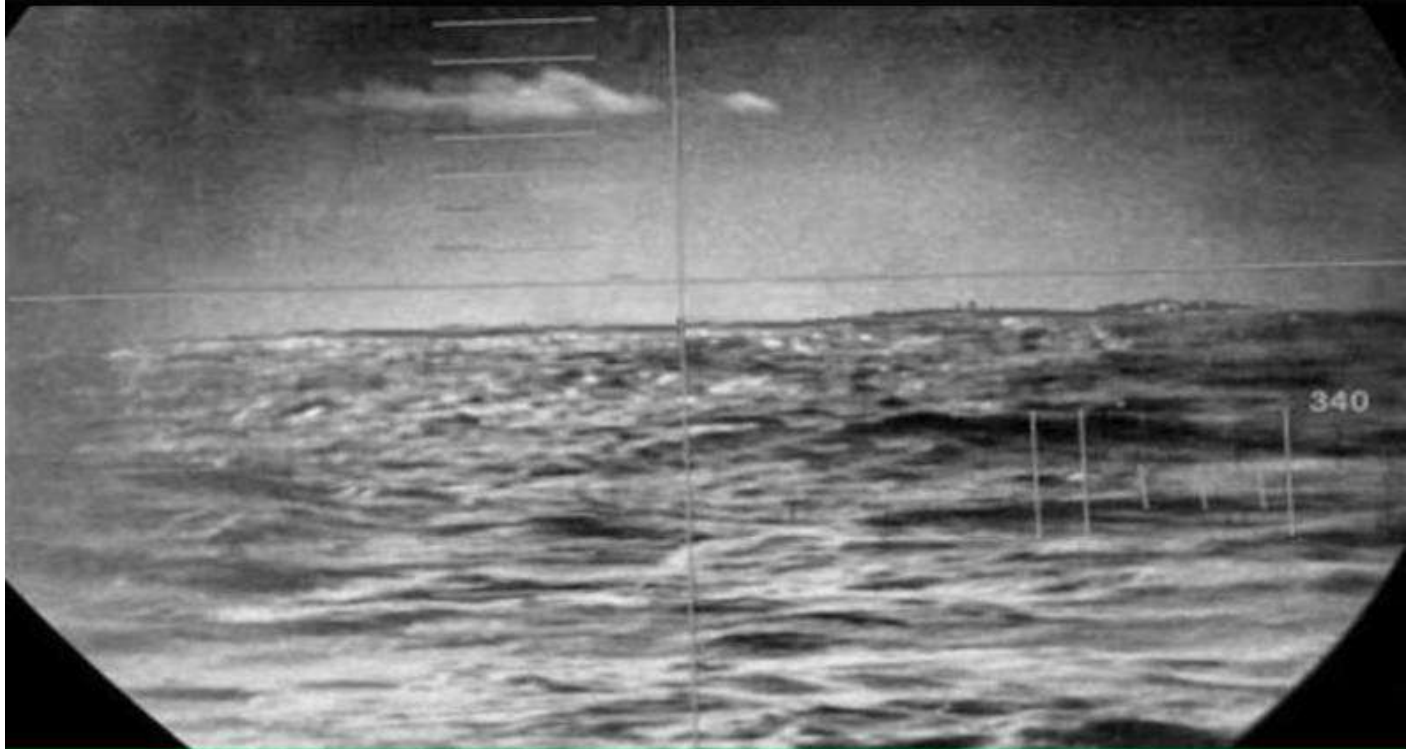


WE WOULDN'T SINK A PASSENGER LINER... WOULD WE?

