

The Sugar Revolution

Lyle Garford

Except where actual historical events and characters are being described for the storyline of this novel, all situations in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to living persons is purely coincidental.

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Dedication

This one is for absent friends.

Prologue
November 1786
London, England

The King's mood darkened as he turned his thoughts to the situation with his son. Prince William Henry, young third in line heir to the British throne, had grown adept at manipulating the people around him and using his position to maximum advantage before he was even a teenager. Dismayed, the King turned to the rigid discipline of the Royal Navy to provide a cure. Not expected to inherit the Crown, the young Prince was thus sent to sea at age thirteen as a midshipman. But a career in the Navy was not having the intended effect on the now twenty-one year old Prince and the King's pent up displeasure was clear in his meeting on the issue with the First Lord of the Admiralty.

"Dammit, Lord Howe. I don't understand why I continue to hear reports of unacceptable behaviour on the part of my son. Please tell me the Navy has not lost its sense of discipline." The King scowled to emphasize the point and was gratified to see the First Lord squirm in visible discomfort.

"Your Majesty, it has not. I confess to a certain frustration, too, as the reports you have are correct. The Prince has continued to display impulsive and headstrong behaviour. He is manipulative of those around him, regardless of whether they are above or below him in the command structure."

"And now I hear promoting him is your answer to this? How is that to solve anything?"

"Your Majesty, I felt the burden of command might give him opportunity to find maturity. A warship Captain has no one else to blame if things go wrong and even the smallest decisions have weight. I am posting him to Antigua, where he will be under the command of Captain Horatio Nelson. The Prince's First Officer is Lieutenant Isaac Schomberg, a capable and experienced officer. I can think of no better role models for the Prince."

The King grunted and paused a moment in remembrance. "Nelson, yes. That was rather presumptuous of him to write directly to me about the smuggling issue two years ago, but I cannot fault his achievements."

The King stared away into the distance in thought for several long moments before turning back. "Lord Howe, I approve of this strategy, but I desire one thing. When you next communicate to Captain Nelson please ensure he understands what we are trying to achieve here with my son. In particular, make it clear I have direct interest in his success in this matter."

"Consider it done, Your Majesty," replied the First Lord as he rose to leave, relief at having escaped further wrath obvious on his face. "I am confident the Prince will grow quickly in his new role, especially with the guidance of Captain Nelson."

Chapter One
December 1786 to June 1787
English Harbour, Antigua

Captain Horatio Nelson rubbed his chin as he sat deep in thought in the aft cabin of his warship, contemplating the new challenge before him. Royalty had arrived on the Caribbean island of Antigua in early December 1786, borne there by the Royal Navy frigate *HMS Pegasus* as replacement for one of Nelson's squadron returning home.

Prince William Henry, now Captain of the *Pegasus*, was the centre of attention from the moment he arrived on the scene. With a promotion to Lieutenant at age twenty and now confirmation as Post Captain of *Pegasus*, the Prince's spectacular rise to command past many other deserving officers was interpreted as a sign he was in high favour. In turn, everyone around him wanted to be in *his* favour.

Nelson had faced his share of problems during his tenure commanding the Northern Division of the Leeward Islands squadron and the Royal Navy Dockyard at English Harbour, and the Prince was rapidly becoming yet another to deal with. From the moment the Prince appeared on the scene he had set about acting as if he were already King, manipulating everyone about him at every opportunity.

Nelson felt torn and, in honesty, had succumbed more than he wanted to the Prince's manipulative ways. Nelson picked up the First Lord's letter from the desk and sighed as he read it again. What was expected of him was clear, but Nelson felt a deep conflict within. His role was to follow orders, but no one could claim to be more loyal to the Crown. The problem was Nelson felt an overriding desire to support royalty at all costs. How to remain true to his loyalty while finding a way to influence the young Prince was the challenge.

Nelson wasn't alone in succumbing, as everyone of consequence on the island had fallen under the Prince's spell. The rest of the Navy officers on the island were disgusted at the fawning displays of support shown for the Prince. Where only days before the plantation owners and businessmen on the island had been sullen and disgruntled, in open support of the new rebel American state, the Prince's appearance transformed all of them into staunch supporters of the Crown. Prior to his arrival invitations to Navy personnel to attend social events were as rare as cold weather on the island, but endless opportunities to attend balls and dinners for the Prince and his colleagues were now forthcoming. The Prince himself was only too happy to be the centre of attention. Making it clear he was a steadfast supporter of the need for slavery to continue unabated endeared him to their hearts.

