot of grass close to the shore rested a huge white bone, semicircular and at least twenty feet from tip to tip. "The jawbone of a whale," Walt Gorman had once told us.

Closer to the hotel a different aspect of existence in Iquique flourished. Almost unbelievably comical romances went on almost all day long. They did not involve people, of course. The lovers were diligent, hard-working burros.

Every noon when the sun burnt through haze and

brought a little warmth to Iquique, Nieves carried me to the balcony of the Hotel Prat and put me in a chair where I could get some fresh air. I sat on the balcony looking over the *prado*, watching the life of Iquique ebb and flow. Burro love was a major portion of that life.

Sound is the keynote of all burro romance. When boy burro meets girl burro, there is neither nuzzling nor whispering intimate messages. When his passions are aroused, the male burro simply opens his mouth wide and howls. Demurely, the female acknowledges with a cry that is only slightly less deafening. So it goes for many minutes. But burro love in the *prado* is doomed to remain incomplete. The people who own the burros cannot spare the time and so they virtually drag the little animals apart. Then the howls of passion turn to howls of hopeless love, but still they grow no softer.

Across the street from my balcony was the one movie house that served Iquique's 40,000 people. The same picture was playing all that week, and on the marquee was a title considerably longer than any I could remember ever having seen before. One afternoon when Jo Manning returned early from fishing, I asked her what she thought the title meant. She reads Spanish much better than I can.

"Let's see," Jo said slowly, staring across at the marquee. "The title says, 'Where Went Yesterday? Where Went Today? Where Goes Tomorrow?'"

"What?"

"Don't ask me what," Jo said. "I'm only telling you what the marquee says."

"Of course," I said, "I've got it. I know what that title means."

"Is it an American picture?" Jo asked.

"Sure," I said. "Don't you catch on? That must be *Lost Weekend*." It was!

From the balcony the center of Iquique lay before me and the *prado*—the little park which is the romantic center of every Latin city—was directly below. It was the only bit of green in all Iquique. Beyond, the box-like houses, bleak and naked to the eye, were depressing to see. But in the middle of the drabness and decay two houses close together stood out clearly. One was painted bright blue and the other was done in shocking pink. "Two floozies," I commented to Jo. "I wonder why only those two houses are painted?" After checking into local customs, Jo returned with a full explanation.

"May 21," she said, "is the big holiday in Chile. It commemorates a big sea battle between Peru and Chile. This year the government threatened to fine anyone who didn't paint his house in recognition of the day. But it didn't work. It's more expensive to paint a house than pay the fine, so most people paid and passed up the painting. The men who live in the blue and pink houses had the money to paint and were so damn proud of it, they wanted to make sure everybody knew."

"I think I like the unpainted houses better," I said. "They aren't pretty but they fit in, the way they look so weather-beaten and gray, hemmed in by the gold and bronze hills."

Sometimes a whole year passes without a heavy rainfall in Iquique, but in winter the sky is overcast for days. The clouds resemble an eider-down blanket covering a sleeping city—an interpretation I first believed to be original with me. "When the sun rises," I told Jo, "the blanket even has a gold satin border." Then Jo explained that my thought was not entirely novel. It seems "Iquique" is the ancient Inca word for "sleeping city," and hundreds of years before I was born the Incas had seen the city exactly as I saw it now.

While we were chatting on the balcony, Jo told me what was troubling her most at the time. "I think," she said, as delicately as she could, "that it is called the *tourista* sickness."

"I know just what you mean," I said. "I got the same thing from the food in Mexico once, Jo, only there they have a more expressive name for it. The Mexicans call it Montezuma's Revenge." Jo laughed, but bitterly.

Our talk of *tourista* sickness had brought Nieves out suddenly to join us on the balcony. "*Tourista* sickness?" she asked, looking at Jo.

"Sí," Jo said, "I'm afraid so."

Nieves vanished, without saying another word.

"I wonder what that was all about?" Jo said.

"She is very *simpático*," I answered.

After a while Nieves came back with a steaming cup of a black concoction which she placed in front of Jo.

Jo cringed. "I'm sorry," she said, "but I'm not having any today."

"*Para usted, niña, para usted*," Nieves said.

I looked into the cup and saw a thick sticky mass which turned my stomach.

"*Para usted, niña*," Nieves insisted to Jo.

Jo's humor was a little forced. "Goody," she said. "Just what I wanted."

In desperation, Nieves lapsed into English. "Medicine," she said, "no ow."

"No, no, no," cried Jo in mild panic.

But Nieves simply would not accept Jo's "no." After a long harrowing session of poor Spanish and poor English, Nieves managed to inform us that within the cup was an age-old Chilean remedy, made from sweet potatoes which had been forced through a sieve and then cooked with cornstarch and a little chocolate. Jo is a plucky girl. She managed to eat the entire cupful, under Nieves' relentless eye, without a single audible whimper. Jo staunchly declares that the mixture cured her. At any rate, it did not make her any sicker, and Nieves was happy.

As a matter of fact, all sorts of drugs have been discovered and taken out of Amazonian jungles from the trees and plant life which flourish there. I know that a

great many experiments have been going on to test the power of these drugs in inhibiting the growth of cancer cells. People laugh at jungle medicines until they themselves suffer from some jungle ailment. Then, often as not, a primitive remedy turns out to be the best.

Jo was not alone that week in her battle with the *tourista* sickness. No less rugged an individual than Captain Walt Gorman was caught in its unpleasant grip. But, of course, Walt carried on. "There are people in hospital beds with screens around them who feel a damn sight better than I do," Walt said, but he kept working during every waking moment. Each day at four o'clock the group went out, and each night the work for Luis Rivas lasted until close to midnight. Practically no one got more than four hours sleep a night but I did not hear any complaints.

While everyone was away I spent most of my time thinking about Iquique and the past. The two seemed to be so closely interwoven. If you can envision a city slowly turning into a ghost town, changing painfully from riches into rags, losing everything and falling out of step with a transforming world, then you can understand about Iquique. Before World War II, when nitrate fertilizer was in enormous demand, thirty or forty boats would fill Iquique harbor, waiting to load up with precious nitrates. Everyone who lived in Iquique had all the work he could handle, and the village bustled and prospered and grew. Then the Germans, cut off

from doing business with Chile, turned their scientific skill to synthesizing an ersatz nitrate. They were too successful. What the Germans produced was as effective as Chilean nitrates and could be manufactured at a lower cost. When the war ended, and the rest of the world obtained the formula, there was what I suppose is global progress. But Iquique cannot take a global viewpoint. To the little village, ersatz nitrates did not mean progress, but only the guarantee of slow and painful death. Once, when Lou and I went to church in Cavanha, a little fishing village near Iquique, we fell in love with the charming stone grotto of the church. But at the same time we were appalled by the church's roof. It was not so much roof as an open venetian blind. There simply was no money for repairs. Iquique wears its stark poverty with gentility, like an old lady who is clad in tattered silk, for the village has known better times.

These solitary days spent in a dying city did something to me. I began to realize how fortunate I was. So many women spend so many solitary days while they and their husbands each go separate ways, following separate hobbies, work and interests. Lou and I were always very lucky. Our abiding interests always coincided. From the first, we both dearly loved the sea.

"Why?" I remembered someone asking once, during a party at Twenty One or some other pleasant place that Lou and I frequented. "Genie, can you tell me why

you rush off into primitive country? What good does it do you and Lou?"

My answer then was absolutely frank. "Just like you," I said, "I'm really the product of some awfully soft years. I find I actually welcome the chance for privation."

The lady I was answering was attractive and used to a comfortable and ordered life. "I don't admit to Lou that I get a kick out of the hardship," I said, pointedly, "but now that I've learned to take it, it's given me a new lease on life."

"Oh, Genie!" my friend said. "You can't be serious!"

"Serious!" I exclaimed. "Why, of course I'm serious. Just look what fishing has done for my trapezius muscle!" I leaned forward so that the muscle, which runs from a point high up on the spine to the tip of the shoulder blade, bulged out of my evening gown.

Shock crossed the woman's face. "Yes, certainly," she said, hurriedly. "Your trapezius. I understand." Then she was off with, I suppose, a new nugget of reasonably humorous gossip.

I would not be honest if I claimed that a social life is something of no consequence to me. Nor do I like to be the object of gossip. But on that balcony in Iquique, as I thought over my career and Lou's, everything seemed to hinge on an abrupt interruption in our social lives in New Jersey almost thirty years ago.

I had been a girl of varied interests, which ranged

from sculpture to painting to teaching, but with Lou it was different. He was completely single-minded. Our paths crossed at Columbia where I was getting a master's degree in fine arts and Lou was majoring in business administration. We were both from New Jersey, both had a more than transient interest in the sea, and we were married not long after Lou had finished at Columbia. We were certainly not rich. Lou had a small real estate business and he earned just enough to keep us eating. He worked late hours almost every night. Lou is a wonderful businessman, and quite rapidly his business began to grow. He was buying tracts of land, putting in streets, building houses and selling them. Often he took me along to see if my studies in art could help provide ideas for decoration. Soon Lou was doing well enough for us to buy a second-hand Chris Craft. The fishing bug first infected us in those early days, when moonlight fishing was satisfying in more ways than one. It was romantic and it was cheap. A big thrill for us then came on the night we caught a ninety-one-pound shark, but the real transformation from normal girl to dedicated angler occurred in the middle of a party.

It was on a Saturday night in the New Jersey sea-coast village of Bay Head, and at the risk of absolutely dating myself, I'll confess that I was making a minor splash with an imitation of Helen Morgan. I perched on the piano, and wearing my best black velvet dress, ges-

turing dramatically with my handkerchief, I sang in the huskiest tone I could invoke. There was a small gathering of what I believed to be "admirers" grouped around the piano, and since this was long ago, Lou was right in the very first row.

"'Along came Bill,'" I sang, "'an ordinary guy . . .'"

At the door an apparition appeared.

"'You'd meet him on the street and never notice him . . .'"

People were turning away from me toward the figure at the door. I was losing my audience.

"'His form and face,'" I sang louder. "'His manly grace . . .'"

Now even Lou was turning away.

"'Are not the kind that . . .'" Then the pianist quit and it was go it alone or stop singing. I was younger then and less confident. I stopped. Then I stared at the intruder with all the fury of a woman, perhaps not scorned, but certainly ignored. The figure, wearing soaking dark oilskins, moved further into the room and shouted, "Tuna off to the nor'east. Jerry just came back and he seen 'em. Out near Shrewsbury Rock. Let's go." The intruder was Clint Thorne. He was the captain of our little second-hand boat.

"Tuna?" Lou echoed. "Big ones?"

"Yeah," Thorne said. "A whole big school of 'em."

Lou, as every other man at the party, was wearing a

dinner jacket. The man in oilskins loomed impressively, like a sleek seal pausing among penguins. Water from his oilskins was spotting the blue carpet.

"Sounds great," Lou said. "Come on, Genie. Get down off the piano and get a move on."

I was amazed. "But the party's in full swing," I said, "and I haven't finished my song."

"Come on," Lou insisted, "let's get going."

"If you think I'm going to go fishing at twelve o'clock on a Saturday night, Lou Marron, you can start thinking all over again."

"Okay, Genie," Lou said. "Take care of yourself and don't worry. I'll probably be back before morning." Lou turned away. "Now Clint," he began, "you got the boat all gassed up?" The two men started quickly for the door.

"Wait," I screamed. "I'll finish singing on the ocean. Wait for me."

"We ought to get to the tuna at two-thirty, if we start right off," Clint was saying as the two men walked out of the party, with me just one step behind.

"But what about my clothes," I shouted. "And yours, Lou? We'll have to take time to change."

Clint Thorne looked at me sternly. "We don't have much time to waste," he said.

"That's right," Lou said. "You can change on the boat."

I started to protest again, but a rush of wind carried

my breath away. A gale was blowing in from the northeast. The tuna had probably just ridden in from Newfoundland, carried along by the gale, I told myself. The party suddenly seemed absurdly glamorous.

By the time we reached the boat dock, my best dress was soaking wet and the wind was defying us to try the boiling ocean. I was defied; Lou and Clint didn't seem to notice. They helped me onto the boat and we were off for Shrewsbury Rock, with the boat bucking like a bronco and Lou and Clint muttering excitedly.

"Lou," I shouted, "I've forgotten the words."

"What words?" he shouted back. We were standing near each other on the rolling deck, but even when we shouted, the wind made our voices barely audible.

"The words to the song, you dope," I called. "My Helen Morgan song."

"Oh," Lou shouted. "Urmph."

Moving carefully in my high heels, I inched my way below decks to search for something both drier and more functional than my floor-length black velvet dress. In the hold I spotted a small pile of dungarees. "Perfect," I thought. There were three pairs in all and each one belonged to Lou. Even in those distant days my husband was no minnow, but I had only one logical course to select. It was either swim in a pair of his pants or sink in my own evening dress. So off came the dress and on went the pants and with that single speedy change of costume my whole life turned around. I did not

know or even suspect it at the moment, but from that time forward I was always fated to be more at home in jeans on a wildly tossing boat than at the finest party in the smoothest silks. Clad in the jeans and one of Lou's most battered shirts, I hopped into one of the bunks. As I considered from my balcony chair years later in Iquique, what happened next seemed to be symbolic, too. The boat pitched and I fell out of the bunk. I got up, climbed back into the bunk and fell out of it again. But the third time I stayed put. I took the belt that was holding up Lou's dungarees and used it as a safety belt. Strapped to the porthole cleat, I remained in my bunk. From that night on, I was to find a way of making do with whatever happened to be at hand.

Sleep in the angry Atlantic Ocean was out of the question and when we anchored, I was wide awake, even though it was well past four o'clock.

"Hey, Genie," Lou shouted. "Come on up on deck."

"What for?"

"Chumming," Lou shouted.

I don't imagine it would be difficult to trace the origin of the word "chumming." It must have been invented by a man and for a situation identical with the one that faced Lou. To a bright-eyed young girl, what can sound more stimulating than "chumming" with a man at night and alone on the ocean? Frankly, though, I cannot think of anything that could be less romantic. "Chumming" that night meant what it means every night at

sea: chopping and grinding up fish and throwing the chum, or choppings, overboard to attract any game fish that are swimming in the area. There were 300 pounds of dead fish on our little boat and one large meat grinder. My work was cut out for me. I clawed handfuls of the slimy bait out of the barrel and proceeded to grind and toss, grind and toss. In a short time there was a long, shiny oil slick in the sea. Lou stood in the stern, playing out a line through the slick. Captain Thorne showed some compassion for me, or at least gratitude for my efficient chumming. "Nice going, Mrs. M.," he told me. "But get ready to be chair boy for Lou in case a big one strikes. Just keep the fighting chair turned in the direction of the fish. These tunas are tough and we're short-handed, you know." I hadn't known anything of the sort.

I eased closer to Lou. He was wearing oilskins now, like Clint's, and his evening clothes had given way to dungarees like mine. "Clint," he said, suddenly, his voice husky with excitement. "There's a swirl. Out there."

"How can you see in all this blackness?" I said.

"That's them all right," Clint said, ignoring me. "Toss the chum, Mrs. M. Steady, not too fast."

Then there was silence. An hour passed. The sun came up, cold and dim through the heavy overcast. Then it broke through and the sea, eased by the morning warmth, turned calmer and less petulant. Around the

horizon I saw other anchored boats, almost like dots in the distance. They were commercial fishing craft, anchored the same as we, but the great tuna run was not primarily what had brought them out to sea. They were fishing for bluefish.

Long ago light-tackle fishing was unknown and Lou was working with equipment that I barely could have lifted. His reel was new and roughly the size of a small derrick. His rod was made of black palm that was no more flexible than a river pile. I watched Lou closely and with a little fear. Catching a tuna requires both strength and experience, and Lou in those days was not really an experienced fisherman. It was a long and trying wait for every one of us. I broke the wall of silence to exclaim, "I'll be right back." No sooner did I get below than our motors suddenly bellowed forth full blast. "The wait is over," I thought. "Lou must have something." Modesty vanished as completely as my Helen Morgan routine. I hurried to the deck, full speed ahead, blue jeans not secured. Sure enough, when I reached the deck there was Lou leaning back in the fighting chair, the line singing as it played out. Then I noticed Clint Thorne at the controls, his gaze fixed on Lou's line. "The chair, turn the chair!" he yelled to me. "That rod'll snap. Hurry!" I grasped the chair and went to work.

Then I began adjusting my outfit to conform with public laws. If I had known more about fish fever, I'd have realized that the adjustments were mere idle ges-

tures, but they did seem awfully important at the time. With that giant tuna thrashing at the end of Lou's line, I could have been stark naked, painted green to boot, and it's even money that neither man would have noticed until the big fish was in the boat.

Fishing for tuna is a grueling experience. Lou braced himself in his chair, his rod bending sharply against the pull of the fish. The fish moved close to the boat and sounded, diving down to what must have been the ocean floor. The cords in Lou's neck proclaimed the terrible strain his body felt. My own hands were drenched with sweat. "Lord," I murmured, "that fish is as stubborn as Lou."

Exerting every measure of his strength, Lou managed to pump the fish up from the ocean bottom, the harness cutting into his flesh. When the tuna hit the surface, he sped straight for the anchor of a commercial fishing boat not 300 yards away.

"Oh no," Lou groaned, "I'll get fouled in his line." Clint gunned the motors and Lou spun the reel furiously and somehow succeeded in forcing the fish to change the direction of his run. "Great work, Lou," I shouted. Clint jumped down from topside and hurried to grasp the leader so he could gaff the fish as soon as Lou got it alongside of the boat. But the tuna was not yet ready for surrender. Again he took off in the direction of the nearby fisherman. This time he reached it. Lou's line was fouled around the taut hand line of the commercial fisherman.

The two men aboard the commercial boat bent over the side and began working to free the fish. "No," Captain Clint shouted. "Don't touch our line." But the men did not hear Clint's cry. They freed the fish easily and all the excitement came to an end. Lou subdued the tiring tuna in a matter of minutes but as a sporting catch the fish was without value. Under the international rules of game fishing, no one other than the fisherman himself may touch the equipment during the course of the action. The bluefin tuna weighed 577 and was the first giant Lou had ever caught. He was not Bosco and he did not count as a catch, but he did infect me with the fishing fever.

The next day we tried again, and this time it was I who nabbed the big one. After fighting for two hours and showing more fishing sense than I had imagined I had, we boated a 430-pounder. I was a sorry sight, with matted hair and a broken rib caused by the shoulder harness that we used in those days. But I had my fish! The State of New Jersey arranged for my fish to be mounted and soon began using it to attract tourists. It was the first giant tuna landed by a woman off the coast of the United States. "See," men in the state Chamber of Commerce proclaimed proudly, "this is what a little woman caught. Can you imagine what a man can do, fishing off the Jersey shore?"

Catching that first tuna was only the beginning of a long fishing career which led ultimately to our search for the giant swordfish.

CHAPTER

6

~~THE~~ The west coast of South America offers the most perplexing set of extremes Lou and I have found anywhere in the world. The Andes Mountains, which rise close behind Iquique, loom treeless and barren, but beneath their yellow surface fortunes in copper and iron lie waiting to be mined. The southern tip of Peru is often drenched by furious coastal downpours, but Iquique, almost adjoining in the northern tip of Chile, has felt only a few drops of rain since 1941. The Humboldt Current beckons as the finest fishing grounds in the entire world, but last spring the bright blue waters suddenly vanished. Instead, a huge red tide covered the ocean for eighty miles straight out from shore, and some unknown poison in that scarlet blanket killed hundreds of thousands of fish. The paradoxical world around

Iquique is never gentle, never easy to understand. Even the jokes that nature plays near the poor, eroded village are huge and cruel. But sometimes they can be devastatingly funny.

During our expedition two years ago, I could always buoy my spirits, as I sat on the small balcony waiting for my injured hip to heal, by recalling the greatest fishing joke nature ever played on us. It had happened just one year earlier during the greatest fishing experience we'd ever had. The principals in this comedy were Lou and Bosco, but two females had important roles, too. One, of course, was me.