FOREVER BENEATH THE CELTIC SEA



FROM THE COMPLETELY ABRIDGED SERIES – VOLUME 1

DAVID-MICHAEL

HARDING

AUTHOR OF *HOW ANGELS DIE*

*Forever Beneath
the Celtic Sea*

by

David-Michael Harding

from

The Cats of Savone

The Completely Abridged Series –

8 Short Novels for Busy People

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The Cats of Savone, from which “**Forever Beneath the Celtic Sea**” is gleaned, is the 1st installment in the *Completely Abridged Series – Short Novels for Busy People*. The collection grew from the author’s teachings and letters on the Art & Science of Writing. This work contains examples of what David-Michael Harding refers to as newborn novels. “Most novels begin their lives as short stories. Consider Ernest Hemingway’s *Old Man and the Sea*, or John Steinbeck’s *The Red Pony*. Though in their entirety these classics are short in comparison to other works of the masters, each began life as a true short story. Writing, much like any gift, skill, habit, or hope, is strengthened through practice, training, and exercise. The short story is the stretching and dedication to a running regime long before the marathon. It is the repetition of scales on the piano, years before the recital.”

Read “**My Boo Radley**” and meet the peculiar ex-big league pitcher. “**The Cats of Savone**” will take you into the world behind the walls of a maximum security prison while in “**Forever Beneath the Celtic Sea**” you’ll feel your hands against the damp hull of a German U-boat in World War I. You’ll be taken back to a hidden side of the Civil War in “**Black Men in Bright Blue**” and somewhere unknown through “**St. Alden’s.**” Then saddle up to laugh and learn with “**The History of West Texas According to Henry Brass.**”

For fans of David-Michael Harding, these shorts and novellas are glimpses into the talent and passion his creations are layered in. Readers care about the people in a Harding story. You’ll cheer, jeer, laugh, cry, and inexplicably learn as characters dance, stumble, and recover at the tip of the author’s pen through the amazing reading delight Harding calls “edu-tainment.”

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David-Michael Harding is a life-long writer whose novel, *How Angels Die*, continues to receive critical acclaim. A former semi-professional football player, his writing is hard hitting and passionate. He holds a master’s degree in education and is an adjunct professor of writing.

Novels by David-Michael Harding

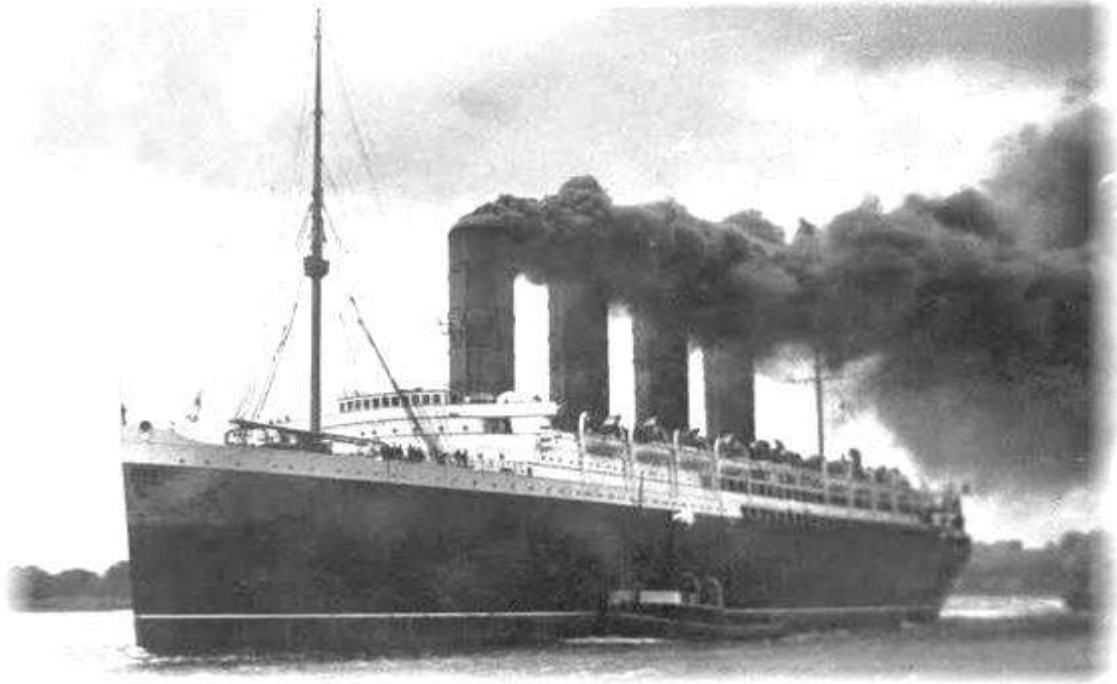
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Forever Beneath the Celtic Sea

“We’re coming up on periscope depth, Captain.”