Despite his dismay at some of the Prince's behaviours, Nelson's blind loyalty wasn't his only problem. Nelson had come to *like* the Prince in the short time they had known each other. Following the bond of genuine friendship with the Prince seemed the only path Nelson could follow and, feeling certain he could succeed, he resolved to use it to steer the Prince in the right direction.

Commander Evan Ross was in a reflective mood as he cleaned up his desk in the Dockyard at the end of the day, looking forward to the Christmas season and taking a little time off.

The past three years since he arrived on Antigua had been both challenging and frustrating. Evan, then a Lieutenant, and his companion James Wilton, a master's mate, first met Captain Horatio Nelson when he had arrived at Antigua to assume command of the squadron and the Royal Navy Dockyard. The two men were recovering from injuries suffered in a fight with smugglers. Evan had lost his left arm to a gunshot that shattered the bone and James had been shot in the thigh. Abandoned on Antigua by their former Captain, the two men were in deep despair for their future until Nelson found them.

While many saw only disabled, injured men with no future, Nelson saw opportunity. He soon had them working as spies, helping to stop rampant American smuggling in the area that was starving a treasury in dire need of customs duties. Frustrated by the extent of complicity displayed by rich local plantation owners and local officials bribed to look the other way, Nelson needed the help. Evan and James gathered enough intelligence of smuggling activity to enable Nelson and his squadron to stamp it out.

Evan and James had also uncovered a plot concocted by two spies to destabilize the British held islands. The French and American agents, working in partnership, encouraged the ongoing smuggling and tried to push already sympathetic local plantation owners to rebel against excessive taxation. Unknown to the owners, however, they were also in the process of arming runaway slaves to enflame the situation when Evan and James learned of the plot. In a series of desperate actions the two men helped Nelson put a stop to it all.

Evan and James were rewarded with promotions, but with no openings on warships anywhere courtesy of being at peace, the two men had to settle for a different assignment. Notice was taken of their success with covert activities, resulting in a longer assignment to serve as naval intelligence officers to British diplomats throughout the Caribbean. For this they reported to Captain Sir James Standish, based in Barbados. For cover the two men served as commanding officers in the Dockyard, ensuring its readiness to meet the needs of warships in need of repair.

As he left his office, Evan chanced to encounter Nelson and the Prince, also leaving for the day, and together the three men walked to the gate of the Dockyard. Alice, a beautiful, black former slave prostitute who had helped Evan build informant networks around the island, was waiting outside the Dockyard for him to appear. Despite their backgrounds, Alice and Evan had fallen in love with each other. Evan bought her from her owner, a man with one of the largest plantations on Antigua who also was her father, and set her free. Alice couldn't enter the Dockyard itself as women weren't allowed on the site, but it had become a ritual to meet Evan at the end of each day to walk back to the home they shared between the Dockyard and the small village of Falmouth Harbour.

Evan stopped to converse for a moment with the Dockyard Shipwright, who had waved him over at the gate to ask him a question before he could get away. Nelson and the young Prince continued out the gate and Nelson veered off to have their coach brought around for their departure. The Prince saw Alice standing to the side, wearing a fetching white dress Evan had bought for her, and detoured over to where she stood.

When Evan finished with the Shipwright moments later he saw the Prince talking to Alice and realized immediately there was trouble. Alice had never directed her fiery anger at him, but he had seen it before and he saw the evidence on her face now. Nelson

could see her anger too, and both men converged quickly on Alice and the Prince. As they got there Alice spat out a heated response to something the Prince said.

"No, I think *not*," said Alice to the Prince, with a hiss that lashed him as if he had been whipped.

Evan stopped beside Alice and placed his hand on her shoulder as the Prince took a step back, a look of shock on his face.

"Anything I can help with here, my dear?" said Evan.

But Nelson intervened, having already read the situation and obviously desiring to separate them fast.

"Captain Henry," said Nelson, his tone of voice carrying enough edge to convey he would brook no arguments. "We must be on our way *now* or we shall be late for our engagement. Good day, Commander Ross."

Nelson turned to Alice and paused for the briefest of moments. Seeing Evan's protective hand still on her shoulder, he gave a small bow. "Good day, madam."