Lou and I had been chasing albacora all over the Humboldt throughout that previous trip, searching for Bosco. We knew any number of good, big swordfish swam those waters but we never landed anything that even approximated the size of Bosco as we imagined him. Then, one day, as our old boat, the *Flying Heart*, cruised over a gentle sea, we spotted huge dorsal fins.

"Bosco!" Lou bellowed at once.

Everyone aboard jumped into action, and baiting began before the sound of Lou's shout had faded. Lou pulled the line off the big Fin-Nor reel and stood holding the end of the big, trailing loop in his hand. We waited, breathless. That huge dorsal fin looked like the mainsail of a windjammer. Eddie Wall, veteran of many swordfish safaris, was our captain that year. With a wonderful display of skillful manipulation of boat and

Looking down the throat of a broadbill. Note the hook hanging loose (foul-hooked) and the gills inside the mouth

A tail-walking
striped marlin
fighting for
his life

Three parasites living off
one another and all eating
off the same fish

We catch five marlin in
one day

Dr. Walton Smith and Mrs. Marron examining result of plankton tow

bait, he put that bait right across the albacora's nose. The fish turned away. Again we maneuvered. This time, with a great splash of his mighty tail, Bosco dove for the bait. "Wham"—the sword lashed out. Lou was in the chair now, waiting and watching. Suspense pinioned everyone. A little of the line spooled off, then a little more, faster and faster. "Strike! Ahead with the boat," Lou shouted. We had struck Bosco, the king of kings. Lou worked like a man driven by some fury risen from the sea. It was scarcely more than fifty-five minutes before that greatest of all albacora was brought to the leader. The next hour taxed us almost beyond endurance: twelve times more, twelve separate battles, each one bringing him to the boat only to have him elude our grasp and dash away. It was the most difficult hour of my life. I took the controls so that Eddie was free to take the leader. That thirteenth run, however, ended the fight. Bosco had got too close to the boat for his own good. Eddie wrapped the heavy-cable leader wire around both hands and held on. I thought his arms would rip from his shoulders—but the gaff was in the fish now and he was ours—Bosco, the king of the sea! What a Goliath!

Lou could scarcely contain himself when he finally saw that great bulk across the stern.

"Bosco," Lou breathed, with the reverence of a priest at the altar.

The *Flying Heart* turned and made full speed for port.

Back in Iquique, the albacora was officially weighed in at 1,182 pounds, which made it the largest game fish of any species that had been caught anywhere up to that day.

"You've got Bosco at last," I had to admit to Lou.

Later we cut Bosco open, and soon we were probing into his body cavity. It was I who spotted the gonads first.

"Bosco!" I shrieked at Lou. "So you've caught Bosco, have you?" I did not even try to control my first few screams of laughter.

"What's so funny?" he snapped. "What do you mean?" Then he noticed the fish's gonads himself.

"You're right!" he cried. "This can't be Bosco."

"Of course not," I said. "Maybe we've caught Bosco's wife, but this certainly isn't Bosco. Maybe it's Bosco's wife, Bertha."

"All right," he said. "Call this one Bertha if it pleases you, but whatever you say, it still is one hell of a big fish."

"Particularly," I said, "for a lady." Then Lou broke down and started laughing too.

Two main factors come to my mind whenever I wonder why it is that Lou and I have been so delighted with our fishing. First, there is the opportunity we have had to grow as the sport itself grew, to have a hand in some innovations, to get a touch of pioneer feeling when

deep-sea fishing expanded toward the tremendously popular recreation that it is today. Then, years later, there was the element of science. After we had learned as much about deep-sea fishing as we thought we ever would, along came Luis Rivas to demonstrate how little we knew about the fish themselves, or the waters in which they lived and died.

A scientist at Rutgers University, Dr. James Westman, states that records exist which show that George Washington once chartered a boat and went fishing off the shores of Long Island. No one knows exactly how long men have indulged in deep-sea fishing as a sport but, surprisingly perhaps, deep-sea fishing as we know it dates only from the turn of the twentieth century. Deep-sea fishermen like myself have been few in number, and as recently as 1935 there were no more than a dozen or so in the world. Today, the number runs closer to a thousand; possibly there are even more than that. Women these days are not necessarily more adventurous or more nautical than their grandmothers, but until recently only a girl with the build and the strength of a blacksmith could enjoy herself angling on the ocean. The old equipment put all the stress exclusively on muscle.

I think the first tuna ever taken on rod and reel was a 251-pounder which a man named Colonel Morehouse hooked off Catalina Island near California in 1899. Then fishermen off the Jersey shore hauled in some big

ones, notably a 407-pound bluefin which Christian Feigenspan licked about 1910. But even the men had trouble with the big ones in those days because equipment was awkward, huge and often dangerous.

The old reel was called a knuckle-buster. It had no drag, which made it about as safe as a bicycle without a brake. Whenever the fish decided to make a run, the handle on the knuckle-buster spun freely and furiously. There was no way to check the sudden spin. If it did not always break the knuckles, it usually broke open great patches of the fisherman's skin.

Other tackle was little better. Line was treated with tar but certain to snap at the first hefty tug of a fish. The old rods were heavy, inflexible and far too ungainly for any woman to handle with complete control.

Gradually, equipment evolved and improved, and the biggest single boost deep-sea fishing ever got came in the middle of the roaring twenties when reels had drags and line was tougher. It was then that Zane Grey, the author of so many western stories, caught a tremendous marlin near Tahiti in the South Pacific. By the time Grey's marlin was boated, its carcass had been slimmed down by hungry sharks to about one-third of its original size. Still, the fish weighed 1,040 pounds. Word of the catch stole headlines, even from baseball.

Grey did quite a little writing about his favorite outdoor spot, and other anglers have turned out libraries of books and stories. With his Nobel Prize, Ernest

Hemingway stands as the most distinguished of fishing writers, but Philip Wylie is only slightly less famous. The honor roll of famous fishermen covers more than one profession, though. Some old-timers still boast of how they learned where the fish were while running rum during the years of prohibition. Others, who are just as skillful, were coast guardsmen stationed along the shore. The society of fishing men and women cuts through lots of ice and more than one quick slug of whiskey, too.

The blending of unmethodical sport with disciplined science is not so strange as it might seem at first. Today's finest fishing people are all advocates of conservation. Neither Lou nor I ever kill a fish unless it is to be used for food or for scientific examination. After enough years of catching everything that swims—except for Bosco—the edge of excitement that comes from indiscriminately hauling in fish has been dulled. A few years ago when Lou and I originally stumbled across a sea-going scientist, we were immediately fascinated. Stumbled is perhaps not the right word, but fascinated is a decided understatement.

We were on a fishing trip to the Bahamas, and one particularly bright afternoon, as we sailed into South Bimini harbor, we saw a man go riding on a shark. As we watched, he jumped from a small boat into the middle of a school of huge nurse sharks which were lying close to the surface of the water. With quick, long strokes the man swam to the side of the most imposing

shark and leapt onto its back. He wrapped both legs around the creature's body, thrust his two thumbs into the shark's nostrils and, clinging like a leach, he rode the shark. The ride ended only when shark and man were both exhausted.

"Do you do that sort of thing often?" I asked him later when we met this man on the dock.

"No," the man admitted, "but a friend of mine wants sensational movies of fish and I wanted to see if that stunt would really work before we started shooting."

Introductions were made and the man told us his name was Al Pfluger. He owned a fish taxidermy shop in Miami.

"You could get killed trying a stunt like that," Lou said.

"Not very likely," Pfluger said. "With my thumbs up his nose, he can't sound. He can only run on the surface. Besides, those sharks are pretty sluggish now, anyway."

Later, when we and the Mannings went to Florida to get ichthyological instruction under Luis Rivas at the University of Miami, we visited Al Pfluger's shop. We had Jane Thuet, our field secretary and the wife of Captain Thuet, along. As we headed toward the mainland, Lou said to Jane, "Look, when we get into the place, we're going to get some scientific pointers. Do you have your notebook with you?"

Fortunately, she did.

"Great," Lou said. "Take notes on everything."

When we arrived at the taxidermy shop we saw mounted fish by the dozen. "Pfluger's Mortuary," I announced, and the name stuck. Inside Al was watching Luis Rivas. Before long, Rivas was holding us spellbound with the first fish dissection we had ever seen, and before much longer we found ourselves dissecting right along with him. Rivas had a basic tool, which looked like a huge wooden caliper, and first he measured key lengths on the fish's body.

"What's that for?" Lou wanted to know.

Rivas looked up. "To discover what kind of fish this is."

"Why, it's a white marlin," Lou said. "That's as plain as day."

"Maybe," Rivas said, "but how many varieties of marlin are there?"

"Oh, blue, black, white, striped, silver . . ." Lou counted off.

"Nobody knows," Luis Rivas interrupted. "Actually, the only way we can classify fish as accurately as we classify land animals is by first making exact notations. How far are the eyes set apart? What is the thickness of the eyeball? Points of that sort."

Lou nodded, and although Rivas' measuring lasted more than two hours, none of us who watched him felt even a trace of boredom. "Now," Rivas suggested when he was finished, "suppose you people get to work with me."

"In these clothes?" I said. Catching a fish was one

thing, but cutting it apart later was a particularly unattractive-sounding venture.

"That's all right," Al Pfluger said mercilessly. "I've got enough aprons to go around."

I looked at Jo and she looked at me. We shrugged and donned aprons.

"First," Rivas said, deadly serious, "I want you people to remove this marlin's gonads." He told us where to look and there they were, the two of them.

"This," Rivas said, "is a male fish. But he recently spent himself. That's why they look so small and narrow."

"How could you tell the female?" I asked.

"The female gonads are grittier," Rivas said.

"Oh," I said. A pause followed.

"One thing you can tell from this fish," Rivas said, breaking the silence, "is that a breeding ground for marlin is not far from where he was caught. Probably the eggs he fertilized will hatch not too far from that spot."

There were more directions, and after we had wiped the blood off our hands, we went back to work—this time on the gill plate. We removed a section of the bone and Rivas studied it closely.

"This fish is ten years old," he announced.

"How can you tell?" Jo Manning asked, guardedly.

"Each ring in the gill plate represents one year of life," Rivas said.

"Like the rings of a tree?" I asked.

“Something like that,” Rivas said.

Jo and I counted the number of *spines* in each of the fish’s fins. We measured the depth and diameter of the eyeballs. We measured the length and width of the bill. It was two hours before Luis Rivas would let us go, and by that time he had won four converts to science. After spending twenty years at fishing, I realized that I knew next to nothing about fish’s habits, senses, sensibilities, or, for that matter, their sex life. It was not long before Lou and Luis Rivas were talking along the exciting lines that were to lead to our Iquique expedition. Suddenly John and Jo Manning and Lou and I had a lifetime of science to catch up on. “Why, do you realize,” I found myself admitting, “that we don’t even have any idea whether fish feel pain from our hooks?”

“I don’t think you need to worry too much on that score,” Rivas remarked the next day at Pfluger’s Mortuary when I put the question to him. “If they do, the pain could be no more than slight.”

“I thought there was a lot of debate going on about that,” Lou said.

“Yes there is,” Rivas said, “and it isn’t possible to be positive, but we have certain indications. I’ve heard about a perch who was hooked in the eye, making the fisherman who caught him want to throw him back. When the man removed the hook, though, he also removed the eye.”

“Ugh,” I said, supported by a faint squeal from Jo.

"Then," Rivas said, "it was so hard for the man to get the eye off the hook that he decided simply to use the eye as bait. As soon as his line hit the water, a perch went for the bait. It was the same fish he had just freed."

"That doesn't prove anything about pain," John Manning said quickly. "It just proves that fish don't necessarily learn by experience."

"Well, actually," Rivas said, "the real basis for the belief that fish hardly feel the hook is that their nervous systems are poorly developed. A big hook lodged in a human's throat would cause terrible agony, but a fish, with a smaller brain and less sensitive nervous system, cannot possibly feel anything so acute."

I was not and am not entirely convinced. Fish do possess some nerves and sense organs and I think they must feel at least a disagreeable sensation when they are hooked. All animals, it seems to me, must be equipped with organs of pleasure and pain simply to preserve the species. For all creatures, reproduction and matters of well-being must be connected with pleasure or else reproduction would cease. Similarly, pain, or something akin to pain, must accompany dying and conditions harmful to life. I have heard scientists insist that there is a sort of automatic nervous reaction in lower animals which we misinterpret to indicate real pleasure and pain, but I do not think an automatic reaction need be considered any less valid than a conscious one.

Blindfold a man, convince him that you are going to burn through his palm with a blowtorch, and then drop a piece of ice into his hand. The man will scream. Does the screaming man really feel pain? Do hooked fish really feel pain? I have never heard a completely satisfactory answer to either question.

But I suppose part of the wonder of science lies in its unending number of unanswerable questions. For example, there is the venerable question of the ferocity of sharks. In every deep-sea motion picture, sharks play the role of villains, lunging viciously for the heroine's pure white ankle just as the hero, knife poised, swims into view. But knowing the liberties Hollywood takes with fish, not to mention those it takes with pure white ankles, I wondered how many species of shark would really attempt to devour a man. Some old fishermen claim they have seen it happen; others say that sharks, unless driven to fury, are perfectly harmless. After checking with a number of scientists, I learned that both answers are correct. Certain types of sharks are man-eaters; many other types are not. There are just about as many kinds of sharks as there are kinds of dogs. Whale sharks, one of the largest varieties, weigh tons but are no more dangerous than tadpoles. They live exclusively on plankton which they sieve from the water into their digestive systems. Then there are other varieties of sharks, such as the fearsome mako shark with his many rows of pointed teeth, which seem willing to eat anything

within reach. Near Bikini a scientist once found a horse's hoofs with iron shoes attached, intact and undigested, in the belly of a tiger shark. After hearing that, I concluded that a tiger shark eats a man only for an antipasto or, possibly, as a snack between meals.

"A lot of a fish's actions seem to be psychologically motivated," Luis Rivas said. This was a point of view that Lou and I had arrived at many years ago. Fish have personalities, in a sense, and in order to be a successful fisherman you have to be able to do a little fish analysis. Fish can be teased, cajoled and enraged; and by arousing their greed they can be driven to recklessness. A fish swimming by himself usually approaches bait cautiously and takes a long time before striking out. Put the same fish into a competitive situation and he may well become foolhardy.

Off Bimini one day Lou had a large bait on his hook when he was after blue marlin. A small white marlin spotted the bait first and moved toward it carefully. Lou did not want to catch that marlin with heavy tackle, so he decided to tease him while the mate got the ten-pound test line ready with a small bait. Lou reached over the side of the boat and pulled in his line by hand until the bait was clear of the water. When the marlin saw what was happening, he stopped being cautious. In apparent rage, he tore at the bait dangling just below Lou's hand. He was a small marlin but his bill was big enough. Lou drew the bait and his hand back quickly. The fish made

another run, dorsal fin raised high. This time he almost impaled himself on the stern of the boat. Fury was actually moving that cautious fish to destroy himself. Again and again he came at the boat. Lou could have easily grabbed his bill several times. When the bait was tossed to him, he grabbed it at once, abandoning all caution.

Only a few days later, Lou and a native Bimini guide named Mannie Rolle tested these teasing tactics on a shark. Actually, he and Mannie had set out in a rowboat with a small outboard to find a tuna, but after they had run into a nice school of small tuna and were having a field day, a shark suddenly came up smack in the middle of the school. Lou did not want him to gobble the tuna on Mannie's line so he started to tease the shark away. He let a baited line drift out toward the shark, and in a matter of seconds the shark was making a quick pass at the bait.

"See if you can bring in a couple more tuna, Mannie," Lou said. "I'll handle the shark."

"Yes, sir," Mannie said, not quite contented with the arrangement.

As the shark charged, Lou gave the line a skillful tug and the bait disappeared under our boat. Lou's hand was only inches away. Then he let the bait line drift out again. Once more the shark dove at it and once more Lou drew it back.

"How you doing, Mannie?" Lou called, keeping his eyes on the water.

"Fine, Mr. Marron," Mannie said. "How long you gonna keep on playing with that shark?"

"Till we get enough tuna," Lou said, "or till we get even for the ones he scared away."

"Boss," Mannie said, "it don't make sense to me, playing around with a shark. You sure you don't know another way to get even?"

I was glad Mannie had asked the question. I was wondering about the same thing myself.

Lou did not answer, but I could see by the way he set himself that Mannie had made a grave tactical error. Now Lou was convinced that this match against the shark was a point of personal pride. For all I knew, he might keep teasing the shark until nightfall.

Every time the shark lunged, Mannie's big round eyes seemed to grow a little bigger and rounder. Lou's eyes stayed narrow and cold. I sat counting the number of times the shark went for Lou's bait, and noticed that each time the fish seemed to become more angry and more reckless. Each time, he came a little closer to the boat.

"Scared, Mannie?" Lou asked.

"No, sir," Mannie said. "I'm not scared."

"I'm scared," I said.

"Here he comes again," Lou said.

At the third lunge the shark's sense of caution gave way to his sheer fury. He rolled over and hurled himself at the bait Lou snapped under the boat. The shark

followed it all the way down. He crashed into the bottom of the boat. The boat came up out of the water and then dropped back. "You sure you aren't scared, Mannie?" Lou asked.

"I'm not scared," Mannie insisted.

Fortunately, both Lou and the shark were fed up with the teasing game. We turned around and, with a small tuna catch on hand and a neurotic shark behind us, we headed back for port.

On the dock Lou put his arm around Mannie's shoulder and grinned. "Boss," Mannie said, "I want to tell you something. I was scared out there. Plenty scared. But you was scared too, boss. You wouldn't keep asking was I scared if you wasn't scared yourself." The two men started to laugh, but I did not think that it had been much of a joke.

This very quality Lou showed, though, this ability to tease a fish to fury, is an essential to good light-tackle fishermen. The secret in applying light-tackle skill lies in knowing how far to go and when to stop. Marlin often jump themselves into exhaustion or sulk at such low depths that they die of suffocation. Fish have air bellows which inflate and deflate as they rise and sound. Often, when they sound, fish plunge so deeply that the extreme pressure kills them. I have even known fish to bury themselves in the ocean bottom and suffocate in the mud. Frequently after you have teased a huge fish into taking the bait, he is too tough to raise. The trick is to

give the fish plenty of line, making him think he is free to come up. It is impossible to raise very big fish on light line if they die on the bottom.

My favorite technique for fooling fish into a false sense of independence involves the use of free spool. I simply let the line run out unchecked and a sounding fish, encountering no tug or pull from the hook, decides that he has gotten loose and heads back up to the surface again.

The average amberjack, which runs about thirty-five pounds, may not be a huge fish but he has great strength and can exhaust a fisherman. To catch amberjack on light tackle is a particularly interesting test of skill, since, much like tuna, they prefer to fight beneath the surface.

Lou and I were fishing off Bimini with Jim Hurley, who writes an outdoor column for the New York *Daily Mirror*, when I had my most interesting battle with an amberjack. We had each caught one, on twenty-pound test (six-thread) line and now I was using line that snaps under only ten pounds of direct pressure. My amberjack stayed deep for thirty-five minutes after I had hooked him. I worked hard, trying to raise him, and in the course of the action my line packed itself so tightly on the reel that the reel itself froze solid. It rolled on free spool, but not with the drag on.

"I guess I'll just have to fight him on free spool," I announced.

I put the rigid drag on to reel in, and in an instant,

when the fish moved, I snapped it off. One error, and all—including the amberjack—would be lost. I did not want to excite the fish unduly so I used a gentle coaxing method, with no sudden change of pace, no strain. "Easy does it," I told myself. We stand up with light tackle, the rod is put in a "belly pad." The strain is on arms, shoulders and legs. The next hour taxed my strength to the limit. This was not the spectacular struggle one has with marlin or albacora. Rather, it was a war of nerves. Lou and Jim between them did not utter ten words to me during the whole time. There was no special turning point. The fish almost fooled me many times with a sudden run which almost caught me with a rigid spool and might have snapped my line. But always there was that priceless fraction of a second for me to recoup or let the line run free. By Jim Hurley's watch, it was exactly one hour and fifty-eight minutes after that first strike when I finally landed the amberjack.

"What a beauty," Jim said, when we had the fish in the boat. "That must be a record for ten-pound test. Good girl."