“Very good,” Schwieger said as he eased through the few steps to his station at the periscope of U-20, his German submarine. Experienced, calloused, and confident hands gripped the well balanced instrument and effortlessly hefted the boat’s clandestine eye to its maximum height. As the thirty-year-old Captain pressed his own eye to the viewfinder, the lens above him broke the surface of the windswept Celtic Sea just off the south east Irish coast and west of Germany’s English enemy.

“Bearing!” Schwieger barked as he spun himself and the periscope to catch sight of a ship nearly two thousand meters out on the horizon.

“Nineteen degrees ea’ nor’east, Captain. And steady.”

“Speed!”

“Eleven knots, sir. She’s making a run.”

Calmer now, the Captain questioned his first officer. “What is she, Commander?” he asked as he gave way to let his second view the quarry.

“Looks to be a freighter, sir.”

“Agreed,” the Captain said as he again took hold of the periscope and resumed studying the grey silhouette. “And her destination?”

“I’d say given her heading she’s bound for the yards of Liverpool, sir.”

“And from there?”

“Sir?”

“Her cargo. What is its destination? Given the God-awful state of Europe.”

“Ahhh. Yes, sir. Munitions and supply for Flanders Fields, I would venture.”

“Flanders Fields? Indeed.” Captain Schwieger said as he continued his own study. “You’ll have to go elsewhere for argument.”

Around the tight confines of the sub’s conning tower and below throughout the wider body, nose to tail, the crew waited to execute with well oiled precision the orders they knew would come.

“Helmsman?” Schwieger said in voice that was more request than order. “Lay in a course to intersect. Heading two eight seven. Bring us around. Commander? Arm torpedo tube one.”

“Arm torpedo tube one!” the Commander echoed, as his own words bounced from man to man along the sub.

“Range?” Schwieger asked no one in particular.

“Sixteen hundred meters. Holding at eleven knots, Captain.”

“Open outer door on one.”

“Open outer door on one!”

“Open outer door on one...”

“Stand by to fire.”

“Stand by to fire!”

“Stand by to fire...”

The command was relayed through the boat to the forward torpedo room, a cramped and clammy space where extra torpedoes hung from the already low, rounded grey ceiling. Seventeen-year-old seaman Guenther Stroehmann heard the reverberating order and grabbed the simple lever that would launch havoc with the wake of the torpedo. His hands were glistening under a sheen of dirty oil and grease. He had spent most of the day cleaning and preparing the loading mechanisms for tubes one and two. The forward torpedo bay, integrated into the bow of the submarine, had a mirror of it facing aft in the stern. The second firing station gave U-20 two more torpedo tubes that could be armed and ready for Schwieger to spin the sub or fire in another direction depending on the location of the target. The two identical stations, fore and aft, lent itself to competition between the crews. Cleanliness and mechanical preparation ruled the day and young Stroehmann wouldn’t let his post be beaten. He was young – one of the youngest on the thirty man crew – but his work ethic was solid and his devotion to his captain and to Germany unshakeable.

Back at the periscope, Schwieger watched, waited, and gave the order. “Fire one.”

As before, the words passed from mouth to mouth, careening with the ease of water flowing in a pipe, bolting through the boat’s narrow corridors until they reached Guenther. He twisted his right hand down hard and yelled at the top of his voice, “ONE AWAY!” Beside him he heard the torpedo come to life and felt the lurch as it rocketed from its bed.

Guenther automatically placed his hands on the forward wall of the cramped room and waited to feel the detonation of the explosives and the death throes of the freighter. The sub itself barely breathed as nearly a minute passed in total silence with Guenther’s palms pressed against the hull and in the attack room, Schwieger’s eye pressed against the periscope.

