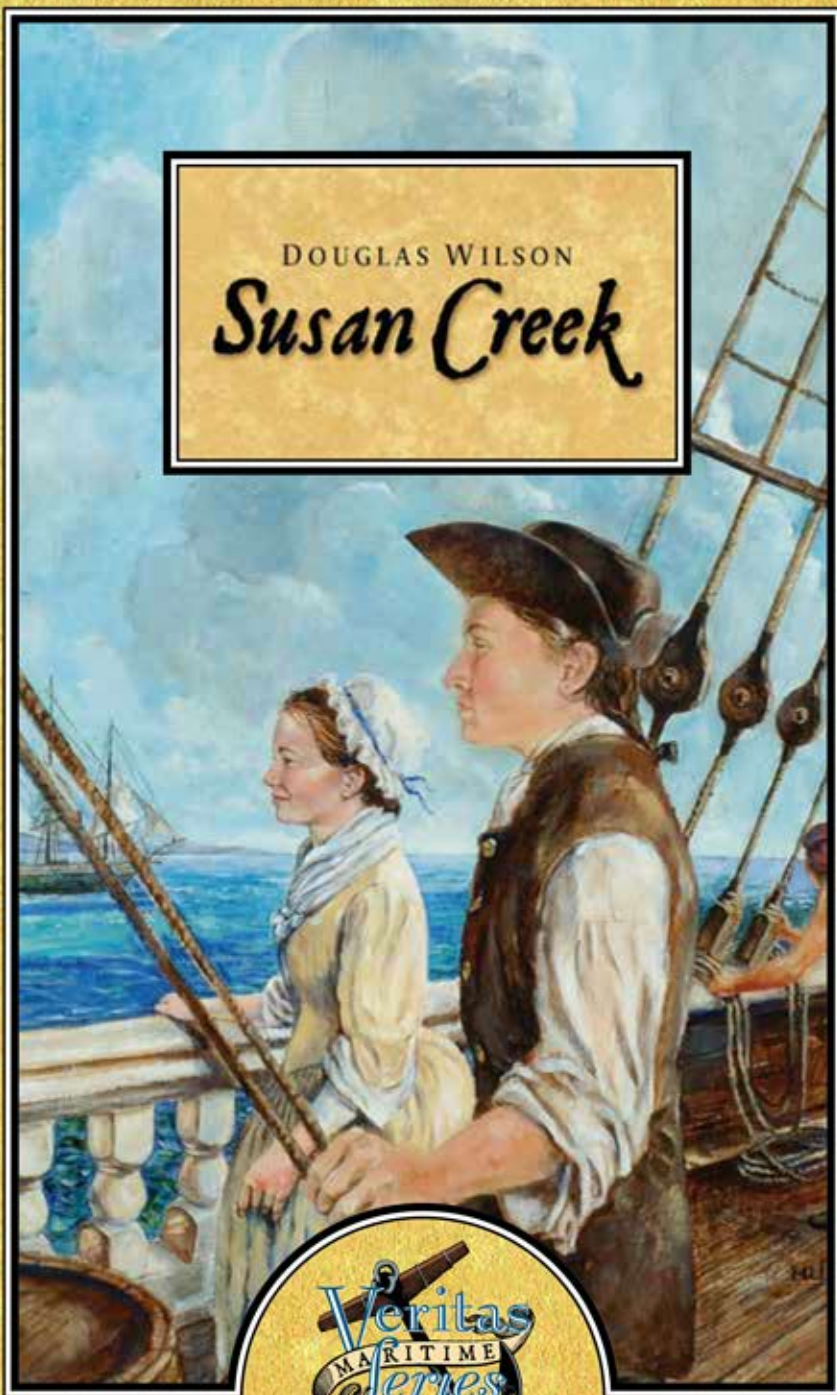


DOUGLAS WILSON

Susan Creek



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First Edition 2004



Copyright ©2004 Veritas Press
www.VeritasPress.com
ISBN 1-932168-26-5

Paintings by Judith Hunt
http://www.picture-book.com/display_profile.asp?artist=2001946

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Printed in the United States of America.