We hurried to port, and the amberjack weighed in at thirty-eight pounds. Jim had been right. My nerves had not been strained in vain. The fish was a world record for the line.

Then, conforming with the rules of the International Game Fishing Association, I had my line tested and the record collapsed. The line overtested by a few ounces.

This is what happened to poor Jo Manning's 345-

pound test. It overtested, giving the record back to me for my 315-pounder.

"Well, Genie," Lou said in an effort to cheer me, "You know how it is. Anything can happen with light tackle."

"I don't mind that," I said, "when I'm reeling in the fish. That's a big part of the sport. But what gets me is that anything can happen even after you've boated the fish."

Fishing psychology is obviously not all one-sided. The fisherman who can outsmart his victims must also be able to cope with depressing periods of frustration he feels within himself. Why do I fish? It is the most exciting sport that I've encountered, and though the odds seem stacked against the fish, they can be pretty close to even when the angler uses light tackle.

The loss of a fish and the resultant dulling of excitement can be a miserable and wretched thing. Ideally, you get your fish on very light line, keep him on it for as long as you can, get every jump you can out of his body, look at him in all his shining beauty and then bring him to subjugation as painlessly as possible. This is great sport. When suddenly the line grows slack and the sport is over and the fish has won, it is hard to find immediate consolation. The change from action to inaction is too swift. Let us say that a particular fish has lived for fifteen years. He has grown into a thing of beauty buoyed by his strong courageous heart. In escaping from me, he is winning a fight for life. Now he

can rejoin his school and some other year, perhaps, when he is still bigger and tougher, there will be another chance for me to catch him. I write that here as I thought it on my balcony in Iquique. I cannot honestly report that these thoughts cross my mind in the painful moments just after a fish has fought his way to freedom. All my thoughts then come down to a single word: "Damn!"

Four years before our big expedition Lou and I had decided we wanted to land some big fish on light tackle. We fished off the coast of Mexico, off Panama, off Talara in Peru, and all in all we hooked about thirty-five striped marlin on three-thread line and some fifty on six-thread line. We boated only eight of the thirty-five and twenty-nine of the fifty. We had not started fishing for science then, but all the frustration we endured with all those fish escaping may well have planted the thought of fishing for a purpose.

One aspect of fish life that few anglers have had much time to study is sex. In school we have all been told about salmons fighting their way up waterfalls, driven by the primal urge to reach the spawning grounds. Then, there is the poetry of fish romance. Ogden Nash has written:

*The chastest of the vertebrates,
He hardly ever sees his mates,
But when they've finished, he appears
And O.K.'s all their bright ideas.*

Before I met Luis Rivas my knowledge of the sexual habits of fish was pretty well summed up in those four lines plus another poem by a rather unusual Greek named Oppian who lived in the time of Marcus Aurelius and was fascinated by love among eels. Oppian wrote with considerable frankness:

*Strange the formation of the eely race
That know no sex, yet love the close embrace
Their folded lengths around each other twine
Twist amorous knots and slimy bodies join;
Till the close strife brings off a frothy juice,
The seed that must their wriggling kind produce.
Regardless, they their future offspring leave,
And porous sands the spumy drops receive.
That genial bed impregnates all the heap,
And little eelets soon begin to creep.*

Basically, Luis Rivas assured me, Ogden Nash's observations are more generally valid than those of Oppian. A typical watery orgy involving, perhaps, sun-fish consists only of gentle bumping. The male bumps the female repeatedly, helping her to extrude her ova, meanwhile helping himself to extrude his sperm. With varying amounts of bumping and violence, this is the fundamental pattern of seagoing sex. But there are some fascinating variations. The sea lampreys, for example, migrate to a clear shallow stream, hundreds of miles up rivers, usually attaching themselves to other fish by the suction of their mouths. Before doing anything else,

they clear an oval space about three feet across as a private love nest. Then they move stones—lampreys have mouths capable of exerting enormous suction—and they place the stones on the bottom all around the nest. Then the female attaches herself, by mouth, to a stone, and the male, also using his mouth, attaches himself to the female's head. The two long thin fish wrap their bodies about one another and start to vibrate with terrific violence. They stir up great quantities of sand, and in this frenzy of action the female excretes her ova and the male excretes his sperm. The excreted matter sticks to the sand and starts to settle at the rocky bottom of the nest. After their ecstasy, a term which I don't think I am misapplying, the two lampreys promptly separate and start moving rocks again so that stones cover only that part of the nest where the eggs and sperm have fallen. Then they dislodge more sand which in turn covers the rocks. Once this has been accomplished, the two lampreys, exhausted and lacerated by their exertions, die very swiftly, either from the ravages of other fish, or from a fungus growth which arises in the wounds cut open during their violent mating.

As with birds, the male is often the most colorful member of a species of fish. Probably only deep-sea fishermen and skin divers really appreciate the magnificent range of color that exists among fish. It would be a challenge to set it down on any canvas. In many species, at mating time the male seems to take on an added radiance. There are also species in which both

sexes add luster to their natural color. I doubt if any fisherman who has trolled the Gulf Stream will ever forget his first sight of a dolphin, glistening in brilliant gold and blue. Nor is a fisherman likely to forget what transpires after the dolphin has been caught. Out of the water the brilliant color fades, and the dying fish turns milk-white, fading into gray at death. When the dolphin dies, the fading of beauty is almost a tragic thing. It is as if nature were making a point about leaving her dolphin alone, and no fisherman who catches one can avoid feeling at least some touches of regret. From scientists I learned of the countless misconceptions I had held, but the beauty of fish was something none of them had to teach me.

Billfish have all the senses of a man. They breathe through gills, see with eyes, smell through nostrils and feel with a central nervous system. They can even hear. But there is something else a billfish possesses, which fishermen sense and scientists are learning more about every day. This is a sixth sense, which is called lateral line. It is apparently a means of compensating for the fish's lack of long-range vision, an attribute which it could not possibly possess in the sea. Still, without distance vision, fish can tell the approach of enemies from far off. They can distinguish an unusual area of water, such as the Humboldt Current, from all the rest of the Pacific Ocean. When I asked Rivas about this specific point—the ability of fish to find the Humboldt—he began to explain about lateral line.

"We know," Rivas said, "it's a sixth sense. We think it is some means of picking up very low vibrations."

"Why, that's like sound," I said. "Sound is vibrations."

"That's right," Rivas said, "but these vibrations are different."

"But fish can hear," I said. "I heard about a Benedictine Monk in Austria who rang a dinner bell before he fed his trout lunch, and after a while the trout began answering the bell just as cattle or people might."

"We know more than that," Luis said. "Enough tests have been made to prove that goldfish can hear vibrations from 344 to 3,752 cycles per second. Do you have Hi-Fi?"

"Our phonograph is old."

"Well, just to let you know what I'm talking about, then," Rivas said, "the human ear can hear from 30 to 30,000 cycles per second. That's the range Hi-Fi aims at. No fish has a hearing range like a human's, but billfish can hear quite well. They make noise, too. They grunt and whistle and groan."

"But about lateral line?" I prodded.

"It doesn't appear to be exactly like hearing," Rivas said. "It's some other means of picking up vibrations. A boat vibrates, other fish vibrate, the Humboldt itself vibrates out there in the Pacific. Somehow this lateral line in fish enables them to pick up vibrations. With it they can also pick up temperature changes, which is how they find the edges of the Humboldt and how they

know enough to stay clear of some of their natural enemies.”

Studying the Humboldt Current is not part of Luis’ area of specialization. It more properly falls into the category of oceanography, which is Dr. Walton Smith’s department at the University of Miami. The director of the Marine Laboratory there, he has written several books on the Humboldt Current. It was through Dr. Smith that we became familiar with the work that is being done in allied fields, and with the studies of a man named Gerald Posner, another expert on the Humboldt. I had always believed that the Humboldt was cool principally because it flowed up from Antarctica, but this theory now appears to be out of date.

“Oceanographers think that something else explains the coolness all year round,” Dr. Smith has said. “The steady winds actually turn the water over. The winds blow the surface water away from the coast, and cold water rises from as much as 1,000 feet below sea level to take its place. The water is low in oxygen but high in nutrients—and nutrients are what attract the fish.”

No scientist knows all there is to know about the Humboldt. The red tide that killed so many fish a year ago still defies explanation. So does a cheerfully named but terrible phenomenon called *El Niño*. The word *niño* means baby in Spanish, but to the people who live around Iquique, it refers specifically to a catastrophe that strikes every seven years. It takes place shortly

after Christmas and the name, I think, is connected with the Nativity.

The punctual phenomenon of *El Niño* is that the Humboldt vanishes and a warm current, seventy-five feet deep, appears in its place. No one knows where the warm water comes from, or why it comes, or what lies at the root of this recurrent catastrophe, but it, too, kills numberless fish which are used to conditions in the Humboldt.

Dr. Smith has said, "It may be connected with the weather, with meteorology; it may be connected with the rotations of the earth. There are a dozen possibilities. The final answer has eluded us all."

Our expedition to Iquique was motivated by nothing so grand as explaining *El Niño*. If we could simply find some clues to the main breeding ground of Pacific albacora and marlin we would be serving science well enough. The plankton tows that trailed off the stern of the *Explorer* like gigantic socks were there to catch what floated in the waters about us. By examining the eggs, the minute fish and infinitesimal sea life, University of Miami scientists felt they could make strides in learning more about the life histories of Pacific billfish. Are they a migratory species? Are they a single species of fish, or did many species intermingle over centuries until the present specimen, a sort of superfish, came into being? So far, no one can answer. It was our job to help Luis Rivas find out.

As with all scientific trips, however, the goals that we had set when we began, and the directions into which our findings led us, differed considerably.

Dr. Francis O. Schmitt, professor of biology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been working fifteen years on the chemistry of nerves. When I read that he was using little Atlantic squid, because they had the largest nerve of any animal alive, I wrote to him about the giant squid that we were catching off Peru and Chile. Dr. Schmitt asked us to send a few samples of dissected nerve. Luis Rivas sent these and Dr. Schmitt was so excited with the samples that he asked us to help organize another expedition, not to chase albacora, but to capture squid and to keep them alive.

"These nerve sheaths are forty to sixty times the size of the ones in our squid," he told me later. "The speed of our progress may depend on the results obtained from the Pacific squid."

Not as potentially important, but more immediately practical than the outsized nerve tissue, is the supply of caffeine that can be found in the Humboldt. Caffeine does not serve merely to keep coffee drinkers from enjoying peaceful sleep. It has real values. One company found that pure caffeine could be obtained from the urine and ova of certain billfish.

A major project was about to begin when food authorities got wind of it and said no. Caffeine is a chemical and, chemically speaking, the source of the product is unimportant; but I suppose telling something

like that to food authorities is as effective as working up a frenzy over real estate taxes and telling that to city hall.

What I learned from Dr. Smith, Dr. Schmitt and Rivas is no more than a primer in the science of the sea. Quite probably, some college students can learn more about the life of fishes in a single intensive course of study than I have been able to find out in my lifetime. But for the days when I sat crippled in Iquique, the little science that I had learned was invaluable. With it came something to tide me through the darkest days, the quality of selfless curiosity.

"How is it coming?" I could ask Rivas, when he returned to the Hotel Prat late each evening.

"Fine," he liked to tell me. "I'm making great strides. We missed you at the last dissection."

It was an offhand compliment, but one that I thoroughly appreciated.

All that week "Uncle Lou," the Mannings, Rivas and everyone else worked long hours every day. Yet there was always someone taking the time to chat with me and answer my questions. A few years earlier all I could have said was, "Catch anything out there today?" And I would have responded to a "yes" with envy, while "no" might have led me to announce, "Too bad. I would have." But with science, there were interests that we all could share. There was more to our fishing than catching fish.

Exactly ten days after my accident Lou and Walter Gorman carried me on board the *Explorer*. My hip was painful but, after so much time wasted as an invalid, my balcony vigil had become at last unbearable.

“You don’t think you’re going to fish with a leg like that,” Lou had said the previous evening when I suggested that he haul me out of my boredom and onto the ship.

“I don’t know,” I said.

“Now, Genie,” Lou said, quickly, “you know what can happen if anything goes wrong. You can fix that hip for good.”

“I don’t want to discuss it,” I said, “but if you agree to carry me aboard, I’ll agree to make you one promise right now.”

"What's that?" Lou asked.

"I'll let you do the cooking."

Lou chuckled, but it took a half-hour argument for me to win my point. There were plenty of places to sit on the boat and there would certainly be plenty of time for me to rest.

A little before four o'clock the next morning, Lou and Walt Gorman carried me down the stairs from my room at the Hotel Prat. "I can walk," I announced as soon as we reached the street. Then I took one step and a wild Indian with a tomahawk started chopping at my hip. Lou caught me before I fell.

Without another word Lou and Walt each grabbed an arm, and there was nothing to it. In the blackness before dawn we three made our way to the dock. On the way I sat down to rest on the handiest object. It was that giant twenty-foot bleached bone that someone had hauled out of the sea and left haphazardly near the dock.

As soon as I was settled and had caught one good strong whiff of the iodine scent blown in from the fertile sea, I forgot all about my hip. Around me, the world was almost as it had been that first morning, dawn stirring slowly out of the deep calm of an ocean night. But with this brighter dawn I noticed one strange difference. The birds seemed to have discovered the *Explorer*. Where the first time we had encountered flights of birds only by chance, this morning thousands flew ahead of us, plainly by their own design.

"Lou," I shouted, "have you been feeding the birds?"

"The fishing's been pretty good," he shouted back. "Remember how the birds came back with us? Well, now we can't go anywhere without them for a convoy. They're all around us all the time."

When I arose from the chair to get a look at how many were flying low directly ahead of us, I found that with my painful trip to the boat came mobility I had not anticipated. The *Explorer* was full of stanchions and little platforms. There was something on which to lean at practically every point aboard; I couldn't walk but I could hobble.

When I set about capitalizing on my new independence and investigating the condition of the ship, I passed Mario as he was chattering excitedly to Walt Gorman. The Spanish was too quick for my ears, but fortunately Walt translated for Lou.

"He says to try it up to the north today," Walt said. "A lot of commercial fishermen came in from Pisagua last night and they had a helluva catch of albacora."

"How far is Pisagua?" I asked.

"About forty miles up the coast," Walt said.

"Let's go," Lou said. "Then, if the fishing is hot we can camp up there all night and get a good start out of Pisagua itself tomorrow."

"What's the matter with Iquique, Lou?" I asked.

"Listen," Lou said. "We're going to get an albacora this trip. We're not just going to keep on settling for marlin."

"You mean you didn't get a single albacora all that time I was stuck at the hotel?"

"Jo Manning got a nice one," Lou said.

"What's the matter with you?" I said. "Ten days and not a single albacora. The only way you'll ever get Bosco is with a net."

"Do you think we could swing around, Walt," Lou said, "and put Genie back on the dock?"

Walt laughed and turned slightly northward on the course to Pisagua. At once the rugged coastline stretched as far as I could see along our starboard side. In the pale, early sunlight, the Andes Mountains seemed to be a chain of massive elephants, trunks entwined with tails as they marched on in an unending procession from one horizon to the other. The sun drew from the elephant's sides long streaks of blues and grays and reds, just as the sun does on the Painted Desert in Arizona.

"Look," I said eagerly to Lou, "all the colors of an artist's palette are out there."

Lou shook his head, but Mario, standing nearby, overheard me. "It will bring *buena suerte*," he said. "Luck. Soon *grande* albacora."

"That's fine, Mario," I said carelessly. "Bring on the grandest, toughest albacora in the ocean. Bring on Bosco."

"You today, Señora?"

"Maybe," I answered, with a sidelong glance at Lou.

Lou glowered at me and headed for the cabin. I leaned toward the port side of the boat and fingered the

twenty-four-thread drag on my reel. Twenty-four-thread line can withstand eighty pounds of pressure. Lou was hunting Bosco with thirty-nine-thread line which tests at 130, but twenty-four-thread was plenty big enough for me. I weigh only 110 pounds, against his 200.

The Mannings and Captain Santiago on the *Marlin* seemed to have ideas of their own. They were fishing southwest. Lou was trying to call them on our radio-telephone. When he got a response, of course, he couldn't resist ribbing.

"We're using marlin for bait up here," he barked as a greeting to John Manning. "How are things in the south?"

"We don't need any bait," Manning's voice came back. "They're just jumping into the boat."

"If you see an albacora, let me hear from you," Lou said.

"Suppose we check at four this afternoon," Manning said.

"Fine," Lou said. No matter where we were, we could check with them easily because our radiotelephone had a 1,000-mile radius. Actually, it was our news reporter, lifeguard and expediter throughout the entire trip.

The *Explorer* was running within three miles of shore and everyone was searching the even, untroubled sea when Lou came out of the cabin. He quickly dropped a thermometer into the water and it came up reading seventy degrees. "Too warm right here," Lou called up sharply to the bridge.

Luis Rivas (left) with John Manning (in cap) taking precise measurements of a marlin

Plankton tow, magnified, showing comparative size as against a ten-cent piece

A large Pacific squid showing suction cups of tentacles and white orifice which hides vicious black bill

OPPOSITE: Walt Gorman and Mario head into cave behind rocks to pick up baby penguins. The flying spray in background is their destination

An odd specimen that inhabits the great deep. Only other one ever found was off the coast of Africa

Five flags fly proudly after record haul of five large marlin
(Gus strings them up)

"Mario says they're coming closer to shore every day," Walt called back. "Let's keep on up the coast a while."

"Okay," Lou said, without enthusiasm.

Within half an hour the water had turned choppy and a fresh wind whipped up. Mario's extra sense had been correct. "*Agua blanca*," Gus called from the mast. Good clear fishing water—albacora water! As I sat in my chair, I had just one decision to make. The twenty-four-thread line was beckoning nearby, but we were on a scientific expedition. I felt that if I could hook an albacora I could make short work of him, but that was not really why we were there. I was just staring blankly when a huge black fin cut swiftly through the water, 200 feet to port.

"Albacora," I shouted automatically. "A big one!"

Walt Gorman must have seen it at the same time. Immediately the boat was moving toward the fin, which stuck up a good two feet above the bumpy water.

Lou moved to his rod and started peeling off line. "All right," I said. "All right." I got out of the chair and Lou dropped into it, not noticing me or the ocean or anything in the world except that single black fin. Still, it was hard to keep the fin in sight among the choppy waves and the big surging rolls of sea. Mario and Gus, from their vantage point on the bridge, had to keep pointing it out to Walt Gorman. A lifetime on the ocean must do something for the eyes, and both boys had phenomenal vision. But while Mario and Gus were

undoubtedly our eyes, Walt's boatmanship was no less valuable. It takes skill to manipulate a boat for broad-bill baiting, keeping her close enough to the albacora for the fisherman to troll the bait right in front of the fish's nose, and still keep far enough away so neither the wake nor the boat would frighten the albacora—as we may have done on our first day out from Iquique.

Thuet moved into the stern and threw overboard the long loop of line that Lou had let out. Howard held it lightly between thumb and forefinger, waiting for a strike.

Walt Gorman handled the *Explorer* beautifully, easing it into a smooth circle so that the stern crossed directly in the fish's path. The bait swimming on the end of Lou's line was close enough to the albacora to slap that giant bill.

"Easy," Howard whispered. "Easy, Uncle Lou. You'll get him."

Then the albacora turned away from the bait.

"Damn!" Lou said.

"Must be dieting," I said.

Howard's lean body was tense, but he said nothing.

"There," I heard Mario shouting to Walt Gorman. "See there." He was pointing out the albacora's new course.

Again Walt steered the *Explorer* into a careful arc. Again the boat swung across the path of the giant bill-

fish. Again Lou drew the bait slowly in front of the albacora's line of vision.

"He sees it," Howard said. "He sees it."

Perhaps he did. For an instant the albacora seemed to take notice, but then he slowly swung away.

"Damn!" said Lou.

"Damn, dumb fish," I said.

"A wise old devil," Howard corrected.

Twice more the fish ignored our bait. We were sailing in continuous circles that led nowhere, drawn on by the albacora, baited by the fish, in fact, just as we were trying to bait him.