Under his breath Captain Schwieger counted down the stopwatch that ticked in his head. The seconds and the distance ran together while, invisible to him, the torpedo crept through the cold water. Schwieger counted softly to himself. The torpedo crashed against the hull of its target on cue. A monstrous blast no one on the U-20 could hear sent men and metal over sixty feet in the air above the stricken ship. The sub felt an unmistakable shudder caress her. All who felt it recognized the tremble as the tell-tale sign of a hit. A slight smile of satisfaction came to Schwieger’s face. “There she goes men. Prepare to surface.”

In the forward torpedo room Guenther clapped his hands when he felt the wave of the explosion pass around the submarine. He pulled his lucky deutsche mark from his pocket and tallied another scratch on the grey wall with the multisided coin. The number of enemy ships he had sunk now totaled seven. He ran his hand over the scratches, brushing away the loosened flakes of paint. When he returned to Hamburg he mused, he would be a hero.

The rest of the submarine was darting sailors as the men prepared to surface. A machine gun crew stood at the hatch ready to man the 37mm gun that waited on the sub's deck. Other men had lighter machine guns over their shoulders. Captain Schwieger and his officers waited as well. When the cry came that they had breached the surface a seaman unbattened the hatch, thrust it open, and jumped aside as the gun crew scampered up the ladder through the sea spray that showered down through the open portal. In seconds the entire collection of men stood on the deck and packed the tower, cheering as the last vestiges of the freighter slipped beneath the waves.

The captain, over continuing shouts of celebration, ordered his boat ahead at quarter speed. In short order the sub was cruising through the floating remains of its victim. Boxes and bundles floated everywhere. Men, dead and dying, were bobbing in the bitter water. A few clung to pieces of freight and were summarily executed or left to die in the cold sea. There were orders to the contrary – orders to surface and call for all hands to abandon ship before launching a torpedo. This directive was often followed and often not. This was war, perhaps the biggest the world had ever seen. Surfacing near a ship presented a real risk of being rammed and run down as there was bounty money levied on each U-boat.

U-20's executive officer made notes on the debris, placing stars next to entries of "food stuffs" and "diesel oil," much of which burned on the surface around the creeping sub. While the commander continued jotting his notes, the communications specialist took advantage of the surface time to check radio traffic otherwise out of reach when the boat was beneath the waves. He reported up the conning tower to the captain that he had monitored lagging transmissions surrounding an SOS from a freighter called *Centurian*, apparently torpedoed thirty miles south of St. George's Channel, U-20's present location. Later, Schwieger would log the *Centurian* sunk on 6 May 1915.

The submarine remained on the surface a scant twenty minutes. All the members of the crew, including Seaman Stroehmann, scrambled out the hatch as they rotated among themselves for a few minutes of fresh air. Soon however, all the men had returned to their posts and U-20 had returned to hunt the Celtic Sea.

The following morning broke slowly, hindered by dense fog cradling Ireland's southern shoreline. Schwieger utilized nature's cloak and cruised openly at thirteen knots on the water's back. With a trail of sunken ships behind her, the U-20 was making for home to refit before joining a wolf pack bound for the North Sea. As the hours ticked away the fog melted and forced the boat to seek the shelter found in the depths. When the submarine dove, Guenther was writing another letter home. The letters were more a journal of the mission than true letters as he wouldn't be near a postal pick up until he was back on land at the submarine's lair. The writing took a pause as the sub nosed down. Guenther was accustomed to the changing pitch of his bunk, but momentarily held the rail of his narrow bed to keep from sliding. Even though the letters wouldn't be read for some time, he picked up his writing as the U-20 leveled off. He recounted the recent sinking of three ships in two days, forewarning his hometown that a hero would be returning.

Once his command was settled beneath the waves Captain Schwieger traversed his boat. Each step was surrounded by the quiet hum of the electric propulsion motors. He paused near the torpedo loading hatch amidships and gently touched a small wooden cross that was fixed to the curved hull of the submarine. In a vessel as confined as the U-20, this tiny space served as the crew's church. Schwieger had long known of the cross and how, during inspections in port, it mysteriously vanished, something he appreciated as most ranking members of the military could be counted on to take exception. But the cross, and the two square foot sanctuary it carried with it always materialized as the sub left port for the sea. Schwieger smiled as he thought of the symbol and its innocent game of hide and seek, but the smile quickly faded when he considered for a moment how he and his boat played the game on a grand scale. With the war back on his mind he petitioned for a continued good hunt and a safe return then eased his hand away.