Evan watched with interest as Alice recovered herself enough to offer a civil nod to Nelson, but the fire of her anger still burned in her eyes. The look on the Prince's face had turned from shock to obvious affront, but before he could speak Nelson grabbed the Prince's elbow, steering him to their coach and getting in. Puzzled, Evan turned to Alice once they were gone. "What was that all about?"

Still smoldering with obvious anger she glared in silence after the departing carriage. Relenting, she turned to face Evan. "So who was that bastard?"

Evan raised one eyebrow, unable to resist because of the irony, while he nodded his head in the direction of the departing coach.

"Well, that bastard, as you call him, is none other than Prince William Henry, third in line to the British throne. He also happens to be Captain of the *Pegasus*, the new frigate that has joined the squadron. And the other fellow pulling him away was the good Captain Nelson himself. My God, what did the Prince say to you?"

"Huh," said Alice, as she paused to scowl at the departing coach. "God help all of us if that's the kind of beast we've got lording it over everyone."

Taking Evan's arm she nodded in the direction of their home and they began walking. Evan acquiesced, but continued giving her sidelong glances in hope she would offer more.

Sensing his gaze, she finally relented. "Look, let's say I think he's another one of these animals that see nothing but opportunity to take advantage of black women so they can indulge in their sick fantasies. We're all just ignorant slaves anyway, right, so what does it matter? I—ah, enough."

Alice gave his arm a squeeze, making a visible effort to calm down, and looked up at Evan's concerned face.

"I'm all right. He made me mad. Thank God you aren't anything like him. You're the real prince around here and you're a better one than this monster could ever hope to be."

"Hmm, well, perhaps it would be best if you stopped meeting me outside the Dockyard as a precaution to ensure no further unpleasant encounters."

By the time the holidays were over Nelson's supreme confidence he could change the Prince was already being tested to the limits and he was once again back at his desk contemplating what he now knew. More important, the question was what to do about it.

Rumours of the Prince's frequent dalliances with an endless series of black slave women made available at his whim by willing plantation owners around the island had become so prevalent any attempt to deny them was impossible. By itself this could have been manageable, but Nelson had learned the Prince's relationship with his First Officer Lieutenant Isaac Schomberg was not. Nelson was dismayed to discover the two men had been at odds with each other from almost the moment they met.

The Lieutenant, a seasoned veteran of the American Revolutionary War and a skilled seaman, was thirteen years older than the young, inexperienced Prince. Nelson understood many would sympathize with the Lieutenant, as it must have been galling in the extreme to have the Prince promoted to Post Captain rank above him at so young an age. Although everyone knew Lieutenant Schomberg was a far more deserving officer, the situation could still have worked because the Lieutenant, despite whatever frustration he felt, was at the least a dedicated officer. The real issue was the Prince failed to see all he had to do was give his Lieutenant free rein to do his job. The Prince had never been a diligent student even at the best of times, which fast became clear to the professional men of the sea surrounding him, adding to the problem.

The first bad weather they encountered on the trip outbound from England had been the start of it. If the Prince's orders had been followed the ship would have been lost. Schomberg and the rest of the crew were forced to ignore his orders and do what was necessary to save their lives. From that point the Prince felt the need to reassert his authority by interfering in even minor decisions that everyone understood were the domain of the First Officer.

By the time *Pegasus* reached Antigua the situation had degenerated to the point of regular, sometimes public shouting matches between the two officers in full view of the rest of the crew. The disdain the two men felt for each other had already hardened into an unbreakable wall between them and the damage seemed irreparable. Reluctant as he was to call his royal friend to task, Nelson had no choice.

"Captain," said Nelson, feeling disconcerted at how far gone the situation was and struggling to find some way to resolve it. "It is your responsibility to manage your people appropriately. I am loath to interfere with how you handle the Lieutenant."

"I know Horatio, but the man is trying beyond all belief."

"My Lord, please be careful how you address me, especially when we are discussing Navy business," said Nelson, with a weary voice. "I know we have quickly come to consider each other very good friends, but you could slip when others are around and this would be inappropriate."

"You are right, Captain. Well, I shall continue to do my best with the man, sir."

But it had not gone well. An unbridled shouting match in late January of 1787 observed by several witnesses from the *Pegasus* and the Dockyard forced Nelson to act and, fearing the threat to authority, he came down hard on the Lieutenant, placing him under arrest and removing him from the *Pegasus*. But the problem was this was not a viable solution.