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An Odd Meeting

JOHN MONROE TURNED THE GLASGOW CORNER with a quick stride and walked straight into a very surprised woman who had been moving briskly the other way. John jumped back abruptly, startled, and then began picking up a few bundles that she had dropped, apologizing all the while he did so.

The woman was not amused, or annoyed, or anything else that might pertain to John, but just kept looking over her shoulder.

“Come on, mama. We need to hurry.” John looked over and was surprised to see a very pretty young girl, about his own age, plucking at her mother’s arm. The mother was very pale and white and was coughing a horrible, ragged cough. She was also a pretty woman, about forty years old.

“Yes, yes, we need to go.”

“Do you still have it?”

“Yes, right here. *The Golden Sextant* can’t be far.”

With that the mother and daughter resumed walking quickly down the street toward the harbor. John was mildly annoyed that they had not accepted his apologies—in fact, they had ignored his apologies entirely. But almost immediately, he began to hear his father begin a conversation with him somewhere in his mind, almost out of earshot. “John, a fool shows his annoyance at once. Don’t run headlong.” As his father’s voice faded away, John thought he was going to end the admonition with a characteristic joke, but by this time he was no longer listening. On an irritated whim, he turned and began to follow the women.

This was only the second time that John had been to Glasgow. He was apprenticed to the captain of a tobacco merchant ship and had served him very ably. His family had long experience with the sea, and John’s father was a prosperous merchant on the Chesapeake Bay in America. John could have been employed profitably in his father’s warehouses, but his father—a kindly man named Thomas Monroe—belonged to that school of thought which held that sons of prosperous merchants ought to have more than a small taste of what it was like to serve in unrewarding positions. “After you have been to sea, you will know what you are doing when you send others to sea in your name, and for the sake of your purse.” So John

had been apprenticed when he turned sixteen—that had been a year and a half ago—and so it was that he was now walking the streets of Glasgow in search of some mutton and ale in the late spring of 1747. He was grateful for his experience at sea, but he was also ready for something else. And sometimes he wondered if the length of his apprenticeship decided on by his father had not slowed down his ambitions too much. Still, as he had once thought to himself, he would do it again, but he would not do it over.

But now he was walking back toward his ship, not really wanting to, but keeping the two women in sight. He knew that what he was doing made no real sense, but he was an impulsive (and adventurous, romantic and chivalrous) young man. He was not as impulsive as he had been several years before, but still enough to walk down a Glasgow street in a direction contrary to his earlier plans. Because the street was so crowded, John only had to stay about fifty feet back to keep from being noticed. He did not know why he was following them, but it seemed to him at the time to be a mixture of annoyance and a desire to make amends somehow. He was just about to give it up as a ridiculous venture and return to his search for an inn that kept better victuals than could be had back on the ship. But just as he started to turn back, looking over his shoulder as he did so, he stopped suddenly.

An officer in his majesty's service in a distinguished red coat had stepped quickly out of an alley that the two women

were passing and took the mother firmly by the arm. There was no one else with him. John stopped, and he started to walk slowly back toward the confrontation. His mouth was suddenly dry, and he could feel his heart pounding in his ears. The officer was intently whispering to the woman, and she was replying and gesticulating with her free hand. The daughter looked as though she was imploring the man to let them go, and as John came closer he heard the mother saying, "... but I don't have it!" The officer hissed something in reply that John could not hear, and John, just like the officer, was sure that she *did* have it.

To the end of his life, John could never explain what he did next. He did not know these women, and he did not know if the officer was a good man or a wicked man. He did not know if he was trying to get something back that belonged to him, or if he was trying to rob the women of something that was theirs. He did not know anything except that he had bumped into a woman trying to get away from someone, and here, apparently, was that someone. How he chose between them, he never knew for certain. But he did admit to himself later that the girl was a lot prettier than the officer.