The captain had just stepped from the small chapel when a seaman's head poked through an open watertight doorway in front of him.

"Captain, the Lieutenant Commander says there is a ship on the horizon."

Schwieger moved quickly. He grasped the header of the doorway and vaulted through feet first. Once inside the control room he rapidly ascended the short ladder into the attack room within the conning tower of the sub. His commander was peering through the periscope but stepped aside as Schwieger entered.

"I thought it was a convoy at first. It's hard to say what she is, but it's big."

"Destroyer?"

"No, sir. Bigger."

"Battleship?" Schwieger asked, obviously excited as he pulled himself into a tight embrace with the periscope.

"I can't say, Captain. She's a long way off."

"Helmsman," Schwieger ordered. "Lay in a course to intersect. Bring us hard about to starboard. Bearing twenty-two degrees. Let's get a closer look."

Over the next hour and a half the two vessels drew closer to one another – one knowing, the other ignorant they were being shadowed. Schwieger and his commander took turns at the periscope, relieving each other and their eyes as they struggled to examine the hulking shape in the distance. Finally the commander saw something that disturbed him. It was heard in the tenor of his voice.

"Captain, she's got four funnels."

The senior officer assumed the watch and saw four thick smokestacks on the horizon. As he continued studying the intended prey growing in his lens, he noticed that not all the funnels were spewing smoke which told him the huge ship was running under partial steam. Behind him his commander silently mouthed the word, "Liner," to others nearby who in turn passed the information quietly on to their shipmates. The word rocketed through the boat as quickly as the order to fire, but in jetted whispers no one except the next nearest man could hear.

The captain spoke from behind the periscope without looking up.

"Commander, arm torpedo bays one and two and open outer doors."

The commander's eyes jumped in their sockets beneath a brow that was instantly furrowed. His jaw slackened and he turned his head as though to adjust his hearing.

When the captain's second didn't instantly relay the instruction, Schwieger looked up from the picture of the monstrous ship in the lens.

"Commander? Did you hear the order?"

"Yes, sir," the commander said as he tentatively pointed to the periscope. "But I believe that is a liner, Captain."

Schwieger put his hands behind his back and stepped the short distance to his commander until the two mariners stood nose to nose.

"That, Commander, is a ship operating in enemy waters. As you are aware, our directive is to attack all vessels which sail within our reach."

"Yes, sir. I understand, but—"

"Speed!" the captain snapped as he spun back to the periscope.

A voice rang from the control room below. "Seventeen knots, Captain. We'll range to seven hundred meters on our current course."

"Steady as she goes then. Commander, arm torpedo bays one and two and open outer doors."

The commander's eyes stayed on the captain as the latter resumed his post at the periscope. His repeating of the order was barely audible and slow. He hadn't quite finished before a sailor in the control room snatched up the order out of the air.

"Arm torpedo bays, one and two, and open—"

"Arm torpedo bays one and two and open outer doors!"

The order reached Guenther just behind the news that the vessel they'd been stalking was a passenger ship. He mechanically armed the torpedoes as his eyes looked through the hatchway toward the command room as though his eyes might find justification appear before him. While his eyes searched, his ears listened for an order that would bely the one that moved his hands over the launch levers. All while his mind was racing above the surface to the mammoth target.

"We're not going to fire on an ocean liner," he said to no one present. "It must be a battleship or something. Or maybe a liner converted to a troop ship."

As Guenther continued to reconcile himself to the order he hurriedly cranked open the doors of chutes one and two then retreated to his station over the firing handles. He closed his eyes and literally shook his head in an effort to clear his mind free from beneath a weight he had never felt before. The stealthy killer he worked and slept in had no need to attack a civilian passenger liner. "What reason would there be?" he heard his voice say to his ears only.