Placing an officer under arrest meant the officer had reason to expect a trial of sorts, with opportunity to explain and defend his actions. Someone would be a winner

and someone a loser, and word of the details of what had happened would be public. On one hand potential public humiliation of a Prince of the realm was not to be countenanced, while public punishment and disgrace of an officer known by many to be excellent at his duties was not the level of support competent professionals of the Navy had reason to expect. The matter spiraled out of Nelson's control as word of the dispute soon went beyond the borders of the Dockyard and was all over the island almost from the moment it happened.

Nelson understood from the warning signs of people's reactions how the decision was being received and it was here he made his second mistake. He saw the predicament he was in, but chose to let the decision stand and remain firm in resolute support of the Prince.

When word eventually reached the Admiralty from other sources, the First Lord shook his head in disbelief and dashed off a letter to Nelson querying what was happening. By the time Lord Howe got the response yet another complaint about the Prince's behaviour had risen to his attention. In a fit of petulance upon arrival in Antigua the Prince had refused to provide the usual paperwork in support of his supply requirements.

This led, in the eyes of the First Lord, to Nelson's third mistake. Doing his best to ignore the matter as a petty detail may have seemed reasonable to Nelson, but the immutable rules of the Navy and its bureaucracy were not to be denied. The Dockyard was required to provide regular reports to the Victualing Board, which was prompt in expressing its bureaucratic outrage at the failure as loud as it could.

The First Lord was shaking his head once again as he considered what to do, when word came the King wanted to see him on the matter. Knowing he was in for another testy meeting, the First Lord gave a resigned sigh to himself as he reached for his hat and left to attend the palace.

"Lord Howe," said the King, the tone of his voice betraying his feelings enough to make the First Lord brace himself as he sat down. "Please tell me you know what is going on in Antigua with this arrest of the Prince's First Officer. More to the point, please tell me you know what in God's name Nelson thinks he is doing! I thought I made it clear you were to communicate my expectations to him."

"Your Majesty, I have only recently found out myself and I agree, the last thing we need here is a public airing of this nonsense. I have no idea what Captain Nelson is thinking, but I assure you he was told how we expected the Prince to be handled. Leave it with me to resolve and be assured there will be no scandal about this."

"I should bloody well hope not!" growled the King, but he looked mollified enough. The First Lord gave an inner sigh of relief.

Returning to the Admiralty, the First Lord wrote terse orders to Nelson to wind up his affairs and return to England. They also specified the Prince and his ship the Pegasus, minus Isaac Schomberg, were to be detached and reassigned to the Jamaica station. The First Lord's final order was to release the Lieutenant from his arrest and with as little ceremony as possible have him returned to England.

The duty Marine guarding Nelson's cabin door came in with Evan close behind him. Stamping to attention, the Marine announced the visitor's arrival. "Commander Ross to see you, Captain."

Evan came to a stop in front of the desk as the Marine left. Nelson remained standing and staring out the wide stern windows of the aft cabin of *HMS Boreas*, a sleek frigate of the Royal Navy bearing twenty-eight guns and his command for the past three years.

"Reporting as ordered, Captain Nelson," said Evan, saluting as he spoke.

The Captain waved a hand vaguely in the direction of his desk without turning away from the view. "Thank you for coming Commander Ross. Have a seat. I was taking a little break. You can remove your uniform coat and make yourself comfortable. It is beastly hot out there again today."

"I agree and thank you, sir," said Evan as he shrugged out of his coat, grateful to be out of the sun and into the more bearable interior of the cabin. With the vent windows open what little breeze was present made enough of a difference to help cool the cabin.

The stifling heat pervasive in the month of June on Antigua was a harbinger of even hotter summer months to come. English Harbour was not the best place to be during these months unless you were looking for smothering heat. The well-sheltered harbour serving as excellent protection from the devastating hurricanes plaguing the Caribbean in late summer and early fall was also well known for having a large windless area courtesy of the same geography protecting it from storms.

Evan settled in, waiting for the Captain's attention. But Nelson remained where he was for several long moments more before he gave a deep sigh.

"I shall *not* miss this place, Mr. Ross." Turning, the Captain walked over to slump into the chair behind his desk and glare at the ever-present pile of correspondence and paperwork strewn about on its surface. The look of undisguised distaste mingled with weariness on his face surprised Evan by its intensity.

"I will be up half the night dealing with all of this, Mr. Ross. Well, it must be done if I am to sail for Nevis to say goodbye and then onward to home tomorrow. It has been a long three years on this station."