John was only about fifteen feet away by this time. He broke into a run, and by the time he reached them he was running at full speed, straight at the officer. He remembered few things about this later, but one of his vivid memories was the daughter's eyes getting very round as she saw him careening toward



the officer's right shoulder. The man was a soldier, hard and massive, and John was surprised afterwards that he had been able to knock him over, sprawling on top of him. In his surprise, the officer had let go of the mother, and John shouted at them to run. "Go! Go!"

John jumped back to his feet, turned on his heel and ran as fast as he could back up the street, away from the harbor, hoping that the officer would change his mind and think that *he* had it, whatever it was. He stopped at a corner, just before he turned it, and looked back down the street. He could see flashes of red through the crowd, and he laughed out loud. The soldier was following him and not the women. John was light on his feet, and very confident about his ability to outrun the officer. And so that is what he did, running up the street for about half a mile. Before he turned another corner in order to circle back toward the harbor, he stopped again and looked back down the street. No sign of red at all.

Now all he had to do was find *The Golden Sextant*. He briefly played with the idea of just heading back to his ship in case the officer had gotten a good glimpse of him, but by now the spirit of adventure was on him completely. He needed to find what he supposed was an inn. It was certainly *named* like an inn.

Darkness was approaching as John walked slowly back toward the harbor. Every time he came to a cross street, he would stop at the corner and look to the right toward the street where the confrontation had happened. Occasionally, he saw

red-coated soldiers but this was not at all unusual, and they did not appear to be looking for anyone.

When he had made his way about a mile toward the water, he began asking for directions to *The Golden Sextant*. The first three people he asked had no idea, and the fourth thought it was somewhere near the “old Presbyterian church.” Every block or so John would ask again, and finally he found someone who gave him some clear directions, somewhat confidently.

John caught a glimpse of a golden sextant hanging above the street before he could make out the words. As he walked up to the front door of the tavern—for it was a tavern—he naively thought that he would meet the women, receive their proper thanks, and then make his way back to the ship, his small adventure concluded. He had never been so completely wrong in his life.

It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the candlelight, and when they did, he saw the daughter sitting at a table against the back wall. Apart from her table, the tavern was empty. A man was sitting with her, apparently the proprietor of the tavern, holding her hand and obviously comforting her. She saw John and dully waved him over. As he approached, he saw that her eyes were red from crying, and he pulled up a bench, puzzled.

“Her mother has died,” the proprietor said. “She had a coughing fit just after she got here.”

John sat bolt upright, surprised and shocked, and stammered out his condolences. The girl nodded, miserably.

The proprietor of the inn—his name was James Gunn—continued to talk with the girl. “I dinna think your circumstances are changed at all. Or if they are, it’s all to the worse. The men after you are *still* after you, and you must still leave the country immediately. I will see that your mother gets a decent Christian burial. You have to leave and take all that your mother had.”

“I am here on a ship from America,” John volunteered. “We sail for home tomorrow, at high tide. We have some berths for passengers.”

“What is the ship?” Mr. Gunn asked.

“The *Sea Breeze*,” John said.

“She has a good captain,” Mr. Gunn said. “A Mr. Wainwright, is that correct?”

John nodded, impressed.

Mr. Gunn looked across the table at the daughter, who thought for a moment, and then nodded reluctantly. “I was ready for mama to die,” she said. “She had consumption bad. But I was not expecting it so soon, or so suddenly.”

“But what do we know about you, young man?” Mr. Gunn looked gruffly across the table at John with a thick Scots stare. “Why should I entrust this young lass to you?”

“You know of me about what I know of you. But it appears that providence has thrown us together. I am willing to help, provided you are doing nothing wicked or unlawful.”