As we made a fifth run, the sun was directly behind us and the glare from the ocean burned so intensely that it was hard for me to see. For a moment I had the feeling that everything was slowly being reversed. We were not the hunters here on this alien ocean. We were the hunted. Forces which I could not understand, could only sense, were turning things around so that that albacora was hunting us down, taking us on a course he knew, but we could only guess. I shook my head. It was ridiculous.

More than thirty minutes had passed when the albacora reappeared.

"He sees the bait," I shouted. "He's going for it." With a splash of his tail he dove.

Howard threw the coil into the ocean and Lou's line began running out at a slow, even pace. Then it stopped

unrolling. Lou sat stark still and waited. Fifteen seconds later the tackle unrolled again. A minute passed, and still the line uncoiled neither more swiftly nor more slowly. Then it was two minutes, then three, then four, then five. I heard the faint humming of the engines as they idled, and sharp slaps of the choppy water against the sides of the *Explorer*. Overhead, ocean birds were making faint angry noises. But there were no human sounds I could detect except for the hiss of my own breathing.

As the wait entered its sixth minute, the line suddenly uncoiled with a rush. The reel whined angrily. "Strike," Lou roared. "Boat!" The engines thundered with a full burst of power. The *Explorer* jumped ahead in the rolling ocean, and I pitched against the transom, stumbled on my good leg and held on to the transom with both hands. Somehow I managed to turn myself around and crawl to the cot.

Lou was reeling in furiously and for a few seconds I thought he had him securely hooked. Then the line went slack. "No," Lou bellowed. "Hell!" The albacora was free somewhere out in the ocean. Lou reeled in the rest of his line deliberately and with disgust. Finally, when he lifted the hook out of the water, we saw the bait. It had been flattened, mashed and sliced by the angry albacora. There was no chance of using it again.

"Too bad, Lou," I said.

"Yeah," he said. "We're still going to get one,

though.” Lou lifted himself from the chair heavily and walked from the stern into the cabin. I moved into the empty seat with my twenty-four-thread outfit and swiveled around to face the wake. Mario and Gus were scanning the ocean, Mario covering the starboard side and Gus staring out to port. “Ho,” Mario suddenly cried to Walt Gorman. “Albacora. *El mismo*. Same one. Albacora. *Allá*.” He pointed, and my gaze followed his finger. Through the choppy water I saw that black fin once again.

“Howard,” I said. “I’m going to try this.”

Howard looked at me and scratched the back of his neck. “Please, Howard,” I said.

“What are you gonna use for legs?” he wanted to know.

“I’ll manage.”

“If you say so,” Howard said, “but . . .” Then he brought my twenty-four-thread outfit to me.

Actually, you can get by on one leg in this type of heavy-tackle fishing. You are harnessed to the rod which rests in a sort of brace called gimbals, set into the chair. The back of the chair is removed and there is a foot brace to help utilize all the strength that lodges in the muscles of the back and legs. While a great deal of force can be helpful, overwhelming power is not an absolute essential. The closest comparison I can think of is jujitsu. Despite the advertisements, I doubt if the 100-pound woman really ever pins that 250-pound

masher thanks to six lessons in jujitsu. Strength assists one in applying jujitsu technique, but it is possible to be effective at the sport without being very strong. Similarly, with deep-sea fishing on heavy tackle, a 110-pound woman like myself may not exceed most fishing records set by brawny men, but they can come close or surpass them on occasion. I knew a fellow named Louis Schmidt who caught a 1,004-pound marlin with just one arm. In the end, the harness cut his flesh so deeply that he had to turn his rod over to someone else for the landing of the fish. A number of women can catch fish in the thousand-pound class, but of course only with two hands. I have strong muscles in my back and shoulders and after a long stretch of fishing, I am hard and rugged. But working on one leg, after ten days as an invalid, was not going to be easy.

When Lou saw me grab hold of my reel, he came rushing out of the cabin.

"Genie," he said, "that's a big fish. Watch that leg. Think you can manage?"

"I don't even feel my hip," I said.

For that one second I spoke the truth. Then I pressed my bad leg against the foot brace. Pain shot into my hip. I would not let myself wince. If Lou got worried enough, he might drag me from my chair. Soon the pain passed.

I let my line play out and Howard took up his old

position at the stern, holding the end of the loop in his fingers.

"Well, it's your leg," Lou warned.

I was too busy to turn around and try to answer, for Walt Gorman was already swinging the *Explorer* into the familiar circle of attack. The bait had to swing across that albacora's nose. The boat continued turning, and my line was now out about three hundred feet off the stern. It was well placed and running close to the line of vision of the fish. Sure enough. He spotted it! He went for it. Walt stopped the boat. Then there was nothing for me to do but wait. It had taken Lou more than thirty minutes to draw his albacora into making a pass at the bait. I had been luckier. Maybe I would be more fortunate with my strike, too. My line reeled off uncertainly for two minutes. Then it began to speed up. I struck with all my strength, rearing back with the rod again and again. It was too easy. The line was loose. I struck again. It was useless. No albacora.

"That's how it's been all week," Lou said. "They're just not hungry."

"Maybe I'm out of practice," I said. "I feel a little rusty."

"No," Lou said. "It's not you. There's too much natural food around. They're well fed."

"Where did that broadbill get to?" Howard said, scanning the sea around us.

We searched the water. There was no sign of a fin. My heart was lead. The search seemed hopeless.

"Albacora," Gus called out from the mast.

Sure enough, he was out there astern of us.

"Get a fresh bait ready, Gus," Lou called.

I reeled in to change my battered bait for a fresh one. "He's coming right at us," Howard shouted. "Hurry!"

In consternation I saw that Gus had not finished sewing up the fresh bait. We had no time to lose.

"Hand me the small outfit," I called to Howard. "It's all baited."

Howard quickly thrust a fifteen-thread outfit into my hands. It was baited with a mullet, a small fish weighing about a pound and a half, and the line could take only fifty pounds of pressure. This was my striped marlin outfit, set up specifically to handle fish which usually run half the size of albacora. I tossed the bait overboard and let it run out three hundred feet or more. The chance of landing albacora on this tackle was one in a thousand. It seemed absurd to imagine that a fish of this size, which had been so reluctant to lunge at a skipjack, would work up interest in anything so small as a mullet. But as Gus and Mario were preparing to drop the big bait into the water, the albacora slammed my mullet viciously.

I squealed. "He hit it. He's socked my little bait."

"Damned if he didn't," Lou hollered.

I shrieked again. The reel spun faster and faster.

Then it stopped. I struck at once, and the line went taut.

"Boat ahead," I called.

I struck and struck again as hard as I could.

"Sock him, Genie," Walt called from the bridge.

"Careful!" Lou reminded. "That line can only take fifty pounds."

"I know," I called. "I know."

The tension of the reel surged through my hands and into my body. The fish was lunging away from the boat, and the reel was screaming.

"Watch it," Howard said.

He meant the friction. With tackle that light, just the friction in the water caused by an albacora's frantic run might be enough to burn clean through the line.

Walt turned the *Explorer* toward the albacora, and I released the drag on the line. The boat sped down on the fish and I reeled in rapidly, trying to keep the line taut without straining it to its breaking point.

"That baby must run seven hundred pounds," Lou shouted as we neared the fish.

Ordinarily albacora do not leap and play the role of greyhound as marlin frequently do, but this was not an ordinary situation. The drag the albacora felt was so light the big fish must have thought he could leap free. He shot clear of the water, arched his big streamlined body, and banged down again into the choppy water.

Hedley Doty had stayed in the background all morn-

ing, but now he was the most important man on the ship.

"You getting this?" Lou asked him. "You getting shots of this albacora?"

At his perch not far from the bridge, Doty was too busy shooting to answer.

The albacora did not stop with one jump. He kept hurling his 700 pounds out of the sea, striving to outrace the *Explorer*, driving northward with spectacular determination.

"Watch out," Lou warned me. "Don't get too anxious. That's light tackle. Don't hold him so close. Good Lord, woman, give him room to breathe."

"Umph," I grunted. "Who's doing this?" We always bicker when I fish because Lou wants me to do everything his way and I have ideas of my own.

It was a cool day but I had peeled down to a cotton shirt during the blazing excitement. Still, drops of perspiration ran from my forehead down into my eyes. Lou leaned over, and with his big white handkerchief wiped my forehead.

Since I could not lean back in my chair and pump the line too well, I could not force the fish to follow my path. The only chance I had with light tackle was to tire the albacora and then coax him my way. It was a long shot, I realized, but one well worth taking.

When the albacora sounded, I decided that I was through. Down he plunged swiftly, ripping my line from the reel almost as rapidly as he had done on my first

strike. Finally he stopped, but I was certain he had stopped too late.

"How far down do you figure he's gone?" Howard asked.

"About three hundred yards," I said. "Let's circle."

"Not yet," Lou said.

I waited.

With the fish down so deep, I was helpless. An angler using heavy tackle can drag a fish up from the ocean floor, providing he has the brawn. If I had tried dragging this fish upwards, I would have been left with nothing more than a broken, dangling line.

Through the silent wait, I pumped and reeled at each slight sign that the fish might be weakening. It seemed useless. He was down deep, sulking and determined. For forty-five minutes I tried everything in my little bag of tricks. I plucked at the line—when it is taut like that it sends a vibration down to the fish that may annoy him. I circled the fish to change direction. Finally I played my trump ace—I free-spooled the line. It was a long shot and I could easily lose him and all the line, too, but I had to chance it. Out ran the line and off into the deep blue ran the albacora. Then when I thought the spool would surely go bare, up he shot, breaking through the surface a good two hundred and fifty yards away, leaping like a gazelle, all 700 pounds of him.

The boat spun around and tore after him, Lou urging, "Fast! Fast! Get that line in!"

"There's 400 yards of line in the water, Lou," I shouted, pumping and reeling furiously. Then I had most of my line back and we were on top of the fish.

At this point, he settled about twenty yards under and proceeded to travel along slowly but with as much determination as he had displayed earlier with those greyhound leaps. Again Walt ran the *Explorer* in a circle around the albacora. I pumped, exerting as much force on the fifty-pound line as I dared. Too much and the line would break, too little and I'd lose the fish.

Inch by inch I drew him toward me. I tightened the drag. He weaved back and forth in tired confusion.

"Quick," I shouted. "Close in on him, Walt. Let's go."

"You better wear him out first," Walt shouted back.

"Wear him out?" I said. "What do you think I've been doing?"

"You've only had him on the line for an hour and forty-five minutes," Lou said. "This is no marlin, remember. It's albacora."

But it was my albacora and it was my decision. "If he sounds again," I said, "he may go down so deep he'll kill himself. I'll never get him if we wait. I think he's headed for a sulk right now."

"And I think you're making a mistake," Lou said.

"I'll chance it," I told him.

"Close in, Walt," Lou shouted. Then, more softly, he said, "Good luck."

We eased close to the fish as he lay quietly near the

surface. Mario reached for the leader, a line of fiber that held the fishline to the bait. Gus held a gaff in his hand. When the *Explorer* drew alongside the fish, I had trouble believing what I saw. This was not Bosco, perhaps, but it was certainly a very close relative.

Mario and Gus were leaning toward the albacora when, suddenly, the fish lashed furiously. Gus swung the big gaff hook down and missed. Then he swung up and missed again. "No," I shouted. The fish whipped the water with his tail. I saw my hook embedded in the skin in front of his dorsal fin. The fish turned and twisted again. The hook tore the flesh. "No," I shouted again. The big fish rolled over once more and broke away. The hook had pulled out of his skin. My line was empty now. The fish had won.

For a few minutes nobody said anything. I knew that it was up to me to break the gloom, but I could not quite bring myself to do it.

"Lou," I said, "I'm sick."

"I know, Genie," he said. "It was only one chance in a thousand."

"He went over 700 pounds for sure," Howard said.

Luis Rivas, who had been in the bow during the action, was back in the stern with us now. "Well, didn't you tell me," Rivas said, "that more broadbill break away after hooking than anything else that swims?"

"Yes," I said, "because ninety-five per cent of them are foul-hooked."

"There will be others later on for you," Rivas said.

"But if I had caught that one on fifteen-thread line, it would have been an all-time record."

"That fish put up a terrific battle, Genie," Lou said. "He deserved to get away."

"I think I deserved to catch him," I said. "Damn." I got up out of the chair and took a careless step toward the cabin. The pain made me cry out. Lou grabbed me. "I forgot," I said. "I forgot that I can't walk."

"I'll get her an aspirin," Walt said.

"I don't want aspirin," I said. "It isn't my head that hurts."

"I know," Walt said, "but aspirin will make you better all around."

"You don't suppose," I said, "that you could find me a Scotch and soda?"

Walt grinned, but I was serious. All my life I had dreamed of catching an albacora, and now I had nothing to show for it except an aching hip.

"Sometimes I wonder," I said, as Lou helped me back into a chair, "if it's all really worth the trouble."

"If what's worth the trouble?" Lou asked.

"Everything," I said. "You know. Life."

"You better make that a double Scotch," Lou shouted after Walt. "Hey, make it two double Scotches while you're at it."

We continued on our way toward Pisagua, keeping our course three or four miles off shore. Despite the

drinks, I was glum but finally Walt's recurrent optimism began to make itself felt.

"See those rocks over there," he called down from the bridge. "Way over starboard."

"Who cares about rocks," I said.

"What rocks?" Hedley Doty shouted up to Walt.

"Over there near the shore," Walt answered.

"What about them?" Doty said.

"They're covered with penguins," Walt yelled. "That's what."

I spun my chair around and stared. The shoreline was flecked with gold and copper under the afternoon sun. I did not notice any rocks. "You're wrong, Walt," I shouted. "You won't find penguins this close to the equator."

"Why not?" Luis Rivas asked. "The Humboldt is a cold current, isn't it?"

"Pictures of penguins would go great," Walt shouted.

"Let's try it, then, Lou," I said. "At least it'll get our minds off albacora."

"Your mind, maybe," Lou said. "I'm not forgetting." He shrugged. "I've heard that penguins are supposed to breed in caves along the shore around here," he said. "What the hell, let's take a peek."

"I'd love to get one aboard," I said, enthusiastically.

"Let's move in on 'em, Walt," Lou shouted.

The wind seemed to pick up as the *Explorer* turned toward shore and I saw the rocks now, white with the

signatures of countless birds. The waves were crashing hard among them, kicking up geysers and stirring up great patches of yellowish foam.

"Look!" Lou shouted. "Look at those penguins."

I glanced from one clump of rocks to another and then I saw them. They were smaller than the penguins that thrive in colder climates but they had a penguin's inevitable pomposity.

"Undertakers' Convention," Lou announced.

"At the Waldorf," I added.

"Saturday night," Howard said.

"We'll have to move in a little closer," Doty called down. "My lens won't pick up very much from here."

"Can't you use a telescopic lens?" I asked.

"Not on a movie camera," Doty answered.

"Then you're out of luck," Walt said. "We can't get any closer than we are. We have to give those rocks a little room."

I remembered that first day out and forgot about my hip. "Walt," I shouted, "let's go over in the *WaWa*."

"Don't pay any attention to her," Lou said.

"I'll go over in the *WaWa*," Walt said. "I'll take Mario and go up on the rocks and get one of the birds with a net. Then we can get pictures of the penguin on this boat."

"Or a picture of you in the drink," Lou said. "You aren't any mountain goat, fella."

"Mario," Walt said, "want to come along?"

Mrs. Marron catching her record broadbill on twenty-four-thread-line tackle

Uncle Lou fishing on heavy tackle, thirty-nine-thread line, of which he is a master

Walt Gorman and Uncle Lou—anxious moments—Walt acting as chair man just before the gaff

OPPOSITE TOP: Little fish being attacked from beneath by whales and from above by birds

OPPOSITE FOOT: Balsa raft leaves “mother ship.” Men will not be picked up until sundown

Explorer under way on test run

OPPOSITE: Charlie looks us over—a Guani bird who joined our expedition for a few days

Striped marlin stands on tail

OPPOSITE: Charlie eats

Visiting neighbors in Salango, Ecuador

Mario wanted to come along, and he and Walt grabbed nets and started out toward the coast. At first Walt used the outboard, running it slowly as he edged the skiff among rocks that were half submerged. There was a break in the outer rock wall, we all saw, and a lagoon that lay behind it extended all the way to the irregular coastline and flowed deep into the caves which pitted that formidable shore. Walt eased the *WaWa* toward the opening, watching the rocks and trying to time the progress of the boat so that it missed the roughest breakers. As soon as Walt saw a stretch of water without the makings of an angry wave, he gunned the motor just enough to carry the *WaWa* into the lagoon. Then he turned off the motor and he and Mario grabbed paddles. They followed along the inside of the rock wall, staying in our view, until they reached the base of a huge boulder which extended onto a ledge. Mario found a spot that he could grab and Walt scrambled out of the boat, up the steep side of the rock. He was surprisingly agile for a big man. But for all his agility, he made a comic silhouette against the more distant whitened rocks, threading his way along like a tight-rope walker.

"Pretty," Lou roared. "Very pretty, Captain."

Walt was not attempting to reach the top of the rock. He was only advancing toward the ledge where half the penguins of South America were holding a meeting. When he was almost on the ledge, Walt slipped but did

not lose his footing. He must have terrified a hundred birds. They dove off the rocks and into the sea by the dozens. Walt regained his footing and started forward again.

Walt was creeping when he reached the ledge. I saw him inch toward two large, handsome birds. He lunged with his net. One bird dove into the sea, but the other was trapped. As soon as he felt the net, the penguin went into a frenzy, beating his wings against the strands of cord and the solid rock.

"I don't think we need a picture that badly," Lou said.

"Walt," I pleaded, "let him go. Please let him go."

The net came up and the penguin quickly dove into the water. "I'll go into the caves," Walt shouted. "I'll get a young one out of one of the caves."

"No," Lou shouted. "Don't bother. The water looks too rough around the caves."

"I'll be all right," Walt answered. "Don't worry about me."

"It isn't you," Lou called. "We need the *WaWa*."

Walt's laugh carried to us clearly. He scrambled back to the *WaWa* without a slip, and along with Mario he started paddling into a patch of the worst sort of swirling water. No breakers crashed within the lagoon that fed the caves, but the water boiled in currents and crosscurrents, whirlpools and undertows strong enough to carry the *WaWa* even out of Walt Gorman's

skillful control. The *WaWa* moved carefully among the currents, then shot ahead and disappeared. Walt and Mario were inside a cave.

"What do you think?" Howard asked no one in particular.

"I think I shouldn't have bothered about those pictures," Lou said.

"I think they'll get some baby penguins if they can handle the mothers," Rivas said. "Walt certainly can handle that boat."

All of us stared beyond the whitened rocks into the archways of the caves. The sun was lowering behind us and sometimes I thought I saw strange small shapes move about within the caves. It was unreal. When I lifted my eyes, there stood the Andes, harsh and ominous in the distance.

Lou spotted the *WaWa* first. "They're heading for the break," he said. "They're coming through okay." Then I saw the little boat, too. Mario was at the stern, working the engine. Walt sat up front, holding two fuzzy birds with one hand and holding his nose with the other.

"He's clowning," I said. "They haven't come through the rocks yet and Walt is clowning."

"Don't bet on it," Lou remarked.

For several moments Mario waited for a slack, a calm between the breakers. When the moment came he gunned the motor and the *WaWa* came through. Soon Walt was climbing aboard the *Explorer*, holding the

two baby penguins. They were very white and very fuzzy and their big floppy feet were much longer than the bodies.

"Adorable," I said. "They're darling, Walt."

"Get Mario up here," Lou said, "I want to congratulate him."

"Mario," Walt said, "stays in the *WaWa* and the *WaWa* stays leeward."

"What's the matter?" Rivas asked.

"Mario thought you'd want to see a penguin egg," Walt said. "In the cave he picked out a good one and put it in his pocket. Getting back to the boat he slipped and the egg broke right in his pocket."

"Oh, oh," I said.

"Ever smell a penguin egg?" Walt said. "A smashed penguin egg, I mean?"

I shook my head.

"Ask Mario to describe it sometime, but you better teach him basic English first."

Mario stayed leeward in the *WaWa* and Doty began setting up all kinds of pictures. He took the baby birds being fed, the baby birds kissing me, me kissing the baby birds, the birds sitting on tackle, the birds walking on the deck and resting on the bridge and in enough other poses to take up the better part of an hour.