The tired, drawn features and almost disheveled appearance of the Captain worried Evan. Nelson had contracted malaria earlier in his career and like many others suffered from periodic recurrences of the disease. Even the Captain's boundless energy had been no match for the fever, vomiting, and devastating headaches of the recurrent malaria bout that started over six weeks ago. While he had recovered enough to resume his duties, everyone around him knew Nelson could have used more rest. But no one was surprised to find the Captain back on his feet as soon as he was able to struggle out of bed. Captain Horatio Nelson was not a man to remain lying around any longer than he had to.

"Lieutenant Wilton and I were both pleased to know you are recovered, sir. I confess we feel the opposite to know you are leaving us. Do you have any word of your replacement, Captain?"

"No, except it is likely he will not arrive until after the hurricane season ends and the regular meeting in Barbados of Captains on station is finished. I think both a new Admiral for the Leeward Islands and Barbados will appear at the same time as a new senior officer for Antigua. In the interim Captain George in *HMS Venture* will serve as senior here."

"Thank you, Captain. Do you have any final orders for us, sir?"

Nelson shook his head. "Nothing new and, so you know, I did ask. The response was a straightforward message you are both to carry on with your cover roles as commanding officers for the Dockyard and, of course, continue to take direction from Sir James Standish in covert matters you involve yourselves in. I will leave direct orders to this effect. I can only assume this means the various parties with interest in your work are pleased with what you have accomplished. Of course, you will continue to ensure the Dockyard repair facilities are expanded as we have planned while meeting ongoing needs as they arise."

Nelson paused a moment, offering a tiny shrug to Evan. "Yes, I know. Both you and the good Lieutenant still wish for a commission afloat, but this assignment remains as all there is on offer. I confess the current peace we are enjoying is lasting a lot longer than I had thought. I think the French have too many of their own problems to let their natural arrogance get them in trouble with us again at the moment, but mark my words, though. This will not last."

"Yes, Sir James has articulated much the same thinking to me, sir."

Nelson nodded. "I'm not surprised. He is astute and we are fortunate to have him. So Commander, the real purpose of this meeting is just to say goodbye and express my appreciation for your support these past three years that have been so trying."

"Captain, I speak for both Lieutenant Wilton and myself when I say it has been an incredible honour to serve with you. We had both thought our careers were over until you found us. Thanks to you both of us have been promoted and have assignments where we can continue to serve in a way that has value."

Evan paused a moment to allow a tiny smile to crease his face. "And who knows, maybe the frogs or the Dons will oblige and create enough problems that more ships and officers like us are needed at sea some day. But seriously, on our honour, sir, if there is ever any service we can offer you, we are yours to command. We both agree it would be a dream come true to serve with you once again."

"Honour," said Nelson, as he leaned back in his chair and stared away into the distance for a moment. "Yes, a conversation about honour began our relationship, didn't it?" Nelson returned his gaze to Evan, unable to keep a sad, doleful look from his face. "Honour was in short supply back then, wasn't it? And I dare say it still is, sadly."

"Sir, I completely agree," said Evan, offering a careful nod in reply. Seeing an almost maudlin Nelson was a new and unsettling experience. But then, Nelson had reason to be unhappy, as having a wayward Prince of the blood on his hands had not been his only challenge during his time in Antigua.

For a time, complete success with achieving his orders seemed within reach despite the Prince. Smuggling had dropped to almost nonexistent levels by late 1785, but then the Swedes saw opportunity where others did not. The Navigation Acts covered direct trade between America and British islands, but they did not cover trade with other islands. Exploiting the loophole, they purchased the nearby island of St. Barts from the French and declared the capital Gustavia a free port. The Americans swarmed in and the Swedes began making tidy profits shipping cargo the Americans offloaded in Gustavia to all of the islands in the area.

Nelson did what he could by sailing into Gustavia with the full might of his squadron and all the bluster he could bring to bear. The Swedes stalled for time, knowing Nelson could not start a war on his own. Nelson continued pursuing American smugglers

motivated to cut the Swedes out of the arrangement. Thinking the Navy may have moved on, a few risked trying once again dealing direct with buyers via the secluded beaches that were everywhere. Seizing their ships continued to be his best weapon to deter the smuggler's behaviour, as few owners could afford the risk of having a valuable ship condemned in a British prize court.

