

## THE CAY

So I packed, with her help, and said good-by to Henrik van Boven and the other boys. I told them we'd be gone just a short time; that we were going to visit my grandparents, my mother's parents, in Norfolk. But I had the feeling that it might be a very long time before I saw Curacao and my father again.

Early Friday morning, we boarded the S.S. *Hato* in St. Anna Channel. She was a small Dutch freighter with a high bow and stern, and a bridge house in the middle between two well decks. I had seen her often in St. Anna Bay. Usually, she ran between Willemstad, Aruba, and Panama. She had a long stack and always puffed thick, black smoke.

In our cabin, which was on the starboard side and opened out to the boat deck, my father said, "Well, you can rest easy, Phillip. The Germans would never waste a torpedo on this old tub." Yet I saw him looking over the life-boats. Then he inspected the fire hoses on the boat deck. I knew he was worried.

There were eight other passengers aboard, and they were all saying good-by to their relatives just as we were saying good-by to my father. In the tradition, people brought flowers and wine. It was almost like sailing in the days before the war, they told me.

Father was smiling but when the *Hato's* whistle blasted out three times, meaning it was time to go, he said good-by to us between clenched teeth. I clung to him for a long time. Finally, he said, "Take good care of your mother."

I said I would.

We sailed down St. Anna Bay, and the Queen Emma bridge parted for us. Through watery eyes, I saw the fort and old buildings of Punda and Otrabanda. Native schooners were beating in from the sea.

Then my mother pointed. I saw a tall man standing on the wall of Fort Amsterdam, waving at us. I knew it was my father. I'll never forget that tall, lonely figure standing on the sea wall.

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