"I guess," he said, at length, "I've got enough."

"Well, thanks," Walt said. "What the hell are we gonna do with these buzzards now?"

Granted that the novelty of the babies had worn off, "buzzards" was still a needlessly harsh word to use. "Ideally," I said, in an irrational burst of pity, "they ought to be returned to their families."

"Maybe we could cook them," Howard suggested.

"They belong back with their mothers," I said loudly.

"Say, Gorman," Lou said, "don't you hear Genie? It was your idea to rob the cradle. If you have guts you'll put those babies back where you found them." Lou was as surprised as anyone else at Walt's reply.

"All right," Walt said, "I'll take them to their homes." Then he was back in the *WaWa* with Mario, holding his nose and ignoring all of us on the *Explorer*.

The sea had grown considerably rougher while we had been taking pictures. "Walt," I shouted. "Don't do anything foolish. The birds don't really matter that much."

"We want to cook them," Howard said.

Walt turned around and grinned. "Nothing to getting back in there," he said, "so long as you know what you're doing."

"I know," shouted Mario. "I know."

"Quick, Mario," Walt said, "before the wind shifts. Let's get going."

Because the sea had grown so rough, Mario and Walt waited fifteen minutes in the white foam close to the rocks before there was a break long enough for them to rush through. The lagoon was rougher, too, and the

WaWa rose and fell violently as it neared the mouth of the cave from which they had taken the penguins. The swells were mean enough to capsize a boat twice the size of the *WaWa*. Again Mario and Walt waited, but this time they were pressed to the limit of their skill. A sudden swell of water lifted the *WaWa* like a cork and slammed it sideways over froth that welled around a hundred hidden rocks.

"Oh," I shouted. "Lou!"

"They're okay," Lou said. "They're okay. I can see them. They're still right side up. They're running full speed the hell out of there."

Crests and geysers of white water, and a glint the setting sun drew from the white rocks made it hard for me to see the *WaWa*. "They're coming fast," Lou said. "They're doing okay. They're gonna make it, Genie. They're okay." Then Lou stopped and I stood up, both arms against the sides of my chair. The *WaWa* was still right side up, but Mario was no longer in it. He was nearby, swimming very hard. Walt leaned over the side and somehow, with his enormous arms, managed to lift Mario into the *WaWa* in that rough sea without falling from the boat himself. Now Walt, clear out of patience, got the *WaWa* through the break in the rocks quickly and headed straight for the *Explorer*.

"Bent propeller," he shouted. "Not serious."

"What about Mario?" I called. "Is he hurt?"

"Hell, no," Walt said. "I made him jump overboard

to clean his stinking pocket. But it didn't work so he cut out his pocket with a knife."

When Mario crawled aboard the *Explorer*, his pants were in tatters, as though a knife really had sliced some pieces out of them.

"You mean you really didn't fall overboard?" I asked.

Mario answered with a broad, meaningless grin.

"Oh, we hit a rock," Walt said, "but Mario didn't fall over then. I pushed the little stinker in."

"Walt," I said. "You don't mean it."

"Sure I do," he said.

I looked at Mario. His grin was still there and it was still without meaning.

"Tell me the truth," I coaxed.

"I've told it to you," he insisted.

That was as far as he would go and I never did find out how Mario landed in the water.

"By the way," Walt said, "about those baby penguins. The water carried them into the cave. I think they got home in pretty good shape."

For all his knowledge of life and love among the billfish Luis Rivas is not an experienced angler. At a laboratory or in a classroom or simply across a luncheon table, Luis could describe big-game fish so well that one would have thought he had captured Bosco himself. Aboard a boat, Luis was somewhat less assured.

What with the albacora gone and the two penguins returned to the cave and our day fading off in the west, I decided that prodding Luis would help pass some of the hours that still remained before we reached the harbor of Pisagua. Besides, it was almost dinnertime and only a prompt diversionary action would put off my having to prepare food until we reached port. Then, I hoped, the boys would give me a hand as I knew there would be no restaurant in primitive Pisagua.

"Luis," I said slyly, "have you ever hooked an albacora?"

Luis was crouched near my chair in the stern, working with his calipers over the torso of a marlin. "No," he answered without looking up. "I never have."

"How come?" I asked.

"Oh, you know," Luis said. "Around Florida you don't find albacora the way you do around here." He did not stop poking about the dead fish.

"What about striped marlin?" I asked.

Rivas turned away from the fish. "Look," he said, "I have a heavy schedule of lecturing and lab work at the university. It doesn't leave me much time to fish. Chemists don't dig for chemicals themselves, do they? Atomic scientists don't mine their own uranium. I study fish; I let other people catch them."

"How about taking some time off?" I said. "How about going for a striper now?"

Luis dropped his calipers on the desk.

"That's a helluva idea," said Howard Thuet, who had been standing close by. "Why not go for a striper, Luis?"

"Sure," Rivas said. "That's a good idea. Maybe I ought to bring one in just so I can stop all this noise."

"Help me up, Luis," I said. "You can have my chair."

"Use Genie's fifty-pound-test outfit," Howard said.

Rivas moved into my seat and I hobbled to the transom. When I turned around, I spotted Walt Gorman

on the bridge, grinning, pointing to Rivas and waving. Somebody gave Lou the high-sign, and he popped out of the cabin and came bearing down on Rivas. "Look," Lou asked him, "have you ever done any fishing before?"

"Sure," Rivas said.

"Well, go easy on this light line," Lou ordered. "If you bust it, you'll have to take the time to rig it up again, fella. Here. Let me show you how to do it."

Within a moment Rivas, harnessed to rod and reel, was peering out at the darkening ocean, looking for fins. Not five minutes elapsed before he spotted a striper. Walt turned the *Explorer* toward the protruding marlin fin.

"You know what to do," I reminded Rivas. "The big thing is just to take it easy. Don't pop the line."

He nodded casually, but his dark eyes were bright and there were little lines of strain around his mouth. He could have written a textbook on how to bait striped marlin, but I doubt if he had ever tested his own theories before. Walt brought the *Explorer* around so that the marlin came swimming up in our wake, dorsal fin raised. Luis dropped the bait for several seconds. Then he struck for the fish and struck again. His hook stayed empty. Crestfallen, Luis started to reel in his line.

"He just wasn't hungry," Luis explained.

"Oh, no?" Lou said. "What's that behind your bait now?"

"There he is! He's got it!"

"Strike him," Lou commanded. Luis did—once, twice, three times.

"Reel fast," I shouted. "Keep the line taut."

The marlin was solidly hooked, with no waiting, no drop-back, nothing but grab and go.

"This one won't get away," Luis promised.

"There's nothing like beginner's luck," I said.

"Don't give me that," Rivas said through his teeth.

"I know what I'm doing."

Luis forgot his books, his measuring sticks and his plankton tows. It was just Luis and the fish, and the fish was flying and leaping away.

Luis laid a restraining hand across the spinning line of his reel.

"Ow!" he yelled, as the flying line burned deep into his skin.

"What are you trying to do? Bust the line?" Lou needed.

"The marlin is sure to tire soon, Luis," I put in. "Then you can go to work on him."

About a half-hour later, Luis was reeling away, actually doing a very good job, and the fish was growing so weary it looked as if he'd be an easy catch. But Walt had other ideas. He waited until the marlin got so close to the boat that the double line near the hook showed. Then he gunned the boat so that it looked as though the fish had gotten a second wind and run off.

"Oh!" Luis cried. "There he goes again. I had him so close." The sweat was running down Luis' face and he turned his head to exclaim, "He must be foul-hooked. No fish could be that tough."

"Foul-hooked, my eye," Walt said. "You must be weak. That fish is damn near dead."

I shook my fist at Walter. "You'd poison your own grandmother," I pointed out, but quietly.

"What's that?" Luis asked, turning around.

"I just said you've hooked a rugged baby that would give anybody fits," I said.

"I'll get the bastard if I have to shoot him."

The gag was going far enough for me. If we stayed there to encourage Walt he would keep needling Luis all night. I was hungry. No one had mentioned dinner, but amid all the jokes there was no fooling my appetite. If we waited until we reached Pisagua before eating, the boys might never notice, but I would.

"Good luck with the fish," I tossed over my shoulder at Rivas, as I made for the galley.

I could still hear the shouts. "I got him now. Here's the double line again," Rivas was calling.

As I wrestled with the pots and pans, I heard Lou say, "Now watch him this time, old man."

"Don't put too much strain on your line now," Howard said.

Luis blurted between gasps, "Don't worry, I'm watching. He won't pull that on me again."

“Ooop!” Lou shouted. “Careful!”

I knew then that Rivas would have to go through the hazing at least once again. I felt like putting a dash of arsenic in with the knockwurst and sauerkraut which I was recklessly throwing together in a big pot. (This had become the quickest, the easiest and most appreciated dish on our menu.)

By eight o'clock it had grown dark, and supper was ready. I shouted and the men came filing up to the table. Rivas was first.

“Well,” I asked Luis anxiously. “Did you boat him?”

He nodded quickly. “I practically worked him to death!”

“As I was telling you, Rivas,” Walt said, “you’ve got a real touch with a rod. A fish like that would have floored a lot of old hands. You took it in stride.” The men moved into their places at the table.

“What I can’t understand,” Rivas said, “is how that fish could keep on falling away from us and always at just the right second.”

“Maybe he was hooked a couple of times before and he got away,” I suggested.

“No,” Rivas said seriously. “Marlin are not intelligent in that way. They don’t really have memories. It must have been something else.”

“Must have been,” Lou said.

“What the hell is this?” Walt Gorman asked, pointing to the plate I had set before him.

"Knockwurst," I said, "It's good, just as good as steak."

"It looks like a rubber tube," Walt said. "It's something new, a tube steak."

"Why are we having them, Genie?" Lou asked.

"For an excellent dietary reason," I told him. "The steaks are at the bottom of the icebox and the knockwurst is at the top and with my hip I just can't bend."

"Argue with that," Howard said.

"Say," Lou said, "you know this knockwurst doesn't taste bad at that."

Pisagua harbor is a perfect half moon. We had approached it just before dinner by sailing around a hook of land, and in the darkness, faint lights pinpointed spots along the hillsides where the houses hung one over the other like layers of birdcages. To the people who live in Pisagua, Iquique is a metropolis. After Walt looked at the town through binoculars, he suggested that we spend the night aboard the *Explorer*. "It's a nice town," he said, "but kind of small."

After dinner Lou helped me down the galley steps, and helped pile the sink high with pots and pans and dishes. Then he disappeared. I went to work but it was a full half-hour later when I hobbled toward the deck. In the clear, cool night, a comfortable chair and a comforting drink were all the companionship I thought I would need. Mario and Gus were getting ready to go to bed down in the bow of the boat. Luis Rivas and Doty

were reading. Walt, Lou and Howard were engrossed in a variation of gin rummy. I would have to make my own drink, I supposed. My leg was sore and my hands were blistered, and my heart ached slightly at the memory of the albacora which had gotten away from me. I dropped into the chair in the stern. The first sips of the drink did not help much. I finished the remaining Scotch with a single swallow and the liquor traced a warm, soothing line down to my stomach. The drink downed, I felt a little better. But an overlong vigil on deck would just be asking for a bout of blues, I decided. The place for me was the galley, where I could absorb myself by rearranging all the pots and pans. I was just beginning when Lou came thumping down the galley steps.

“Ready for some entertaining?” he asked.

“I’m ready for some sleep,” I said.

“We’re going to have visitors,” Lou said. “There’s a dugout paddling up to us.”

“We don’t have to entertain everyone who comes around.”

“I think these are official visitors,” Lou said. “Officials from Pisagua.”

“Well, great,” I said. “Isn’t that just great!”

“We’ll have to receive them,” Lou said. “Old Spanish custom, you know.”

“I know,” I said. “Now get out of here and let me start getting a snack together.”

Although our visitors did paddle up to the *Explorer* in a tiny bongo or dugout, they were, it turned out, the two most important men in Pisagua. The first, decked out in a blue uniform interwoven with gold braid, was the major in charge of the local army base. The second, wearing a dark suit, was the Mayor. Both men spoke English and I was glad now to have such guests.

Our expedition was known all over South America for the work we were doing. Our experiments in long-line fishing and scientific achievements would eventually be a boon to all these countries. For example, now there is talk of a new marine laboratory to be erected near Santiago for the purpose of squid research. We were the fêted darlings everywhere. Little Pisagua was no exception. These charming gentlemen were here to invite us to their homes for a celebration. As we passed the drinks, we explained our work and the long hours, and begged off. They said they were happy we had come to Pisagua.

"How's the fishing been around here?" Lou asked.

"Good," said the man in the gold braid suit. "Plenty of marlin."

"Any albacora?" Lou asked.

"Today," the Mayor said, "some commercial boats got albacora. Five, ten, many albacora."

That was good news for the town. Fishing is the business of Pisagua.

Young neighbors pose at Puerto López

Grace Line lowering *Explorer* in Iquique

OPPOSITE: Uncle Lou with two albacora whose total tonnage added up to greatest poundage ever caught in one day

John Manning explores interior organs of marlin

"Have you young children?" I asked the Mayor.

"Yes," the Mayor said, "and grandchildren, too."

I limped into the galley, opened the icebox and searched. Halfway between the remaining knockwurst and the steaks were several boxes of chocolate bars. I gave a handful to the Mayor and another to the major. They thanked me. We talked for a few minutes, then the Mayor rose.

"Now we shall let you all go to sleep," the Mayor said. "Start early tomorrow and you will catch your albacora," he added.

I hobbled up to the deck to see them off, and as the gentlemen were leaving, I heard Mario and Gus talking in the bow. Mario heard my steps.

"*Mañana*," he called, "albacora. *Grande* albacora."

"I hope so, Mario," I answered. Then I went to bed, convinced that the prediction was not based on anything but concern for my morale.

At four o'clock the next morning, a long column of lights began gliding past the *Explorer*. The commercial fishermen of Pisagua were going down to the sea. We were all tired, but the *Explorer* got underway a short time later. Early sunlight was coming up over the rim of the Andes. As we sailed out of the harbor, the curving shoreline was tinted pink. Luis Rivas pointed it out to me. "What does that remind you of?" he asked.

"Gums, Luis. I hate to admit it, but it does."

"What?" Rivas said, as much exclaiming as he was asking.

"To me, it looks like the gums of a jut-toothed old mako shark," I said, "who's smiling because he knows he'll get away."

"You have fish on the brain," Rivas said.

"I know. I've been suffering from it for years."

"This certainly ought to be your day," Rivas said. "You deserve a giant albacora if even the sunrise makes you think of fish."

I walked back to my chair in the stern, grabbed the twenty-four-thread gear, and fitted my fighting harness to the reel. I tested my leg against the foot brace. It was no better but it was unaffected by yesterday's exertions. I tested my drag. I put a glove on my left hand and then there was nothing to do but wait.

One by one, the men came around to wish me luck. I thanked them all.

"Don't you think you ought to wait a day or two," Lou asked, "before you make a try for the big one?"

"Lou, I can't wait. Something's got me going and I don't know what it is, but I'm getting like you."

"You've always wanted big fish," Lou said.

"I know," I said, "but this is different. That big one getting away yesterday did something to me. I don't know just how to tell you. I can't put it into words."

"You don't have to," Lou said. "I know the feeling."

Despite the procession of good wishes, morning brought no action. The sky was hazy, and the sea lay flat and glazed like a silver mirror. The smell of fish rose from the water but all I saw was the small boats of commercial fishermen scattered haphazardly across the horizon. It was difficult to differentiate between those skiffs and birds that might be floating on the water. The craft were open boats, only sixteen to eighteen feet long, powered by five-horsepower Diesel engines. Two or three men worked in each boat, ploughing as far as one hundred miles out to sea, lingering for days on the ocean, although they were almost naked to the elements. When one of the commercial boats spotted fish, there was no careful, delicate process of baiting. The boat raced up to the quarry and one man, standing in the bow, hurled a harpoon. The harpoon men of Chile, Ecuador and Peru learn to throw in their childhood, just as American boys learn how to throw a baseball. From their low perch they hurl the harpoons—which they control with great accuracy—in a long high arc. When a fish is harpooned, the primitive battle is begun. The fishermen cling to the harpoon rope with their bare or gloved hands. The fish, sorely injured, hurls itself about with fury that usually abates only with death. Here is conflict that hinges on physical strength and skill. They let the line slide through their hands when they must, then haul with merciless determination at the first slackening of speed. When the fish are harpooned in a spot

far from their vital organs, they often drag the little boats for miles, and the chase, which starts at dawn, sometimes continues long after sunset. For their work, the fishermen earn barely enough to sustain themselves. The most skillful of them cannot often hold a battle with an albacora to less than three hours.

Then there is the popular method of having the harpoon line tied to a barrel. This barrel is tossed overboard after the fish is well struck. Then, hours later, after a day of fishing they return to the line and grapple with the now exhausted fish, which could not get away from the barrel. In some localities this fishing is done from a tiny four-log balsam raft. It is difficult to watch these men as they stand up fighting, since the raft disappears from view constantly, as the big waves cut them off. The raft, rising and falling with the waves, gives the illusion that the men are walking on the water. "Men with Jesus shoes," the boys say.

As I sat in my chair I was aware of the daily chores and purposeful activity around me. There had been two plankton tows. Two bathyemograph readings for subsurface temperatures had been taken already, and it was not yet eleven o'clock.

Since the *Explorer* was not equipped with a winch, it meant tough, laborious pulling and hauling both for the captain and the two boys.

I sat in the fighting chair, my twenty-four-thread rig ready for action. This was eighty-pound breaking test line, a strength that was, I felt, the perfect one for these

big fish. It was light enough to give the fish an even break, and strong enough for any power I could apply. Lou was using thirty-nine-thread, one hundred and ten-pound test.

The boys had prepared beautiful bait, which lay across the ice in the bait box. They were seven-pound skipjack, whose spines Mario and Gus had removed. The boys had skillfully sewed the gaping walls of the fish together and tied hooks well in front of the skipjacks' mouths. Since the broadbill takes the bait head on, the loose hook folds back as it is picked up. It is considered the best hooking method and is called the Catalina.

I scanned the sea. Great black clouds of Guani birds had flown out of the harbor with us. Now, five hours later, the birds still covered the sky. Suddenly I heard a shout from the mast.

"Albacora. *Grande* albacora!" Mario bellowed.

Gus, from his place on the mast, pointed frantically to starboard. Then Lou spotted it.

"That must be two fish, Walt," I heard Lou cry. "Those fins are too far apart."

I stared out at the flat, glazed ocean. Two figures stood up in the distance, and I could not help but laugh.

"That's not albacora," I said. "It's a couple of commercial men standing in their boat."

Howard rushed to the bait. "Take another look, Genie," he said.

Walt was speeding the *Explorer* toward whatever it

was Mario had seen. As we approached, the image no longer resembled two men; it was, in fact, an albacora.

Howard stood holding the line, the bait one hundred feet astern. Walt clutched the wheel, eyes riveted on the fin. I, sitting tense in the fighting chair, gripped the rod. Nobody spoke. Lou started pulling the line off the reel to make the loop. Doty crouched on the bridge, his camera set. The boat was turning now, the bait trailed out. It glided close to the albacora.

"He's got to see it," I said, almost to myself.

If the albacora was interested in the bait, he gave no sign. The skipjack drifted in front of him for several seconds. Then the albacora turned away. The second time we tried to stir him into lunging forward the albacora turned away again.

"He's a wise old man," Walt said quite loudly.

"That's how he got to be an old man in the first place," Lou said with impatience. But there was nothing anyone could do to hurry baiting. Until the albacora was ready to tear at the spineless skipjack, not all Walt Gorman's boatmanship, nor Luis Rivas' science, nor the fishing years that Lou and I had spent, amounted to a particle of difference. For these creeping minutes, the albacora controlled us all.

The third time Walt circled the broadbill, eagerness almost betrayed him. Walt brought the *Explorer* closer to the fish, and with no haste the albacora plunged beneath the surface. Curiously, the fish submerged with-

out a big splash of his tail. It was almost as if the albacora had been through this exercise before, as if he knew there was no danger so long as he spurned the bait and gently slipped beneath the surface. It was almost as if this albacora was Bosco.