As his words fell aimlessly to the floor others bolted into the room.

"FIRE ONE!"

Guenther's hands were suddenly gripped by shock. Hesitation froze them as they attempted to engage the firing mechanism. It was hard to push. Was it stuck? He had done the maintenance himself. They were spotless – oiled and greased – and had moved as smooth as a summer breeze. A quick burst of sweat bled out across his forehead and ran into his eyes in less than a heartbeat. As it burned he felt the handle give way. The lever started to begrudgingly descend while his hands still begged retreat. He hunched his shoulders up over the firing panel and forced the lever completely down.

"ONE AWAY! he screamed.

As before, Guenther heard the relayed acknowledgement fade as it race down the sub and up to the attack room. As the words vanished he found himself staring at the reluctant firing lever. His hand touched it as if the machined metal might break under his hand. Guenther tested the drop of the handle and it moved as effortlessly as ever before. His hand dropped away and picked up his chin as he wiped the sweat off his mouth. Still staring at the firing panel, habit made him absently reach out and place his hands on the forward hull of the submarine. The coolness of the steel brought his attention to his hands. Only then did he realize that just his fingertips were touching the sub's skin. The reluctance at the firing had been in him, as it was now. A tremble within his mind trickled down to his fingers as he now openly hoped no shudder from outside the U-20 would reach him.

In the conning tower Schwieger was watching the ocean liner in his view finder. Breathless seconds passed before the torpedo sunk its teeth into the starboard side of the great ship. The blast was predictable, but almost immediately a second much larger explosion nearly ripped the gargantuan liner in half. The U-20 shuddered roughly, trembling in the cold murky depths beneath the weight of what it had done. Captain Schwieger stood at the periscope staring at the destruction as his command crept closer and waited for the order to surface.

The crew's actions were as always – the gunners were assembled by the hatch – but an unspoken dread, shared by some in tight glances through pleading eyes, began to seep from man to man through the sub's watertight doors. The shouts of victory were absent. They were replaced by the distant screams of men and women alike who were driven from the stricken ship into the frigid water above the submarine. The men of U-20 would never hear a sound. Two hundred meters away, the huge liner and over two thousand passengers and crew were going in and under the water. The giant ship was being taken down bow first and Schwieger was watching.

For the first time since his torpedo struck the mark, he stepped back from the periscope and motioned to his commander who had been examining a book of black silhouettes used to identify potential ships in the area. As the second in command stepped to the lens he spoke to the captain without looking at him.

"Most likely the *Lusitania*."

"It is. I recognize the colors of the Cunard Line."

No sooner had the commander assumed the lens than simple words escaped his heart and mind and passed his lips. "Oh my God..."

The captain looked around the small attack room. "Pass the word among the crew. Anyone who wishes to see the *Lusitania* sinking has permission to come to the attack room, but do it quickly. She is listing hard to starboard and I believe she will be down in twenty or thirty minutes."

An impromptu but orderly line formed and the men of U-20 took fifteen second stints at the periscope. Guenther was one of them. As the crew passed by the captain some men uttered soft congratulations, but most said nothing.

"Fine seamanship, Captain."

"Great work, sir."

"Well done, Captain."

Guenther's voice was softer yet and his comment had less to do with the privilege of using the periscope for the first time and more to do with an education and enlightenment regarding war he had not anticipated. "Thank you, Captain."

When the last seaman cleared the attack room Schwieger went back to the periscope and watched the final thrashing of the drowning *Lusitania*. He could plainly see the cold water was alive with victims as hundreds – a thousand – toppled from overturned lifeboats and leaped from crashing decks. So many people were in the water it would seem one could walk on them to the Irish coast.

"Sir, tube number two is still armed. Do we send it?" the commander asked.

"No," Schwieger answered without looking up. "I cannot send another into this mass of humanity. They have put children in the life vests incorrectly."

"Captain?" the executive officer asked. "Incorrectly?"

"Yes, the vests should be much higher for children."

"I don't understand, sir."