Mr. Gunn chuckled and said, “Aye. Well said.” He got up and disappeared into a back room and came back out a moment

later with a brace of pistols and some gold coins. He dropped them all on the table in front of John, who stared at them in consternation. It was one thing to run into an officer and knock him down—without knowing why—but it was quite another to be armed for a conflict about which he knew nothing. “What are the coins for?” he asked.

“For her passage. The *Sea Breeze* is not carrying passengers free, are they?”

John shook his head.

“Do you have everything with you?” Mr. Gunn asked the young woman. She nodded. He turned to John. “Are you willing to take her back to your ship now?” He said yes, and they all stood up slowly.

When they were outside in the gloaming, she turned to John and said, “Thank you for what you did. My name is Jenny. Jenny Geddes.”

“My name is John,” John said. “You’re welcome. I am very sorry about your mother. The ship is this way.”



Word Across the Water

THEY ARRIVED AT THE SHIP SAFELY THAT evening, and Jenny had no problem acquiring a berth. The captain looked at John curiously when they arrived, and John had to put up with some raucous teasing from some of the crew, but once she had secured her passage, John had disappeared below decks and did not see her again until they had been out to sea for a day.

A brisk spring wind kept their sails full, and the bow pointed eagerly west. After they had been out at sea for three days, the lookout shouted out that he saw three sets of masts, all sails furled, out on the horizon. It was early on a Sunday, and the *Sea Breeze* rapidly overtook them.

Captain Wainwright paced up and down the deck

nervously, and periodically he would raise his glass, trying to calculate what the three ships were doing. There did not appear to be any danger, but it was still strange to find three ships just bobbing about. At the captain's orders, the *Sea Breeze* tacked to come within hailing distance, and as they did so, John could hear a faint voice coming over the water.

The captain raised his glass again, and this time he lowered it with an exclamation. "By thunder, a preacher!" He handed the glass to John, who had been standing behind him ready to be sent on errands. "*A preacher!*"

"All hands on deck!"

"All hands on deck, aye!"

John turned and saw the crew scrambling to obey the captain's order. Within a few minutes, the entire crew was assembled on the afterdeck, lined up in three disciplined lines. Their disciplined and immediate response to the captain's order provided an apparent contrast with some of their very colorful garb—wide leather belts, homespun shirts and the occasional earring. Some of the men looked quite piratical. The few passengers—there were a handful besides Jenny—stood behind the crew curiously. The passengers, I am afraid to say, were dressed far more respectably.

"Mates," the captain said, "button up your shirts. *We are going to church.*"

The *Sea Breeze* gradually came in closer to the three ships, and John could plainly hear the words of the black-robed

preacher standing on a wooden box near the after rail. At the captain's order, their sails were furled, and they began to drift about fifty yards starboard of the nearest ship. The preacher was on the middle ship, and his voice boomed over the water. John had never heard a voice like it. It was rolling and full, like the ocean beneath them, and John almost could feel the weight of his vowels. He could see the crews of the other ships clustered around him, seated on the deck.

But before I come directly to this, give me leave to premise a caution or two. And the first is, that I take it for granted you believe religion to be an inward thing; you believe it to be a work in the heart, a work wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. If you do not believe this, you do not believe your Bibles. If you do not believe this, though you have got your Bibles in your hand, you hate the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart; for religion is everywhere represented in Scripture as the work of God in the heart. "The kingdom of God is within us," says our Lord; and, "He is not a Christian who is one outwardly; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly." If any of you place religion in outward things, I shall not perhaps please you this morning . . .

John had grown up in St. Anne's church in Annapolis, and his parents had catechized him faithfully. He was not hearing

anything new in what the preacher was saying, but he was certainly hearing it in a fresh way. The vicar at St. Anne's was a kindly man, but somewhat helpless outside the pulpit, and only slightly better than that inside in the pulpit. He frequently read sermons that others had written many years before, and John was not always entirely sure that he even understood what he was reading. At the same time, John still felt bad for feeling this way because the vicar really was a very nice man. One time John's father had joked that the vicar could preach about as well as a pile of wet rope, and John had laughed out loud. His mother had shushed them both, but then had smiled in spite of herself. She was always shushing his father that way.