"Damn it," I said. "We'd better find ourselves another billfish."

"Mario," Lou said. "Look sharp. Everybody. Keep your eyes open. He'll come up somewhere around us. He won't stay down for long."

Usually it was Mario, from his vantage point on the mast, who saw the billfish first. As I watched with my own slightly myopic eyes, I kept listening for his tenor voice to snap us to attention. "Fish," someone shouted. "There he is. Way off to port." The voice was sharp. I turned around. It was Howard who had cried out. He was pointing toward a spot far off to one side. Then I saw the fins, too. Walt was bringing the *Explorer* around.

"I'm going to circle wider this time," Walt called down. "I want to give him plenty of room."

"If he sounds again, you can forget him," Lou said to me.

The bait trailed out and drifted slowly toward the albacora's path. The huge black fins cut through the sea of glass and drew concentric whorls of ripples. The bait bobbed before the albacora now. Then it was past him, drifting to one side.

"He sees it," I cried aloud. "I think he's going for the bait!"

The two fins shifted slightly in the water. The ripples blurred. Then the fins moved again. The albacora turned toward the bait. The fins might have been bombsights. The albacora aimed his body at the target. Watching the bait sidle away from the albacora, and the fins turn cautiously toward the bait, hypnotized us into unbreathing silence. Then the albacora charged.

He whammed the bait with his bill and Howard let go of the loop. The reel spun. It was in free-spool. Everyone turned away from the ocean. The story lay in the reel. It was a time for patience and restraint, and I could only watch the reel spin spasmodically, a sign that the fish was still at the bait. Nothing stirred for five minutes. Then slowly some line pulled out—and stopped. Another wait. In a very low voice, I murmured a prayer. If anyone overheard, no one acknowledged. With every second my chances lessened, for each might mean distance if the albacora were dashing away from us. He might be on the hook and he might not. There was no way in which I could tell without taking a foolhardy chance. Fish may be foolhardy in battle, but anglers can't afford to be.

For nine minutes, by Luis Rivas' watch, I sat stark still.

"Why the hell won't the fish move?" I said. "He's probably halfway back to Iquique now."

We backed up a fraction to relieve the line strain still further.

"Guess he's gone," Lou said.

"Oh, no," I said.

Then, in the eleventh minute, my slumbering reel sprung alive. It was only a small turn, but it was a start. Soon the reel spun smoothly, and then faster it whirled, and faster. With all the energy I possessed I struck.

"Boat," I shouted.

The engines under me exploded into power and the ship hurtled forward.

"Strike."

This was no light-tackle action; I gave it all I had. It was my one hundred and ten pounds against the fish. The harness cut into my flesh as I strained backward against the fierce pressure. My one good leg quivered from strain, but it held. It had to take the brunt. Bosco, running for his life, was on my line. I really felt that all of my fishing had culminated in this one battle.

Everyone struggled along with me vicariously, for game fishing is a solitary sport. If anyone touched my rod, or moved to brace my arm or lift the harness from the welt that it was burning in my back, then boating Bosco would mean nothing other than a fine, particularly big fish for Luis Rivas. The angler must match himself alone against the fish, without assistance of any sort from anyone.

Just after the battle entered its second hour, the fish seemed to give a little. I pumped and reeled. The double line was now out of the water.

"Gaff," Lou shouted to Mario.

"You brought him to leader. Nice work," he said to me.

Not fifteen feet from the boat, the fins rose from the water. Mario, his gaff raised, leaned toward the fish. Then, as unexpectedly as he had eased up, the fish plunged. He did not leap but he was green as grass, speeding close to the surface of the sea. Walt turned the boat to follow, but the fish was too quick. My line was flying from the reel. "It'll go bare," I shouted. "He's got all my line." He could sound, and sure enough he did. Down he went, the line spinning out and down.

With the fifty-pound test of yesterday I would have been helpless, but today I had at least an even chance of keeping the fish. I thought he would never settle, but he did. Then I really went to work. Inch by inch I raised him. Lou leaned over and carefully wiped my face.

"I hope that I don't look as worried as you," I told him.

"You look fine, Champ," he answered. "You're doing great."

But there wasn't much time to talk. The fish was coming up out of the sea, slowly but surely. When he broke

the surface one hundred yards away, I made my only mistake. I relaxed my good leg, which up until then had taken the entire brunt of the battle. I tried to shift my weight to get more pressure on my back, holding on to the arms of my chair as I did. Instantly both feet slipped off the footrest. I slid forward, and my face cracked hard against the metal reel.

"Don't touch me," I shouted. "Nobody touch me."

A single helping hand on the rod would have disqualified me. So no one moved. Then I was braced and pumping again. I became conscious of a queer empty space in the front of my mouth. I moved my tongue across my upper gum, feeling the empty socket with my tongue. I discovered a pointed stump, and then I knew why it did not hurt. It was my porcelain crown.

The fish came prowling toward the *Explorer* again and I reeled in. This time, though, he came neither as close nor took off with as much speed.

"He's tiring," Lou said. "He feels a lot more bushed than you do."

"My eyes, Lou," I said. "Could you wipe the sweat out of my eyes?"

Lou drew his handkerchief across my forehead and I went back and pumped the fish toward the boat. Fifteen minutes later he was close enough to gaff. Gus had succeeded Mario with the hook. He leaned out, swung hard and nicked Bosco. But the fish thrashed and twisted away. I clutched the reel and held it as hard as I

could. I turned the spool slowly and forced the fish to come close enough to gaff. Lou ran and grabbed the leader with both hands. The albacora surged. The cords jumped out in Lou's neck, but he held fast. This time Gus connected with the gaff. We had our albacora.

"But that's not Bosco, Lou," I shouted. "The one you caught last year was bigger."

"He'll run about 800 pounds," Walt Gorman said. "You know how many women have caught a fish that big?"

"Record, record," shouted Mario.

"I timed you an hour and fifty-five minutes," Luis Rivas said. "How do you feel?"

"Tired," I said, "and filthy. I want to roll into a good hot tub where all I'll have to land is a cake of soap." Then I remembered Jo Manning.

"Lou," I shouted. "Did you talk to the Mannings yesterday?"

The boys had hauled my fish aboard. Lou turned away. "Hell," he said, "I forgot all about it. Those damn penguins. It just slipped my mind." Lou ran to the cabin and began barking at the radiotelephone. He had plenty to tell the Mannings, and his voice sounded impatient, but they were not expecting to hear from us. The phone date Lou had made had passed almost twenty-four hours earlier, and now he could get no answer. Walt Gorman headed the *Explorer* toward Iquique. Pisagua had come through, exactly as our guests

had advertised the night before. Lou stayed at the radiotelephone, trying to contact the *Marlin*. He finally succeeded in reaching someone in Iquique.

"Mrs. Marron caught an albacora," Lou roared. "Get hold of the derrick and weighmaster. We'll be in at about five o'clock."

A crowd was waiting when we reached the dock. Next to the derrick that hauled him from the boat, my albacora looked small.

"He certainly isn't Bosco," I said to Lou. "He isn't really much of a fish after all."

"He's a record, Genie," Lou insisted.

Lou helped string the albacora up for weighing, casually, as though he knew that what he had said was fact. Then, on the scale, my fish weighed in at 778 pounds. They cut him down and weighed the rope. It weighed only six pounds. My albacora weighed 772 pounds. It was the biggest swordfish any woman had ever caught and the biggest any man or woman ever caught on twenty-four-thread line.

Hedley posed me next to my record albacora and asked me to smile prettily. I broke into a grin without thinking of my tooth. When I remembered, I pursed my lips to hide the hole. My grin turned gummy, like the smile of a seven-year-old.

"Smile," Doty insisted, "as though you meant it."

"I mean it," I said grimly.

"You'll look unhappy in the picture."

"Well, I don't feel unhappy." I felt like a crone, and with the dirt of my day's labor on me, I felt like someone in the Foreign Legion, too. But I definitely did not feel unhappy.

Back at the Hotel Prat, Jo Manning came in with the soap right after dinner. "It's still unopened," she said, "and unused."

"Well, I won't use it then," I said. "The way we've been going that soap will probably keep passing from hand to hand until the expedition is over."

"I don't think so," Jo said. "I think the one you caught today will let you have the soap for keeps."

I had caught a big one, and the fight had been clean and hard and good. But there was a bigger albacora swimming somewhere in the Humboldt, and what I had accomplished was no more than a preliminary to the greater struggle. While I lay back in my tub with the sweet-smelling soap as a prize, Bosco still swam free off the Pacific Coast.

✂ When we launched a fifty-four-foot cruiser in Bay Head, New Jersey, as a successor to the *Explorer*, trumpets sounded, champagne corks popped and *Sports Illustrated* magazine announced in headlines, "Uncle Lou Builds His Dream Boat." *Eugenie VIII* was the name Lou chose for the new craft, over an objection which stemmed not so much from modesty as from the fact that all those Roman numerals did nothing to conceal my age. Actually, in naming the sixteen boats he has built since 1929, Lou has used my name only half the time, so I suppose I should be grateful.

To Lou *Eugenie VIII* represents thirty years of dreams, but for me it has not yet taken the place of the *Explorer*. Admittedly, the *Explorer* was a smaller boat;

only forty feet in length. Under a full load, it never could make more than eighteen miles an hour, while *Eugenie VIII* can speed six miles an hour faster, even though its General Motors Diesels were designed principally for long-range cruising. But it was in the fighting chair in the stern of the *Explorer* that I battled Bosco's first cousin. The *Explorer* means only a trifle less to me than the Ark must have meant to Noah.

The *Explorer* was built under pressure, amid confusion and in haste. It is a wonder that it was ever built at all. On that morning when John Manning had first dropped in from California to discuss Lou's ideas for an expedition and a boat it was hard for me to believe that anything would ever take shape.

When Manning arrived at our Manhattan duplex Lou and I were eating breakfast, our maid Elma was scurrying in the kitchen and, in general, there was the sort of chaos we have come to expect. I was dictating to a secretary, Lou was trying to talk on two telephones at once, while reading the financial pages and gobbling toast, when the doorbell rang. I hurried to the winding staircase, ran down and opened the door.

"Hi," John said. "Have you got an extra glass of orange juice?"

After a greeting kiss, I ushered him upstairs. Lou dropped the phone to wave a welcome and John asked Elma if he could have eggs once over lightly. The bell rang again, I ran to answer it again and, on opening

the door, I saw a small man carrying an enormous camera.

"Mrs. Marron," he began, "I understand you're planning a fishing trip."

"Trying to plan a trip," I corrected. "What is it?"

"I'd like to get pictures of you and your husband for the papers."

"Thanks, we don't want any," I said. I slammed the door and scooted back upstairs, congratulating myself on my own worldliness. Pictures in the papers were fine, but I had run into this racket before. The man comes in, takes one or two pictures, plunges into a sales pitch and before long you are buying photos, the camera and even the flash bulbs. As I reached the upper landing, the bell rang again. I was furious, but this time a pleasant-looking woman of about my age had rung.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Marron, but I'm Miss Freebus," she said. "You met me at the press booth during the motorboat show, don't you remember?"

"Oh, my goodness, of course I remember you, Miss Freebus."

"This man," she said, "is my photographer. You know you did say you'd hold still for me to do a story."

"I'm sorry," I said to the photographer. "Please, both of you, come in."

The photographer smiled. I imagine he had been running into similar receptions for years. I led them both

up to the breakfast table. Then the door bell rang again.

"Eggs," I said. "I want to eat my eggs."

"That's the Consul General of Peru," Lou said to me above the telephone. "I asked him up to discuss the trip."

"I'll go to the door," Manning offered.

"Thanks, John," I said. Then, remembering my rudeness to the photographer, I added, "Be diplomatic now."

John nodded. He is a handsome man, charming and poised enough to meet any situation. I think he should have been a diplomat. After one forkful of eggs, I leaned toward the balcony rail so I could see what was happening at the front door. A tall thin man with a long narrow face had entered. He clutched a portfolio, and I could see John Manning was giving him portfolio treatment.

"How do you do, sir," John began. "So kind of you to come and so good to see you on this beautiful morning. Let me take your hat and coat."

There is no such thing as being overly diplomatic with a diplomat and John was pouring it on yards thick.

"Won't you join us for a bit of breakfast?" he resumed, after he had hung the visitor's hat and coat.

"Thank you, no," the man said. "I have a heavy schedule today and I want to get to work."

"Of course," Manning said. "I understand. Perhaps a cup of coffee? I can personally testify that the Mar-ron's coffee is the finest anywhere in New York."

"Sorry," the man said, looking around the living room. "I just don't have the time."

"Then let me make you a drink," Manning urged. "It certainly is a cold morning, sir."

The man bristled. "Drink?" he said. "Never when I'm working."

"So much of the work must be so delicate," Manning said, saving the situation rather well, I thought.

"It's all delicate," the man said. Then he strode over to the Steinway, opened his portfolio and began to tune the piano.

"The middle B sharp," I called. "Be sure you fix the middle B sharp, it's way out of tune." John Manning fixed the drink for himself. The man was still working on the piano an hour later when the real Peruvian Consul arrived.

Later, when Jo Manning reached our apartment, she almost matched John's adventure during a tour of the stuffed fish and shiny trophies that cover our walls and mantels. Lou took time out from his telephones to join me in showing Jo through the place, and in the guest room she spotted a chart not far from a small mounted barracuda. Lou's name was prominent in the heading.

Jo burst out, "What extraordinary catches!"

Both Lou and I had turned to point out another fish.

"This list here," Jo said, waving the chart. "March the first, 198; March the second, 199; March the third, 198 . . . What are these, striped marlin?"

"They aren't marlin," I said, laughing.

"Never mind," Lou said. "Come on, Jo. There are some other things I want to show you."

"Wait a minute," Jo said. "What kind of fish are they?"

"They aren't any kind of fish, Jo," I said. "That's Lou's weight chart."

After three months of planning Lou had decided exactly what he wanted in the *Explorer*. We went over to the Wheeler Shipyards in Brooklyn. "This fellow Gene Wheeler knows how to build a boat," Lou told me, "but we're really going to try him out and see." The sheafs of paper on which all Lou's plans had been drawn were rolled up in the car. When we reached the shipyard and went into Wheeler's office, Lou unrolled them all, the rough sketches, the detailed drawings—everything—and spread them on a large round table. Wheeler leafed through them carefully. After a while, he whistled between his teeth. "*Queen Mary*, huh?" he said.

"It's got to be the way I've put it down on paper," Lou said. "We have to satisfy scientists and fishermen and the sea."

"But the extras," Wheeler said. "There must be 200 extra items."

"We need them all," Lou said.

"Let's see," Wheeler said. "You want a speedboat with 200 extras and you want it constructed of teak-wood and mahogany."

"There's something else you have to consider," Lou said. "We won't be doing all our fishing out of a single port. We're going to be using this boat way down in Chile. We don't know just what the different ports will be like. Some of them may be primitive. The *Explorer* has to be able to sustain itself for weeks on end."

Wheeler whistled again.

"It's got to be a boat with enough size to take rough sea and at the same time it's got to be maneuverable enough to stay with the fastest fish," Lou said. "That's about it."

"How long before you'll need this?" Wheeler asked.

"Six months," Lou said.

"Impossible," Wheeler said.

"Well, here's the situation," Lou said. "Grace Lines is willing to ship the boat for us on board the *Santa Rita*, but they've given me a deadline. If we miss the deadline, we can forget the whole thing because there won't be any expedition or any boat or any business for you."

"We'll meet your deadline, Mr. Marron," Wheeler said. "But how about a bigger boat that could make it to South America on its own?"

"If I had you build a boat big enough to sail 7,000 miles," Lou said, "we'd have to sacrifice maneuverability, wouldn't we?"

Wheeler nodded.

"That's one thing we're going to have to have," Lou said. "The fish we're after are about as evasive as anything in the ocean."

According to Lou's plans the *Explorer* had to sleep eight people comfortably and include a cockpit large enough for working purposes. The fighting chair, Lou ordered, was to be set back four feet from the stern, assuring the footrest ample clearance. Just over the water line, in the stern, a trap door and rollers had to be constructed so we could haul our fish aboard without a davit. Then there was to be a deep freeze that could hold food for three months, an automatic pilot, a depth recorder, a temperature gauge, a tow and dozens of special features most fishermen don't even know exist. For power, Lou purchased two Chrysler Imperial engines, each generating 200 horsepower.

My special project was the dinette. At sea, a comfortable and airy place to eat always becomes particularly important, and on long journeys a dinette also tends to serve as the center of social life on board. The table is handy for cards or writing or supporting high-ball glasses. Much as you want a spacious living room at home, you want a spacious dinette on a fishing boat. But on the boat space is a problem. By putting our dinette in the forward part of the cabin where there was

ample space for big windows, the dinette seemed larger than it actually was. On a compact functional ship, such as the *Explorer*, an illusion of space is the best possible compromise.

"One other thing," I said to Lou, after we had discussed the dinette with Wheeler. "I want a good workable shower."

"Wheeler," Lou asked, "can you give us a good big shower?"

"Hell," Wheeler said, "I can give you Niagara Falls if you figure out a place for me to put it."

Lou hasn't yet devised a floating waterfall, but in less than a half-hour he had that shower bath on paper.

While the *Explorer* was under construction, Wheeler Shipyards was almost a home away from home. Lou and I shuttled over to watch construction and Walt Gorman, who was already signed on as Captain, practically lived at the Shipyards.

"There are quite a few kinds of mahogany I can get you," Wheeler said once. "You got any preference?"

"Hell, yes," Lou said. "It's got to be Honduras mahogany. That's the only wood sure to keep its varnish."

For Lou, most of the questions were no tougher than that, until one morning Gene Wheeler stopped him dead. In many areas where we intended to fish, the ocean teemed with nautical termites, persistent little swimming organisms that bored straight through all kinds of wooden hulls. The surest way to starve the bugs and save the boat demanded a fiberglass covering

on the hull. Lou wanted three layers of plastic glass applied, and while coating presents no difficulties in dry, temperate weather, this was winter and Wheeler's yards were cold and damp. Even in the enclosed shop where the *Explorer* was coming into being, electric heaters could not ordinarily raise the temperature to seventy degrees.

One January day when we thought the *Explorer* was almost ready to sail, Gene Wheeler telephoned to say that he was stymied. "It's too damn cold," he announced to Lou, as I listened on an extension. "We can't do it right. The plastic won't harden the way it should."

"Can't you get it on at all?" Lou asked.

"Sure," Wheeler said, "but it won't go on *right*. Maybe we can fix it so it looks okay, but when you get down there, it's gonna start peeling off. Then you'll blame us for a rotten job. I think I ought to stop until summer."

"But you can't! The fish won't wait and the scientists won't wait and the Grace Line isn't going to wait," Lou said. "We've got to think of something right now."

"I can't think," Wheeler said. "This shop is colder than Siberia."

"Wait a minute," Lou said. "They get paint to stick on cars in the winter."

"Those plants are heated, Lou," Wheeler said. "It's not the same."

"Sure," Lou said, "but that isn't how it works. They bake the paint on with heat lamps. Infrared lamps, I think they use. Can you get hold of some infrared bulbs?"

"Easy," Wheeler said, "but do you have any idea of how many lamps it would take? Do you have any idea of what it's gonna cost you?"

"I don't care how many men and I don't care how much," Lou said. "Get all the lamps you need and put the men on all night if you have to. I'll be over later on."

When we arrived, the boatyard was a startling thing to see. Infrared bulbs covered almost every inch of floor beneath the hull of the *Explorer*. "More than a thousand bulbs down there," Wheeler said. "I think we've got a chance to coat it now."

"We'd better have," Lou said.

The lamps were placed underneath the *Explorer* so that warm air currents would rise against the hull. That night the fiberglass coating stuck smoothly and evenly. A thousand bulbs had dried the three coats Lou had wanted, and after that I knew the *Explorer* was going to be a gallant lady. I remembered how we had allowed Wheeler to cart the *Explorer* in her unfinished state up to the motorboat show for display.

"The beds are up too high," one man said. "It'll be no luxury rolling that far above the water."

"We need storage space underneath the beds," I

pointed out. "This is not a pleasure cruiser. It's a functional boat."