"Higher! Higher! The vests should be higher – above the shoulders."

"Sir?"

Schwieger came away from the periscope and rubbed his eyes as though they pained him. He spoke with them closed beneath his massaging hands. "A child's head is heavier than his legs. In the sea, a vest slung around the chest will cause the child to tip upside down, weighed down by his head." He opened his eyes and pointed to the periscope. "I see children's legs. Hundreds of them. Growing still as I watch. They are tipping upside down – drowning before the boats can pick them up."

The commander looked at the periscope and envisioned the horror above but could not bring himself to take to the lens.

"Bring us about and lay in a course for home," Schwieger directed. "We will refit. You have the boat, Commander. I will be in my quarters."

The captain was lying in his bunk within his tiny cubicle when the first officer sought him out. The pair exchanged blank looks as the commander tossed a single paper on Schwieger's abbreviated desk.

"It's the communications log," the junior officer said coarsely. "The floating antenna was able to breach the surface. We picked up lingering reports of an SOS from the passenger liner *Lusitania*, just off Kinsale. The local fishing fleet is launching a rescue."

Schwieger nodded his eyes.

"They won't make it in time," the commander continued. "The water's too cold."

The captain didn't speak as the lecture continued.

"She was probably crossing from New York to Liverpool."

"Yes," the weary captain said as he swung his feet off his bunk and reluctantly picked up the radio report.

"Certainly there were Americans on board, Captain."

"Quite probably."

“And, quite probably, you’ve just given the Americans an excuse to enter the war.”

Schwieger jumped to his feet and aided by the tight confines of his quarters found himself face to face with his commander for the second time that afternoon.

“The Americans have been in the war! Who do you think is supplying the British if not their English cousins in the United States?”

“That may be true, Walther,” the commander said, ignoring protocol. “But the *Lusitania* is... was a passenger ship. Those were civilians,” he said as he pointed up through the steel hull of U-20 to the surface, cluttered with debris, bodies, and those waiting to die. “Women and children. You said so yourself.”

“Yes!” Schwieger shouted. “There were children on that ship. And we warned them not to travel. We placed notices in their newspapers telling them these ships are traveling in hostile waters. Notice not to sail! Did the British and French bomber pilots tell the people in Cologne and Düsseldorf they were sending planes to bomb them? No! Do the bombers avoid German cities because there are children sleeping there? No! War paints with a broad brush, Commander! A very broad, very ugly brush.”

Without another word, the commander wilted and withdrew from the barrage. He made his way back to his station where he sat for hours contemplating his views on war and collateral damage. Tucked into the far reaches of the bow, Guenther was doing the same.

The disillusioned sailor sat at his torpedo launching station and studied his hands. He looked them over, front and back, examining each finger then did it all again. There were few pauses in the strange review and then only to stare at the firing handle and his tally marks scratched on the wall.

After several quiet minutes, Guenther bent over to reach a small cabinet welded into the wall of the sub beneath the firing mechanism. He moved as though it hurt him to do so. A dented paint can, with dried grey streaks on its sides identical to the walls of U-20, waited for him. The can came out in his hand and settled between the young sailor’s knees. Once again Guenther pulled his lucky Deutsche mark from his pocket, except this time he used the versatile coin to pry off the can’s lid.

Amidships, Captain Schwieger was standing in the submarine’s small chapel staring intently at the small wooden cross as if he full well expected it to move. He stood motionless for some time while the hum of U-20’s electric motors whirled and carried him into the Atlantic.

Several minutes later a motion stirred him and he turned to find Seaman Stroehmann walking up behind. The sailor was whipping splotches of grey paint from his fingers. As the captain watched, Stroehmann stuffed the oily rag and his hands deep into his pockets. The young man’s shoulders were hunched over and he was walking with his eyes fixed on the sub’s grated steel floor.

Guenther’s thoughts consumed his senses. He didn’t notice the captain until he was nearly on him. Startled, the low ranking seaman quickly saluted. When Schwieger returned the salute Guenther slipped his hands back into his pockets and began to move away, anxious to disappear, but abruptly stopped.