... I can do nothing without sin; and, as one expresseth it, my repentance wants to be repented of, and my tears to be washed in the precious blood of my dear Redeemer. Our best duties are as so many splendid sins.

John was leaning on the rail, listening intently. *Splendid* sins. That's what it was, splendid sinning. One time, his father had threatened to start taking the family to the Presbyterian meeting house outside of town, and his parents had quite a discussion about it. But St. Anne's really was a beautiful place, and John loved to go there when no one else was around, just to sit and think and pray. He loved the silence and the glory of the sanctuary's lines. The Presbyterian meeting house was a



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converted stable, and the Monroes were a well-respected family in Annapolis. Going there would not be a secret thing in Annapolis society at all. And yet, John knew that his father and mother were both sympathetic with the preaching outside of town, and he could tell from the books they bought and read that their sympathies were well-informed. And yet, for the time being, they all remained at St. Anne's—though his father commented on it more often than his mother did. One time, as they walked home from church, Thomas Monroe had looked at John and said, "Son, there are only two consolations in this sinful world. One is the perfections of Christ. The other is the imperfections of Christians." John had laughed, his mother tried not to smile, and nothing more was said.

... you must not build upon a work within you, but always come out of yourselves to the righteousness of Jesus Christ without you; you must be always coming as poor sinners to draw water out of the wells of salvation; you must be forgetting the things that are behind, and be continually pressing forward to the things that are before. My dear friends, you must keep up a tender, close walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now John knew that he was a Christian. But as the preacher drew his sermon to a close, John felt himself mysteriously drawn to some point of decision. He felt convicted that he had

been lax in his reading of his prayer book, the one his mother had given him. And he knew his father would ask him about his Bible reading when he got home again. He resolved to make sure he could give them both a good report. At the same time, the preacher was making it very clear that Jesus Christ did not come to make nice people nicer. John felt quite sure that nice people becoming nicer was one of the splendid sins that the preacher had so roundly condemned. But even though the words of the preacher struck him powerfully, so that he felt pierced in his heart, at the same time, John felt himself strangely encouraged. He did not know how to explain it, but fortunately there was no one there that he had to explain it to.

He bowed his head respectfully while the preacher was saying the last prayer and benediction. He lifted up his head after the prayer and saw Captain Wainwright lift his hands to his mouth to shout across the water.

“Our many thanks to you, and to your minister!” A faint cry drifted back across the water, nowhere near as powerful as the voice of the preacher. “You are most welcome, and Mr. Whitefield sends his regards.”

Mr. Whitefield! John’s mouth dropped open. He had heard his parents talk of Mr. Whitefield often—if only all Anglican ministers preached like he did, there would be no need of the Presbyterians outside the town. And here he had heard Mr. Whitefield preach without knowing who it was. Yet at the same time, even though he did not know who was preaching, he had

felt the force of his authority. Mr. Whitefield's reputation was certainly well-deserved. And here John had found him, out in the middle of the ocean. He was delighted, and he wondered what his parents would say when he told them about it.

The sailors were all variously affected. Most of them had simply returned to their tasks when the service was done, but others moved slowly around the deck, appearing deep in thought. Several men went below decks immediately, and John could hear them beginning to blaspheme as soon as they thought the captain couldn't hear them. The passengers responded as most of the crew had, and John noticed Jenny standing off by herself next to the opposite rail. He walked up to her slowly, and saw that she had been crying. Unwiped tears were still on her cheeks. She just stood motionless as he walked up.

"Jenny? Are you all right?" At this she just nodded.

And so he asked, "Was it the sermon?" She nodded again, and after a moment, she spoke slowly. "I have never heard anything like that before. Most Sundays my mother would take me to the old greystone kirk near our house, but I never heard anything there but very learned mumbling. One minister we had would creak when he walked."