The man went away satisfied, but of course the *Explorer* was not functional until afterward, when it underwent the fiberglass and infrared treatment. I never allow myself to wonder what we all would have done if the treatment had not worked.

During the weeks we worried about the *Explorer*, we could always get momentary relief by turning our worries elsewhere. Port clearance was a typical alternate concern. Lou made repeated trips to Washington and the UN to plead with ambassadors and consuls lest the *Explorer* be held up like a cargo vessel in each foreign port. Then Lou arranged our passports for Chile, Ecuador and Peru. He prodded the embassies for all the information they could supply on the Humboldt and how the fish were running. Still, our chief distraction from worry about construction of the *Explorer* was, unhappily, equally upsetting. For a time, planning shipment of the *Explorer* to fishing waters seemed no easier.

"Did you ever hear about the Egyptian obelisk in Central Park?" I asked Lou one morning when he paused between the phone calls during breakfast.

"What about the obelisk?" Lou said.

"Well, the Pharaoh didn't build it in Manhattan, you know," I said. "It had to be shipped over here from Egypt."

"Well?"

"They cut a hole in the side of a boat," I said, "way above the water line, and they shoved the obelisk in so that it ran through the ship like a spear. Maybe you can tell the Grace Company about that to help give them ideas on how to ship the *Explorer*."

Lou went back to his telephones without replying, but I knew I had started him thinking. Instead of checking with his broker, he put in a call to Grace Lines. But after he talked to a few officials, Lou hung up despairingly. "It's getting away from us," he said. "Even if Wheeler does finish her in time, the *Explorer* may not make the *Santa Rita*."

"Why?"

"The Grace people just quoted me a price, Genie. I'm not a piker, and I believe in Rivas' work, but that figure was prohibitive."

"They've got a point," he went on. "I can't argue with them. The *Explorer* runs sixteen tons. They'll have to rig a special cradle just to get her on the *Santa Rita*. Then, there isn't any direct boat service to Iquique. They're going to have to transfer her three or four times to get her down. Every time it's like moving sixteen tons of freight marked 'handle with care.' "

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," Lou said. "Maybe I'd better organize another oil company. The oil business isn't as hard as getting an expedition going. I'm stumped."

Neither of us anticipated the solution. Lou again ex-

plained to the Grace people the importance of our trip. He told them that Rivas would send his analyses and reports to government officials, universities and commercial fishermen throughout South America. If Rivas had any success at all, the work was certain to help commercial fishing which, in turn, might help the Grace Company. After considering and evaluating our expedition, the company reconsidered. They called Lou back with a pledge offering us just as much assistance as they could muster. Their hauling fee dropped to a sum so low it was clearly below their own costs. All Grace's extensive docking facilities in South America were opened to the *Explorer*. Their chief agent in each country would also act as agent for our expedition. Often I have heard about the heartless attitudes that form the backdrop for big business. I would be the last person ever to claim that a big company like Grace throws its business sense to the winds to invest heavily in losing scientific ventures. In dealing with us, the Grace Company displayed something else. It showed imagination.

Along with the *Explorer*, we had to ship twenty-eight cases of equipment. They weighed an additional three tons. Included were fishing equipment, life rafts, diving apparatus and innumerable spare parts for the boat. We did not know very much about Iquique at the time, but we did know that it was hardly the place in which to find an equipped modern repair shop.

The *Explorer* left New York during March. It had a

lengthy journey to make by boat. Lou and I left at the same time for Miami where we were to be briefed by Luis Rivas.

Near the apartment we took in Miami Beach, the chimes of a nearby church were playing Brahms' *Lullaby* on the day we arrived and again on the day we left. From Miami we flew to Guayaquil, Ecuador, in a large plane, and then on to Iquique in a small one. It was a long time before any of us heard music by Brahms again.

The curious desolation of Iquique hit me hard the day we landed. All around me lay its poverty, its treeless mountains and its dusty ground—lifeless save for a few spare patches of coarse grass. But then I looked into the harbor where the *Explorer* was anchored safely, rocking in the gentle tide. There could have been no more comforting sight. From my first day in Iquique to my last, the *Explorer* was a symbol of all that we had accomplished and all that we were yet to accomplish.

Three days before we left Iquique, the *Explorer* filled a role which even Lou had not foreseen for the ship.

We were eating lunch at sea during one of the last bright fishing days when a cormorant dropped out of the sky and landed on the forward deck. He waddled up to the cabin on stubby webbed feet, and looked down at us quite casually. I stared back.

"How cute," I said.

"No," Mario insisted. "Tired old one-eye bird."

I took another look. The bird clearly had two eyes; two beady eyes, as a matter of fact. "I don't know anything about his age, Mario," I began, "but . . ."

"One-eye bird," Mario repeated excitedly, starting from the cabin.

"Nonsense," I said. "He has two perfectly good eyes."

"Who said anything about eyes?" Walt Gorman asked, as if he was confused.

"Mario," I said. "He called him a one-eyed bird."

Walt laughed. "Mario," he called out.

Mario, halfway out of the cabin, turned around.

"What kind of bird is that?" Walt said. "What's the name of the bird, Mario?"

"One-eye," Mario said.

"There," I said. "He said it again."

"What he said," Walt Gorman said, "is guani. You know. G-u-a-n-i, the Spanish word for cormorant."

The cormorant continued peering impudently into the cabin. "Charlie," I said. "He looks like a Good Time Charlie." The name was accepted unanimously.

The way to tempt a bird, of course, is to offer food. Mario brought out some bait, which I stripped into little pieces, and holding a piece in my hand, I left the cabin and advanced cautiously to where Charlie stood. Just as cautiously, Charlie advanced toward me. Both his eyes were fixed on the bait.

"He's a panhandler," I said, and Charlie grabbed the bait and swallowed it whole.

"Say," Lou said, "I want to have a try at that." He fetched more bait. Walt and Howard both joined us and soon Charlie was sprinting from hand to hand, all enthusiasm and appetite. No more drenching dives into

the chilly Humboldt. No more plunging after slippery sardines. Charlie's days of labor were over. His ship, the *Explorer*, had come in.

It took only twenty minutes of feeding to make Charlie sick. A pouch that began to bulge from his neck was the first symptom. "Stuffed crop," Walt said. The pouch expanded swiftly and Charlie suddenly sagged toward the deck in an overstuffed heap. His head drooped and beads of water oozed from his mouth. I picked Charlie up and placed him in a sheltered spot close to the cabin. A piece of bait was lying nearby. Despite what might well be his final agony, Charlie strained himself toward the bait. He was a born pan-handler and he intended to die with his mouth full.

Since Lou had fed Charlie more often than anyone else, it was he who felt the sharpest pang of guilt. "Damn it," he said. "I'm going to massage that neck. We can't just let him lie there and die."

"Didn't I tell you not to feed him so much," I said. "But he probably won't die. Pass out maybe, but not die."

"Look," Lou said, "we better turn this ship around and head for port. I'll call Dr. Lombardy, the surgeon. He can meet us on the dock."

"Why not try giving Charlie water first?" I said.

"That's right," Lou said. "Get some water."

Mario filled a pail and plunged Charlie's head deep into it. The bird did not even try to swallow. When

Mario—good crew and nice guy

Uncle Lou and Charlie again

World record—772-pound broadbill caught by Mrs. Marron on twenty-four-thread line. This catch beats both men's and women's records. Walt Gorman stands by

Mrs. Marron and friend, a giant squid

Giant nerve and ganglion of giant squid. MIT was delighted

Mario put him down, Charlie climbed onto the bait box, tucked his head down his back deep underneath his wings and remained motionless.

"We've got to do something," Lou said.

"Old bird," Mario said. "*Muy viejo*."

"Well, I guess that means he'll kick the bucket," Lou said.

"Maybe that's why he's here," I said. "Maybe he came aboard the *Explorer* to die."

Lou massaged his neck vigorously and continued for a full ten minutes. "He'll come out of it," Lou said. "He's going to be all right." Then Charlie dropped a large white clot on Lou's right shoe. "Damn," Lou said. "There's nothing wrong with this bird any more." He put Charlie back on the deck and the bird recovered as quickly as he had fallen ill.

Later in the afternoon, I had a fine striped marlin at the end of a six-thread line. Marlin are not as large as albacora but they are tough and fast. This one was the most powerful of any I had ever hooked. He tore off so rapidly that I actually had to pour water on my reel to cool the line. The striper was swift and exciting and demanded all of my attention. Suddenly I heard shouts.

"Charlie," Lou was shouting. "Hey, Charlie flew overboard. There goes Charlie. Hey, Charlie, come here. There he is, Walt, over there. Let's get after him."

"Never mind Charlie," I demanded in the strident

tone of a fishwife. "I'm on the fastest striper I ever saw." My line grew taut. "He's getting away. Back her up, Walt, back up the boat."

"Don't back up," Lou shouted. "Swing her around and get Charlie. Hurry it up." I spotted Charlie sitting placidly in the water, off to starboard, watching and wondering.

"If you turn to starboard quick, Walt," I said, "I may keep hold of the fish." Walt turned and I winced, expecting that my line, more than three-quarters off the spool, was going to pop. I looked back and there was Lou, hanging over the side of the boat, whistling and shouting Charlie's name. My reel was screaming, and Lou was whistling at a bird.

When we got alongside him, Charlie waited, almost like a child, to be picked up. Then, accidentally, he caught a spray of warm water from the exhaust. At once Charlie lunged toward it and began to take a shower. Somewhere in the distance my marlin was leaping in long, graceful arcs. Charlie stuck his head close to the exhaust pipe. More of my line ran out. Charlie preened his feathers and let the spray hit him from a different angle. My bare reel was about to break through. "Walt," I shouted, "have you gone crazy, too?"

Lou reached overboard and hauled Charlie on deck. The *Explorer* rocketed after my marlin. From then on it was all business, but after several hours the fish was

still far off, fighting to get free of my line. I managed to haul him closer but eventually, when he was almost at the leader wire and was thrashing wildly for his life, the marlin got away. Charlie, of course, remained with us.

In light-tackle fishing, the chair is not as important as it is when you work with stronger line. The light-tackle angler has to stand a good deal and run back and forth across the stern of the boat, pumping the reel as he goes. As the boat pitches, balance becomes a problem, and a five-footer like myself is only slightly assisted by the advantage of a low center of gravity. But I don't think the angler, for all this, has a task any more difficult than that of the leader wire man.

To help hold a huge, heavy fish close to a boat, the leader man wraps the wire around his hands firmly enough to handle thrashings, but not so firmly that he cannot release the wire in an emergency and let the fish run free without taking the hands with him. Errors have cost leader wire men arms, hands and fingers. Once off Bimini I even saw a leader wire man come within inches and seconds of death. The man was named Gene Wall and he was working with his father, Eddie Wall, an unsurpassable guide. Lou was landing a 655-pound tuna, still green and hard to hold, and Eddie was doing a fine job with the wire when the accident happened. Gene brought the fish in, pulling the leader wire to him, hand over hand, with all his strength

and just as much care. Suddenly a young Bahaman deck hand decided to help. He grabbed the wire, catching Gene by surprise.

I never discovered exactly what happened next, but from the cabin cot on which I sat, I saw a whirling coil of wire descend in a perfect hangman's loop over Gene's head. I shouted and bolted to Gene and got my hands on his neck close to his throat just before the thrashing of the tuna drew the noose tight. When the wire pinned my fingers and I felt Gene writhe, I screamed like a Banshee. Then Eddie Wall saved his son's life by breaking the leader cable in half with his bare hands. In factory tests that leader cable withstood 400 pounds of pressure without breaking, but before the incredible force a father summoned from his body to save his son, it gave way. By the time the wire was removed from Gene's neck, it had cut deeply into the skin and left a thin line of blood everywhere except on the part my hands had covered.

All the way back to Iquique that evening, Charlie stayed with us. Once he tried to eat the white lacing of Lou's fighting harness, under the impression that he had encountered an albino worm, but for the most part Charlie was content with hopping, waddling and jumping into the fighting chair whenever it was vacant. When Walt Gorman eased the ship into the dock, Charlie rested motionless on the chair, his head buried in his back.

"He's unconscious," Lou said, in alarm.

"He's sleeping," I said. "He'll take off in the morning and start stuffing himself again. I know panhandlers."

But I did not know Charlie. In the morning, he was still perched on the chair, still twisted in the same odd position we had seen the night before.

"Dead," Lou pronounced, as soon as he spotted Charlie in the dawn. "I knew I should have called that surgeon."

"Maybe he's asleep," I said. "It is pretty early."

I poked Charlie sharply. I might have pressed a button or thrown a switch. The neck began unwinding like a corkscrew and when it had finally straightened itself out, Charlie looked at me blearily.

"He's got a hangover," Walt Gorman said. "Better check the liquor stock, Lou."

"Lay off the house guests," Lou grumbled. "This bird is going to bring us luck today."

"The way he did yesterday," I said. "He brought luck to marlin and to Bosco, but not us."

"He's not an albatross," Lou said. "He can't bring luck every time. Yesterday he was off stride, but now he's ready to come through." We were to leave Iquique the next day, and while the expedition and our search for Bosco were still to reach a climax, there would be no more fishing among guani birds. Charlie had very little time left to redeem himself.

In the morning, I missed three opportunities to bait

a sizable marlin. "Damn," I said to Lou, after the fish had turned his head and then submerged. "That bird's bad luck."

"Don't blame the bird," Lou said pointedly. "Charlie didn't do the baiting."

"No, look," I began. "I've got a new technique I want to try with this six-thread outfit, if only I can get another chance, and I'm a little on edge." Charlie was waddling behind the fighting chair as I turned to him. "Charlie," I said, "get in on the act, will you? That makes two fish you owe me so far."

Charlie appeared to ignore the comment, but five minutes later Walt spotted a marlin fin cutting through the water not far ahead. It was a huge dorsal fin, the biggest that we had seen yet. The *Explorer* closed in, but the first time we baited the marlin he turned away, just as the earlier marlin had done. He continued to ignore me. Then the marlin lunged for the bait, hit it and ran. To make absolutely certain of this one, I struck six times. My spool almost went bare. The marlin was hooked and trying to break away.

"Turn sharp and then get after him," I shouted to Walt.

"No," he called back from the bridge. "You'll lose too much line that way."

I was asking Walt to turn so that the fish would have almost all my line. Of course the line might break under the strain of the first turn.

"Try it, Walt," I shouted.

"You want to get cut off from your fish?" he asked.

"Please try it my way, Walt."

The *Explorer* jumped into a turn away from the fish. My line ran down to the shiny spool and the marlin jumped into the horizon. Then we were bearing down on him and I was reeling in, fast, fast, fast. In minutes I had all the line back and we were on top of the fish. Then the marlin ran again, taking most of the line. Walt turned and we repeated the process. I saw Mario talking to Gus and shaking his head.

"What the hell are you trying to do?" Lou asked. "You want to lose the fish?"

I was a minority of one, but I was adamant. Then for the third time the fish went bolting away from the *Explorer*. His leaps showed that he was tiring. No longer did he use all the line. After he had run out only half of it, he stopped and lay beneath the surface, resting.

"Get after him now," I shouted. "We've got him."

"Don't kid yourself," Walt shouted. "You've only been on him twenty minutes."

"But I've had him running so hard he's all bushed. Let's go."

"Okay," Walt said. "It's your fish."

"At least," Lou prodded, "he's your fish until he gets away."

None of us yet quite realized that a new record for

catching marlin on a six-thread line was within my grasp. From the battle he put up, we could tell that he was big, that he was strong and that he was very, very wise. But there simply wasn't time to think of records now.

Walt called for Mario to take the wheel. He ran down from the bridge and grabbed a gaff himself. Lou put on his gloves. The men didn't think the fish was ready and they were doing their best to make sure we kept him by changing assignments. Walt was our top man with a gaff and Lou was going to work the leader wire.

Mario steered toward the fish, and when we got close, I could see the marlin still was dangerous. He was tired, but not exhausted. Lou leaned over to grab the leader wire and the fish made a murderous leap. I winced because I knew Lou would lose an eye before letting go of the leader wire, but fortunately the leap was short. Lou kept easing the marlin closer. "Ready, Walt," he said.

Walt swung down and up with the gaff. "Got him," he shouted. The two of them hung on while the marlin thrashed and rose out of the sea and soaked us all. Finally, Gus managed to get a rope around him, and we hauled him aboard.

"How long did that take?" I said as Walt and Lou battled for their breath.

"Twenty-two minutes," Luis Rivas said. "On the dot."

"That's what I thought," I said. "I knew it wasn't long."

"A fast one, Madame Dynamo," Lou said. "You certainly pulled a fast one."

The guani bird was still waddling about. "Nice going, Charlie," I said. "If I insulted you by calling you a free-loader, I apologize."

Charlie stood staring at me for a few seconds. Then, redeemed, he spread his wings and soared off.

"Charlie," Lou shouted. "Hey, you! Come back here." The bird continued to fly and did not settle in the water until he had traveled some 500 feet.

"Let him go now, Lou," I said. "He's done his job. We got a fish on the last day. He's an old bird and he must be tired out."

"Maybe he's not as old as you think," Lou said.

Sure enough, another guani bird had settled alongside of Charlie. We were certain it was a female guani. Probably there was life left in Charlie yet and even Lou agreed not to interfere with romance. As far as I know, Charlie is free-loading and courting on the Humboldt to this day.

That night, when the marlin weighed in at 321 pounds, a new record for women's twenty-pound test, no one was more delighted than Lou. "The best of them all," he said. "The very best of them all."

"Thank you," I said, I hope modestly.

Mario chimed in, "*Grande.*" He kept repeating, "*Grande.*"

"Thanks, Mario," I said.

"What's made him such a fan of yours?" Walt said.

"I don't know," I said. "My manner, perhaps. The way I walk. It could be any number of things."

"Except," Lou pointed out, "it isn't any of them."

"What do you mean?"

"Mario is no fan of yours," Lou said. "He just likes money. *Dinero*. Right, Mario?"

Mario grinned.

"Remember that deal we made to save Mario's house?" Lou said.

"Oh," I said, "that."

"With all we've been pulling in," Walt said, "Mario must own two houses by now. A development, probably."

"*Cuanto dinero?*" Lou asked. "How much have you saved, Mario, from all the fish you've been selling?"

Mario took out his wallet. It was brimming with paper money.

"Let's have a celebration," Lou said. "Hey, Mario, how about throwing us a party?"

Again Mario missed a few words and answered with a flat grin. Lou patted him on the back. "Let's get back on the *Explorer*," he said. "I'll throw a party for you, Mario."

In the dinette, Mario spread his money out on the table and Lou counted it aloud. There were big bills and small bills, forty thousand pesos in all.

"Mario is a man of means," Lou said. "He's saved \$400."

"Wonderful, Mario," Luis Rivas said. "*Bueno.*"

Mario nodded and giggled.

"Four hundred," Walt said, grinning. "Next trip Mario will hire you, Lou."

Lou laughed and I laughed. Everyone was delighted that Mario had saved his Iquique homestead.

"What about you, Gus?" I said. "You have *dinero*, too. What do you want to do with it. You don't have a mortgage to meet?"

Gus was puzzled until Walt translated. Then he grinned and answered with an excited flurry of Spanish.

"It's hard to translate for you, literally," Walt said, "but let's say Gus wants to be a playboy. For a few weeks he wants to live on dry land and spend his time with girls instead of fish."

Lou smiled and then turned serious. "To be perfectly frank," he said, "I can't say that I blame him."

CHAPTER

11

To obtain specimens of black marlin for Luis Rivas we sailed first to Cabo Blanco, a great fishing spot in Peru, where we were to stay as guests of the International Petroleum Company. From Cabo Blanco we were to push on to La Plata, an Ecuadorian island where giant black marlin filled the surrounding waters. The island itself was covered with virgin jungle, commercial fishermen reported, and the sea around it was almost virgin to anglers. We had planned this trip to be the climax of our expedition and we were looking forward to it with great excitement. We went over our itinerary once again.

We traced the route to Guayaquil, then through a town called Hippi Hoppi, and on to a village at a

jutting promontory. This village, Puerto López, was within sight of La Plata Island, but an Ecuadorian sportsman named Emilio Estrada, who was going over our plans with us, became so enthusiastic that he made an additional suggestion.