But the Captain's cares had only grown. In August of the previous summer Admiral Richard Hughes in Barbados hauled down his flag and sailed for home, leaving Nelson as the senior officer for the entire Leeward Islands squadron. No one mourned the Admiral's departure as he had displayed a singular lack of zeal to achieve anything of consequence and, in particular, was unsupportive of anything Nelson had done. But no replacement had yet been sent and the constant stack of paperwork sitting on Nelson's desk was enormous. Combined with the challenge of managing a willful Prince, the burden was heavy indeed.

Nelson shuffled some papers on his desk absentmindedly. "You know, Mr. Ross, I have always striven to conduct myself with honour in everything I do. I am a faithful servant of the Crown, and of *all* of its representatives, and my honour demands I do what I believe is right to show this support at all times. It's a pity not everyone can see that, but my conscience is clear on this. Well, enough said, I appreciate you have come to see me today."

"Captain, I couldn't imagine you doing anything without honour, ever," said Evan as he took the cue the meeting was over and rose to leave.

"Is Mrs. Nelson joining you on the *Boreas* for the journey home, sir?" said Evan, making conversation as he deftly pulled on his uniform coat once again. Years of practice doing it using only one arm had long since made the process unconscious.

"No, Mr. Ross," replied Nelson, a real smile brightening his face for the first time since Evan had arrived. "Finding someone to share my life has been the one positive development stemming from my time out here. It was unfortunate you weren't able to attend our wedding on Nevis this spring. It was everything I could have hoped for, especially with the Prince himself there to give away the bride. Anyway, I wouldn't subject her to the constraints of a long journey on a warship. She is to follow me soon on a much more comfortable merchant ship."

"Well, Captain, once again it has been a true honour to serve with you. Lieutenant Wilton and I wish you and Mrs. Nelson all the best for the future," said Evan.

"Thank you. Mr. Ross? Write to me periodically, both of you. I will not forget the service you and Mr. Wilton have done me. I shall do what I can to have an eye on your careers."

Evan paused a moment, too moved by the unexpected offer to speak.

"Captain. We shall be eternally grateful. We are yours to command, sir."

Saluting one final time, Evan turned and left the cabin. Walking back to his office in the Dockyard he couldn't help reflecting on the impossible situation Nelson had faced. That such a dedicated servant of the Crown should end up in circumstances where no matter what he did criticism of his actions would come from the royalty he was sworn to support was a supreme irony.

Slipping into his office chair in the Dockyard and eyeing the pile of paperwork that had grown on it in the short time he was gone, Evan shook his head in dismay over it all.

The next morning dawned with enough of a breeze to permit the *Boreas* to sail with care out of English Harbour instead of having to submit to the laborious, grueling process of being warped out of harbour to freedom.

Both Evan and James came to watch the *Boreas* depart. The two men stood to the side out of the way of the frenzied sailors bustling about loading a few final barrels of supplies and fresh water for the long journey home.

Evan used the time to fill James in on the details of his conversation with Nelson the day before. James grunted in response and was silent for a time, digesting what he heard. Without taking his eyes from the ship James gave a small sigh.

"This isn't what he wanted, is it?"

"No," said Evan. "But we did our best for him and he knows it."

"So where does this leave us now, Evan? Are we ever going to get out of here and onto a ship? God Almighty, there must be someone out there stupid enough to start a war somewhere. Let's face it, we're both bored out of our minds."

Evan shrugged. "Who knows? I guess we carry on and we see what the future brings is where it leaves us. I have a feeling we are not done with Captain Nelson, though. We may need his support some day down the road and he may need ours."

James sighed. "Yes. You may be right. God, let's hope so."

The bustle on the dock subsided as they spoke and the lines tethering the ship to shore were cast off. The ship itself was now a hive of activity as men swarmed aloft to unfurl the sails while others on deck went about their tasks. The quarterdeck was also alive with action as the First Officer shouted a stream of orders at everyone in sight.

But one figure stood apart from the rest on the quarterdeck. As the ship gained way and came about to head for the entrance to the harbour Nelson turned to face the Dockyard one last time.

Evan and James both stiffened in response and as one the two men saluted the lone figure. Nelson reached up to his hat and raised it in brief acknowledgement before turning away. The two men continued to stand watch as the ship laboured to tack out of the harbour.

As it stood out to sea, disappearing at last from their sight, Evan sighed and turned back to James.

"Well. Let's go see what the future holds."