"What kind of church was it?" John asked.

Jenny laughed. "Scotland, remember? Presbyterian. But I hear that this Mr. Whitefield is an Anglican. How wonderful it must be to hear preaching like that all the time."

John said nothing, but was musing to himself what an

odd world it was. His parents were wishing they could hear Presbyterian preaching, and here was Jenny, who apparently had had her fill of it. So John stood decently off to the side and tried hard not to think about how pretty she was.

“What did you think of the sermon?” she suddenly asked.

“I believe him,” he said simply.

“So do I,” she said.

“What did you think about what he said about being a Christian inwardly?” she asked. “I had never heard that before.”

“I thought he was right. But I am not sure it always looks the same, and I think that some enthusiasts think that it does. I talked to my father about this once, and what he told me helped me a great deal. He likes the revival preachers mostly, but he said some of them are barking at the moon. Not Mr. Whitefield though.” At this, John’s voice became more serious and solemn. He moved to the gunwale and hopped slightly to sit on the rail. As he did so, the ship took an unexpected lurch, and John toppled over backwards and into the sea.



John's First Fight

THE SHIP WAS NOT UNDER SAIL, AND THE DAY was relatively calm, so they had no trouble getting John back on board. A rope was thrown down to him, and as he clambered back on board, over the rail, he flushed deeply under the crew's jibing and catcalls. He did not know why, but he was very irritated, and when Jenny asked him if he was all right, he just nodded curtly. After a moment of shaking himself off, he stomped down below to change into dry clothing.

Everything seemed wrong to him. He had heard a wonderful sermon, and he had taken it to heart. He had been able to speak with Jenny and thought that perhaps she might *not* be taking him for a fool, when he had to go and flip backward off the rail and into the deep, blue sea. He was completely

humiliated and in a dangerous mood.

When he came topside later that day, he was glad to see that the deck was largely empty. One sailor stood watch at the helm, and another stood beside him, keeping him company. John walked slowly back to the stern of the ship in order to stand at one of his favorite places, so that he might watch the wake of the ship curl and boil and return to the ocean. He just wanted to think.

As he walked by the helmsman, he did not see the two exchange glances. The man at the helm shook his head *no*, but his friend—whose name was Curtis—seemed insistent. They whispered back and forth for a moment, and then Curtis turned and spoke loudly to John.

“Hey, laddie. Tell us about your lady friend!”

John did not turn and just shook his head.

“Well, maybe we should tell you about *her* then.”

John’s shoulders stiffened, and he continued to pretend that he was not listening. But it was obvious that he was listening.

“Correct that, laddie. I don’t know about her. Jenny, that’s her name, ain’t it? But I do know about her mother. D’ye want to hear about her mother?”

At this, John stood up and turned around. His forehead was red, and his cheeks were flushed with anger. “No.”

Curtis grinned widely. “Only one way to keep me from talking, laddie. You see, one time last year . . .”

At this, John roared and lunged toward Curtis, but in his

anger he did not move intelligently. Curtis, who was one of the sailors who had been blaspheming after hearing Mr. Whitefield, was agitated and looking for a fight. He calculated everything perfectly. The sermon earlier in the day had an effect on him, too, one that he did not care to think about. Fighting was a good way to think about something else.

When John ran at Curtis, he had no other thought in his mind other than his anger and his desire to do something. He was completely shocked when Curtis, who had been plotting the fight beforehand, threw a right fist into his face, which knocked him on to his back. John lay on the deck, stunned for a moment. In the background, he could hear the helmsman trying to restrain his friend. "That's enough now, Jack . . ."

But when John's scattered senses came back to him, the hot anger was completely gone. In its place was a cold wrath, and a deep sense that he was involved with a kind of situation he had never been in before. He stood slowly to his feet, and approached Curtis warily this time, his fists up in front of him.