"A few miles south of Puerto López," Señor Estrada said, "you find Salango. Here, at the water, a friend of mine has an hacienda with a cook and a houseboy and a bathing beach. I can arrange for you to have it."

"Things," said Jo Manning, "are looking up."

"We certainly would be grateful," Lou said.

"It would please me to have you working in my country," Estrada said. "Perhaps a few officials or a few scientists will call on you, but you will have no interference. It is a short sail from Salango to La Plata. It will be a comfortable way to work."

At two o'clock the next day the Mannings, Lou and I hopped into a Ford station wagon. John Manning had arranged for the station wagon, plus an additional truck, which was to follow a day later with supplies and a few bottles of liquor, some soda and drums of water. A driver named Carlos, who spoke a little English, came with the station wagon. When we started, he headed directly into a traffic jam that would have done midtown Manhattan proud. After ten minutes he honked vigorously and pulled over to a house. A rather flat-nosed man wearing a sweat shirt and dungarees ap-

peared, climbed into the back of the station wagon and curled up amid the luggage.

"Who's he?" I said to Carlos.

"Cousin," Carlos said.

"No you don't," said Lou. "No relatives and no free rides."

Carlos spoke quickly in Spanish. We understood nothing except that his friend in the back had to stay. "No him," Carlos said, pointing, "no trip."

We started again and reached the *camino* to Salango at three-thirty. For an hour we rode down a pleasant two-lane country road, hemmed in by tropical trees and underbrush. It was hot and humid, but we might have been riding down a road in the United States. Then we reached the boundary of a different province. Carlos twisted the wheel hard and we swerved off the highway onto a twisting dirt alley lined with a series of deep ruts. The station wagon bumped ahead. The highway disappeared behind.

"Something wrong with the *camino*?" I asked.

"No, Señora," Carlos said.

"When do we get back on the road?"

"No back. *Este es el camino*."

"Lou," I said, "he's kidding."

"Don't worry," Lou said. "This road gets better. No car could hold together for much of this."

"What happens when a car comes the other way, Carlos?" I asked.

He shrugged as though the question were pointless, but before long we heard the rumblings of a truck. Then we saw a cloud of white dust. Carlos honked hard. The truck replied. Carlos honked again. The truck backed up off the road into a clump of jungle undergrowth. Then we edged past. "In the next province," Lou said, "the road is certain to be better."

Although it seemed impossible, in the next province the road was much worse. The foliage alongside it began to grow thin and as it did, dust thickened and the chalky soil of Ecuador worked its way into our noses, our eyes, between our teeth, and over our hair and our clothing. Conversation gave way to grunts that marked each jarring bump. We saw no other cars, no other people. We kept going.

When night came and we still seemed to be nowhere near anything, I took some comfort in the blood-curdling sort of beauty that the headlights etched out in little yellow holes through the darkness. Half-dead stumps and burned trees marched in the lights, forming an army of the writhing, the tortured and the beheaded. If the road led upward, the Ford shuddered painfully; if it led down, the car brought us into small streams that often ran as high as the running board. Yet, with the night a little of the solitude vanished. Every ten or fifteen miles we came upon invisible villages, hidden by foliage but revealed by blaring phonographs. Out of the jungle came mambos, sambas and rhumbas, and

between dances and villages we heard the strange sounds of wild animals. Once, when the radiator needed water, Carlos drove right past a village and continued until the phonograph noise was left far behind us. Then he attended to the car. When John Manning asked why, Carlos explained that he was more worried about humans than about wild animals. To betray any helplessness among these Indians was dangerous, he said. He preferred stopping in the naked jungle. Close to midnight, we arrived in Hippi Hoppi.

The station wagon, Carlos and his cousin were retired at once. Lou discovered a good truck, complete with an Indian driver named José who said he knew the *camino* to Salango perfectly.

"A miracle," I said.

"No," Lou said. "A hundred American dollars. When I offered that much, good trucks and ace drivers came from all over the jungle."

"No go Salango," José announced, when we reached Puerto López.

"The hell with him," Lou said, jumping from the truck. He ran to the water's edge and stared. Then he turned around and came back. "I thought maybe Walt had the *Explorer* here," he said, "but I guess it's up at Salango. All right, boy, get going."

"No go," José said. "No possible. *Camino* bad."

"Yes, go," Lou said fiercely. "Go."

To José, Lou was more frightening than the bad road. We lurched around the vast bay and then climbed toward the top of a steep hill. We rose for half an hour. Then the truck thumped slowly to a stop.

"We're stuck," I announced.

"We can't turn around," Jo said. "Not on this mountain."

"Engine bust," José informed us, brightly.

"Somebody had better get going to Salango on foot," John Manning said. "We probably can get some burros there and finish this damn trip that way."

"I'll go," Lou said. "You stay here and see that José keeps his distance from the girls."

In the jungle, things were whining and hooting and hissing. Behind us the undergrowth crackled, and out of the darkness to our right two great red eyes flashed for an instant.

"What was that?" I shouted.

"Jaguar," John Manning said. "A leopard, maybe."

"Stop kidding," I said.

"I'm not kidding," John said.

"You're staying here," I said to Lou.

"Sleep well," he said. "I'll see you with some burros in a few hours."

For more than a few hours I tried to fall asleep. But I was listening for Lou's footfalls constantly and at the end of that time I was more alert than I had been before. Dear God, I prayed, let me hear his foot-

steps or his voice. And if I do not? How long can I wait? Where can I go to find him? Neither Jo nor John Manning could fall asleep, either.

"At eight o'clock," I told them, as we waited for the dawn, "I'm going to follow Lou's path."

"I ought to follow it, if anybody does," John said.

"I can't stand the inactivity, John. Why did I let him go?"

"You didn't let him go," Jo said. "He went."

"We can't follow him until it gets light," John said.

"There's nothing we can do, Genie," Jo said, "except listen."

"You aren't going to get rid of him this easily, anyway," John said. "Any jaguar that starts to mix with Lou is making a terrible mistake."

"It probably would be skinned alive," Jo said.

"What about snakes?" I said.

"Lou will use 'em to bait Bosco tomorrow morning," John said.

I tried to smile.

Jo opened some cans of beer that was warm and thick and unpleasant, and we sat in the truck drinking it and listening. At dawn the Mannings were urging me to wait until after eight o'clock. Jo suddenly cried out sharply. "Quiet" she said. "I heard it."

"What?" I said, "what?"

Then I heard the crackling of footsteps down the

road. "Hello," I shouted, "Lou, is that you? Are you all right?"

"You sure pick a funny camping ground," a voice came back. It was not Lou coming toward us, but Walt Gorman.

"Is Lou all right?" I shouted. "Where is he?"

"Right now," Walt said, "he's sleeping in the hacienda."

I looked at Jo and John and we all felt a little silly. Along with Walt, there came a huge Newfoundland dog. "Is that a burro?" I said, trying to conceal joy with flippancy. "Are we supposed to ride him to Salango?"

"What is it?" Jo asked, "an Angora jackass?"

"What about the burro?" John said.

"You don't need a burro when you've got a truck," Walt said. He lifted the hood, probed, thumped and announced shortly, "Just a fuel line clog. I'll have it going soon."

"How far are we from Salango?" I said.

"Four miles," Walt said. "Lou didn't make it until almost daybreak."

In a few minutes we were careening toward Salango, Walt at the wheel. When we arrived at 8:45, it had taken us almost nineteen hours to travel eighty miles. Lou's snores guided me to where he slept. I fell into the adjoining cot and fell asleep, still filthy and without even having changed my clothes.

A vise squeezed my forehead a few hours later when the sounds of daytime awakened me. Lou was gone and the blinds in the room had been drawn tightly, but noise broke where no light fell. I twisted on the cot. Each sound was a solo instrument trying to have its way. There was the raucous neigh and hiccoughing of burros, mixed with the broken songs of jungle birds; the yaps of dogs, demanding attention, played off against the screaming proclamation of roosters. Human voices, the resolute beatings of hammers and the strident echoings of laughter added to the din.

I got up and pushed open the door. Sunlight, glancing off the sea and a clean strip of sand, blinded me for an instant. Then I saw that I had opened a door that faced a little balcony overlooking the sea, now cobalt and clear and stretching toward the sky. Breakers pounded the sand, and just beyond the surf, the *Explorer* lay restlessly at anchor, straining her moorings with each swell and ebb. The sea was so vast that the *Explorer* looked small and inadequate, but still she was a comforting sight in so alien a land.

The smell of fresh coffee rose from below, where the beans had been spread to dry in the sun. Mixed with coffee was the familiar scent of iodine and the smell of tar from boat bottoms and fish nets. Surrounding the hacienda stood a high green fence which served as a perch for all the neighboring vultures. Dozens of the dour birds crouched on its posts and railings. Within an enclosure burros and ducks and pigs and turkeys and

chickens were wandering about. A giant turtle made his way among them. On the grass, too, lay countless little boats, almost like kayaks, the "bongos." I walked quickly to another side of the house and found the jungle, growing close behind frail little houses on stilts—all with thatched roofs. These were the homes of the Indians who worked on the coffee plantations. The Indian women wore bright skirts and chattered, but most of the people outside the houses were men, somber and solemn in drab slacks and shirts. These Indians seemed to be short. I studied several faces. Their skin was brownish, but beneath thick growths of hair that hid their foreheads the features were narrow and sensitive.

I took a shower. It was cold because this romantic hacienda was without such practical items as boilers. The icy water loosened the vise that held my head, and, feeling much better, I wandered downstairs. The house seemed to have neither windows nor screens, and all of its beams were exposed.

"Maybe," I said to Lou who was sitting in the sun, "this is a palace here, but it could use a few conveniences."

"I thought the same thing," Lou said, "but as it is, bare beams exposed and all, it ran to more than \$20,000 to build."

"Back home it wouldn't cost more than \$2,000," I said.

"Well," Lou said, "certainly you could build it for about \$5,000. But you have to remember the way we

came. Imagine transporting building materials here. That's what made it so costly."

To reach the *Explorer*, we had to ride out in a bongo. Natives launched the little boats, which tipped more easily than canoes, and though the Indians frequently were swamped by the first breaker they hit, this was regarded as a minor occupational hazard. Lou, Walt and I took a less phlegmatic view as we put out to sea.

We climbed into a bongo lying close to the beach, and four bongo boys pushed us out as a big and distant wave came rolling in. Then the boys jumped into the bongo and began to paddle furiously. The breaker collected all its strength and there seemed to be no hope of avoiding its full fury. But the boys continued paddling speedily and we rose swiftly up on the crest of the wave. It broke hard, but behind us. Another breaker picked us up—then a third and a fourth. Each time I crouched and held my breath but the boys, paddling with a simple confidence, simply ignored the waves, and at length we were beyond the surf, running among more gentle swells toward the *Explorer*.

On board there was some general housekeeping for me to do, and I worked quickly. As long as we were on the boat and La Plata was only an hour or so away, I decided that I might as well urge Walt Gorman and Lou to make the trip.

"What do you think?" Walt said. "You want to try it, Lou?"

"Sure," Lou said. "Maybe we'll meet Bosco."

We did not sight any fish as we sailed toward La Plata, but, entering the cove that served as the island's harbor, we ran into a school of little boats.

"Where are all the black marlin?" Lou wondered.

Two hills, smooth even mounds that were covered by thick and dark green growth, rose behind the beach at La Plata. I was staring at the scenery, wondering when the next ferry left for Pago Pago, when a bongo pulled up close to us and two Indian natives of La Plata climbed aboard the *Explorer*.

One looked about forty-five and I guessed that the other was a boy of thirteen or fourteen. "Henrique," the older man announced, pointing to his thick chest after he had first raised one hand to greet us.

"Felipe," the boy said, pointing too. Henrique looked fairly rugged, but Felipe, with his wild unruly hair standing up in strange disorder and overshadowing his skinny frame, looked as if he needed a high-calorie diet.

"How many *anos tienes tu?*" I said to him.

He did not seem to understand. "*Anos*," I repeated, "*anos*." I held out my fingers.

"Oh," said the boy. On his fingers he painfully counted seventeen. If these were the men of La Plata, I decided, big fish were in no danger thereabouts.

Henrique and Felipe sold us eggs, fixing the price at a surprisingly high five cents each because the chick-

ens had not been doing well. But huge bananas from the nearby forest went for one cent and ripe avocados cost only four cents. "Fish," I said eagerly to Henrique. "Fish?"

He shook his head. Walt asked him a longer question in Spanish and Henrique shook his head again. "No," he said. "No, no." More words came forth in a torrent, then Henrique quieted.

"Well, Walt," I said. "Which way to Bosco?"

"South," Walt said. "Back to Iquique."

"What's the matter?" Lou said.

"This is the worst year for fish Henrique remembers," Walt said, "and he remembers almost fifty years."

"What?" I exclaimed, shocked.

"The big problem seems to be bait," Walt said. "He says there's a shortage of bonito this year. It's been so bad, Henrique says, very few commercial boats have come back more than once or twice."

"But in Peru," I said, "all we heard from the commercial men was La Plata Island."

"He says that there is some chance near the northwest corner of the island and he wants to show us the spot."

"Well, let's go," Lou said.

To catch bait we trolled with feathers in the area Henrique had suggested. We could have used dead bait for the big fish, of course, but the method common to

this locality was to troll live fish—in this case oceanic bonito. After an hour of trolling we had caught just two of the local bonito.

“Hook them through the back,” Walt said. “They stay alive indefinitely that way.”

We trolled them alive but before long we were neglecting our own trolling to watch fragile Felipe fish from a bongo. He stood in his boat between the *Explorer* and the shoreline, and while we had seen no action ourselves, Felipe had hooked a beautiful black marlin. The bongo was equipped with a small sail, and as soon as the marlin struck, Felipe knocked it down. Felipe could now guide the bongo only by the shiftings of his own slight body.

“We aren’t getting anything,” I said. “Let’s go over and watch him.” Lou and Walt were no less fascinated than I.

As we closed in, we saw that the fish was considerably longer than Felipe’s boat. The marlin lunged repeatedly for the bongo, but somehow the boy kept his boat free and clear. He held the angry marlin only on a hand line but he pulled in swiftly hand over hand. The marlin thrashed and dove and then took off. The boy let the line slip out and then, although the friction must have been enough to break his skin, he clamped his palms shut. He held tight and the bongo jumped after the marlin. Felipe kept his tight grip as the fish headed out for deep water.

"Come on, Walt," I said, "we can't miss this."

"This belongs in the circus," Lou said. "He might as well be hauling that marlin in with his teeth."

Walt followed slowly and at a careful distance so we would not interfere with the battle. The fish, towing the tiny craft through the sea swell, often disappeared from our sight. Gradually the island disappeared from view. "How far do we want to stay with this?" Walt said.

"To the end," Lou said.

The fish was driving and leaping and the boy was holding fast. Finally, fully twenty miles from shore, the fish slowed its pace. The boy had been sitting very tensely hanging on, but when the fish slackened its pace, he had a new cue. He sprang up and drew the line in with both hands just as hard as he could. Twenty minutes later the marlin lay alongside Felipe's bongo.

"That fish is going to run 800 pounds," Lou said.

"Easy," Walt said.

"Well, what's he going to do with it now?" I said. "He doesn't have a gaff. How is he going to get him in the boat?"

"If he tries to get that marlin in his boat," Lou said, "he isn't going to have any boat left. Maybe he'll put the boat in the marlin."

The boy reached into the bottom of the bongo, came up with a knife and began stabbing the marlin with his right hand, while holding him close to the boat with

the other. He stabbed violently and did not slacken until the exhausted fish had bled to death. Then he quickly tied the marlin to the boat and set his sail for home. "Hi," I shouted, "*Bueno! Grande marlina.*"

The boy waved casually at us. "Sometimes," said Walt, "they go seventy miles out from shore. Henrique says that all the men of La Plata are trained at bongo fishing from the time they are children. It's the only way they have to make a living." It was the hardest way that I had ever seen.

The next day I caught a fair-sized shark, which was not what I had been after at all. From the *Explorer* fishing was poor, and all we had for solace was our pleasant primitive life around the hacienda. There was no electricity so we used oil lamps, which smoked and gave off very little light except when the flames occasionally flared up to the ceiling. At bedtime, when all the bedroom lamps were being lit, I learned to expect screams. Someone was always within half an inch of getting seriously burned.

An Indian woman named Maria did her best to keep us comfortable, and her son Adawalpa took to dropping in with his guitar and singing soft plaintive native songs. Neither could cheer us when our supply truck finally arrived. The Scotch was intact and so was the soda, but bouncing over the dreadful *camino*, most of the water jars had been broken. All that remained was eighteen gallons of drinkable water, and since we had

no intention of trying to live on Scotch alone, we were in trouble.

"But we have enough water for a while," Lou said.

"What about the water I need for washing?" I said.

"Use sea water and a strong detergent," Lou suggested.

"What about my hair?" I said. "How am I going to wash that?"

"Sea water and a strong detergent," Lou repeated.

That night I tried Lou's formula. It washed my hair clean—clean of dirt, life and color. Then in the salt water two cashmere sweaters curled up and almost died.

"Lou," I said afterwards, "this is impossible."

"Look," Lou said. "Let's just stick around a little longer. We can keep roughing it for fun even though we aren't doing much with the fish. Sure you look funny, but so what? I'll grow a beard and . . ."

That seemed to me to be sufficient. "My hair could pass for an old Harpo Marx wig," I said. "I want a beauty parlor. Every nail on both my hands has cracked. I want a manicurist. My back hurts, my hip hurts and my head hurts. I want to go to sleep on a mattress."

Lou didn't say anything.

"And don't you think it's about time you got back to the office?"

"Maybe you're right," Lou said, "but about Bosco . . ."

"If anyone catches Bosco this year," I said, "it's going to turn out to be a skinny, undersized Indian

boy bouncing about in a ten-foot bongo. Admit it, Lou. Bosco has outsmarted us for another year."

"I don't know," Lou said.

Early the next day we departed for the airport at Guayaquil.

In our entire South American stay we had boated forty-one striped marlin, twenty-six black marlin and eleven albacora for Luis Rivas to dissect. We had shipped vast quantities of plankton to the University of Miami. In answer to the urgings of the biology department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, we had captured several giant squid and sent their central nerve columns by air express all the way to Logan Airport in Boston. Enough data had been gathered on the Humboldt to fill a special report just for oceanographers. The entire scientific findings of the expedition filled a technical book which the Marine Laboratory scientists prepared. As a layman, I can hardly attempt properly to evaluate the scientific work which we have done, but of all the accomplishments of Lou's life and mine, this is the one of which we are most proud. This expedition in which we never ran down Bosco was the most memorable of two lifetimes spent at sea. It opened our eyes wide, and even as I write, we are busy organizing a new expedition back to the Humboldt for science, and for Bosco.

Walt Gorman agreed to supervise the *Explorer's* voyage back so Lou and I could fly directly home from

Guayaquil. During the flight, odors from the crates of fishbones we took with us made several passengers ill, but we were used to odors. We reached home, battered but healthy, in less than one full day.

That night, only forty-eight hours out of the jungle of Ecuador, Lou climbed into white tie and tails and I squeezed into a tight, off-the-shoulder evening gown. Then we went to a charity ball at the Hotel Plaza in New York City. My hair was frizzled and my skin was blotched with flea bites, and some people close to me at dinner seemed to be staring in surprise. Only when Lou explained that I was suffering from a rare and virulent South American disease, closely allied to bubonic plague, did most of them turn away.

Even in the bright and formal atmosphere of the Plaza, it was hard for either of us to put Bosco out of our minds. "He's still roaming off Iquique," I said abruptly, "daring us to go back after him."

"Well, let's go back, then," Lou said. "Let's go back damn soon."

There was champagne in front of us and we lifted our glasses.

"To the day we find Bosco," Lou said.

I hope the old bones hold out.

A B O U T T H E A U T H O R

MRS. EUGENIE MARRON is the holder of four world records for the catching of striped marlin and swordfish. She has fished the world's seas, from the Great Banks to Hong Kong, with her husband, Lou Marron, a world-record holder in his own right. Mrs. Marron's exploits are not limited to the sea, as she is a painter and sculptor whose work has been on exhibition.

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