“Begging the Captain’s pardon, sir. May I ask a firm question?” Guenther’s words were strong, but his tone was nearly reverent.

Schwieger looked at him from beneath the brow of a coarse German mariner, but his place in the boat’s chapel and the events of the afternoon had dulled his edge. “Yes,” is all he said.

“Sir, was that a passenger ship back there?” Guenther looked over his shoulder, back toward the Celtic Sea. “The *Lusitania*.”

Schwieger returned his gaze to the cross and resumed his study. “It was.”

“But I heard there was a big explosion. Bigger than my torpedoes can make. And some of the boys said they saw bales of rubber floating. Was that rubber for England’s armies?”

“Without question,” Schwieger answered with no vigor.

“Sir, were there other things, because of the explosion – ammo and guns maybe – in her hold?”

“No doubt she was laden with armaments destined to be exercised against your homeland, young seaman.”

“And sir, I know we’ve had a good round out this cruise. We’ve sunk a lot of ships. Someone must have warned a ship as grand as the *Lusitania*.”

“I should think so, yes.”

“Yes, sir,” Guenther said faintly as he nodded and dug his hands deeper into his pockets. He hesitated over his next words then proceeded cautiously. “Captain? Sir? Do I kill people when I fire our torpedoes?”

Schwieger’s gaze didn’t flinch. “People die. Yes, they do.”

“I mean... do I kill them by sending them out from the boat or am I just following orders?”

The Captain pulled his eyes away and looked compassionately at his young charge. “Are you asking am I the one who kills them by giving the order, or you by triggering the mechanism?”

“Um...yes sir. I guess I am.”

The captain’s brow wrinkled in thought before he answered. “We all take orders from someone, seaman. I believe we all share in both the triumph and tragedy of death.”

The two men allowed their eyes to drift to the wooden cross. After a still moment, Guenther spoke again. “It’s our job, right, Captain? Sinking ships?”

“No,” Schwieger paused. “It is our duty.”

The words took their time sinking into each man. When they had reached the heart of both, Guenther asked a question from deep within. “Sir, if it is our duty, why are you here, in the chapel?”

Schwieger sighed heavily and looked at the ceiling of his command, only a few inches above his head. His eyes were blinking rapidly, trying to fashion a bulkhead against tears. “I am here,” he said as he swallowed hard. “For the same reason men the world over go to chapel.”

Compassion and embarrassment combined to pull Guenther’s face away from the straining officer though his own legs trembled. As the hum of the motors steadily droned on around them, mocking the noise in their heads, Guenther nervously shifted his weight and absently examined the shine on his shoes. When another quiet moment had slipped by like the water beneath their feet, Guenther looked back up the cross and posed a final question.

“Captain? Does God make allowances for soldiers and sailors?”

Schwieger lowered his chin. Unimpeded, the water in his eyes cascaded down his cheeks. “I hope so, son. I hope so.”

Captain Walther Schwieger went on to sink many more ships in the fulfillment of his duty. The toll included another passenger liner, the *RMS Hesperian* sixteen months after downing the *Lusitania*. *RMS Hesperian* was carrying 1,114 souls, yet only 35 perished as there was no secondary explosion caused by munitions. The *Hesperian* took over a full day to sink whereas the *Lusitanian* went down in less than twenty minutes.

Captain Schwieger was killed one year later in the North Sea when the submarine he was commanding, U-88, struck a British mine. All hands were lost and Captain Schwieger’s body was never recovered.

In another accident, the U-20 was grounded on the Danish coast and scuttled by her crew. Eventually she was scrapped. The conning tower, deck gun, and one propeller were recovered and are now on display at the Strandings Museum, St. George, Thorsminde, Denmark.

Captain Walther Schwieger was posthumously awarded the Pour le Merite, otherwise known as the Blue Max, the highest decoration in the German military, for his service during World War I.

If you enjoyed “**Forever Beneath the Celtic Sea,**” please help promote this story and others from *The Cats of Savone* collection by sharing with family and friends and posting a review @ Amazon.com &/or Goodreads.com.

Thanks so much,

David-Michael

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