Jack Curtis was about ten years older than John, and he was about twenty pounds heavier. John thought coldly to himself that Curtis was probably going to thrash him, and that his only goal should simply be to acquit himself well. But even with his hot anger gone, John was vaguely aware that his motives were mixed, and that in part he was fighting because he had fallen into the water, or perhaps because Jenny's mother had not received his apology, or perhaps because he had completely

misunderstood Mr. Whitefield's sermon, thinking that he was a nice person because he knew that being a nice person was not enough. There was more than enough in Curtis's taunts to fight over—he had no right to speak about Jenny's mother that way. But John circled around the older sailor, fists in front of him, and he knew that he was not going to be able to fight with that abandon that comes with a clean conscience. He was going to fight, and he was going to do the best he could, but his thoughts were all a jumble. And he was still very angry. His father had once told him that there was always a deeper right than being right. But now he was only in the right one way. And he had to fight anyway.

John was very quick on his feet, and so he was able to strike Curtis on the face, but not very hard. But Curtis just grinned at him again. "So, you can slap like a girl."

With that, John stepped in to swing at Curtis with all that he had, and Curtis just slapped away his punch like he wasn't even trying. John did not retreat and took several heavy swings in quick succession. One of his left jabs caught Curtis on the nose, and John noted with satisfaction that he had drawn first blood. But Curtis was a strong man and had been a sailor of the main for fifteen years, and with his first blow he knocked John down again, sprawling on his back.

John got up again, and this time he just charged. He wrapped his arms around Curtis, and they both toppled to the deck. By this time, the commotion attracted a good portion

of the crew, and they stood in a tight circle around the fighters, cheering them both on. The crew members knew nothing about the origins of the fight and were just happy with the entertainment, and so they lustily cheered both of the combatants on.

In close quarters, John was taking the worst of it. He had longer arms than Curtis and could not effectively draw back in order to swing. Curtis was short and stocky, and every blow to John's ribs knocked wind out of him. Curtis was an experienced fighter, and he knew that blows to the body took a lot more out of a man than blows to the head, and he just kept pummeling away. John was finding it difficult to breathe, both because of the blows to the ribs and because of the exertion of fighting. He was not doing well at all, and he knew it. He had not expected to win, but he *had* expected to do better than he was doing.

He rolled quickly away from Curtis on the deck, and lurched to his feet. Curtis got to his knees, and they both faced each other for a few moments, breathing heavily. Curtis slowly got to his feet, and John ran at him with all his strength, and delivered a blow that had everything in it that John had left in him. He struck Curtis full in the face, and the sailor fell over backwards like a tree. John had fallen to his knees afterwards, and was facing the deck on all fours, trying to get air into his lungs. But this last blow, although it had knocked Curtis over, had also made him angry for the first time. Up to this point, he

was just entertaining himself, but now he had lost his temper with John and fell upon him savagely. John had no more to fight with, and he lost consciousness with Curtis raining blows upon his head.

As soon as John went limp, the rest of the crew, which was made up of a decent sort for the most part, pulled Curtis off, and pinned his arms behind him. Several of them knelt down beside John to attend to him, and this was the scene on the afterdeck when Captain Wainwright walked up. He took everything in at a glance and stared coldly around at the crew. "Who was here when this started?"

"Aye, Cap'n." The helmsman raised his hand.

"Who started it?"

The helmsman just stared for a moment, swallowed a couple times and then said, "Jack did, Cap'n." The captain looked at Curtis angrily. "That true, Curtis?"

"Aye, Cap'n."

"Take Monroe below decks to his bunk, and tend to him until he comes to. Tie Curtis to the mast, and ten lashes, smart and quick. Then take him below."



When John came to his senses, all he could hear was moaning. At first, he thought he was the one doing it, but after a moment his head cleared, and he could hear that it was someone else. Later on he found out it was Curtis, on the far side of the crew's quarters, just fresh from the lash.

He tried to move in his bunk and gasped in pain. Some of his ribs were broken, he was sure, and the left side of his face was swollen. He tried to open his left eye, but he was unsure if he had done so. He couldn't see anything out of it. He tried to lick his lips, but it didn't seem like his tongue could move. He was thirsty enough to spit cotton.

"You awake?"

John could not see anything but croaked an answer.

"You want some water?"

John croaked again, and a moment later he could feel a pewter tumbler pressing his lips. He greedily drank what he could and even enjoyed the water running down his chin.

"Thank you," he said. "Who is it?"

"Henry," came the voice.

"Thank you, Henry," John said.

"You are most welcome, you stupid, little puppy," Henry said.

"May I have another drink?"

"All you want. And the barrel is not that far away."

John took another deep drink and then lay back in his bunk. After stretching out as best he could, he carefully checked all his limbs. He moved both feet and then his legs.

After that he successfully moved both arms and clenched and released both fists. Everything still worked. His arms and hands were very sore, but he thought they would be back to normal in a day or two. He reached up and gingerly touched his face. He flinched as he did so and decided that he had learned enough about his face.

“I don’t blame you,” Henry’s voice said. “It looks bad enough without poking it. I have never seen quite so puffy a head.”

All that was left for John was finding out about his ribs. “Can you help me, Henry? I think some ribs are broke. Could you feel up and down? Gentle, gentle.”

Henry ran his hand softly up one side and down the other, gently pressing as he went. The painful ribs were on his left side, and it seemed there were three of them that were broken.

“Stove right in,” Henry said cheerfully. “Looks like you have some bunk time coming.”

John got another drink and then laid his head back cautiously. He felt all right as long as he did not move, and it was generally easy to not move. As he lay on his back, his thoughts wandered here and there, and he began to reflect on the day he had had. It had begun wonderfully, listening to Mr. Whitefield preach. But then he had fallen in the water, and then he had fought with Curtis . . .

John suddenly lurched up and then fell back in pain. Henry, startled, grabbed at John’s hand. “What? What is it?”

“The Lord’s Day! I was fighting on the Lord’s Day!”

“The good Lord wanted you to wait a day? He wants all good Christians to get in their fights on Monday?”

“That’s not it. It’s always a sin—at least the way I was doing it. But on the Lord’s Day! That’s sacrilege.”

“Suit yourself, Johnny. Doing theology is as good a way to spend time down here while you are fixing up your ribs as anything else. Keeps your mind off the mending so’s you don’t mess that up, too. Is there anything else you want? I was just told to stay down here until you came to.”

“No,” John said. “Yes. Tell the captain I am very sorry, and I will be back in his service as his cabin boy as soon as I can. And can I have one more drink before you go? How is Curtis?”


“Never you mind about Curtis. The captain would have your hide if more fighting broke out down here.”

“No, no fighting. I just need to apologize to him also.”

“I don’t think he is in a frame of mind to receive visitors just now. Maybe tomorrow.”

“Maybe tomorrow.”





DOUGLAS WILSON CONTINUES THE SAGA OF THE Monroe family with an adventure set in the days of the First Great Awakening, twenty-nine years before the American War for Independence. Seventeen-year-old John Monroe is an apprenticed seaman on a merchant ship bound for Annapolis from Glasgow when he falls into an adventure involving an unscrupulous British officer, French and English spies and a young lady with a secret. When John offers to escort Jenny to America, he knows she is bearing mysterious documents, but how can he begin to suspect the dangers his act of mercy will bring to him and his family? What happens at Susan Creek is crucial not only to John himself, but to the very survival of the colonies themselves.

Douglas Wilson is pastor of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho, editor of "Credenda Agenda" and author of numerous books, including *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* and a collection of books on marriage and parenting. His previous contribution to the Veritas Maritime Series is *Blackthorn Winter*.

ISBN 1-932168-26-5

US\$12.00



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