

## *The King of Prussia (2 extracts)*

### Extract No.1

1787

*Dawn*

*The deck of a schooner is revealed as the sun rises and slowly burns off the mist  
A solitary deckhand sings unaccompanied a quiet, haunting song:*

**SONG** Dawn breaks and no day was finer,  
Our schooner lies anchored  
Fresh home from China.  
Stood out four miles  
Due west of the Lizard  
The crew, ocean-weary,  
Yearns for the shore

**LOOKOUT** Lugger! English! Two miles to larb'd!  
Gathering on us with all sail before!

**CAPTAIN** That's our man. The King of Prussia.

**SUPERCARGO** Open the hatches!  
Prepare to discharge!

*JOHN CARTER is received on deck by the CAPTAIN*

**CARTER** Where y'from?

**CAPTAIN** China.

**CARTER** I don't want tea.

*The hatchtop is replaced*

**CARTER** Did ye pick up any liquor on your voyage home.

**CAPTAIN** A few ton.

**CARTER** Lets feel the strength of it.

*He watches the CAPTAIN give orders to the SUPERCARGO*

**CARTER** This is me brother's job but e's in gaol so I'm doin 'is job on  
toppa my job which is two jobs too many don't ya think?  
What's your price?

**CAPTAIN** Five pounds?

**CARTER** Jack?

**CAPTAIN** Nantz.

**CARTER** Bigger five. Three.

**CAPTAIN** Three?

**CARTER** I wouldn't give ya five for Jack. I'd consider four for Geneva but Nantz? Three's generous. In fact you've talked me out of three. Two or nothing. Geneva three. Four the Jack. What did we agree, one?

**CAPTAIN** Two...

**CARTER** That was Geneva. And three pound for jack.

**CAPTAIN** Four pound the Jack...

**CARTER** So you have Jack!

**CAPTAIN** Yes!

*A barrel is brought*

**CARTER** At two.

**CAPTAIN** Two?

**CARTER** Thass better. Two for the jack.

**CAPTAIN** Three.

**CARTER** You offered me two! I heard you say it. Come along Cap'm I'm a busy man willya shit or get off the pot?

*CAPTAIN hands a measure of brandy to CARTER*

**CARTER** Whass this, nantz?

**CAPTAIN** Jack.

**CARTER** (*studying the contents of the measure*) It ain't Geneva.

**CAPTAIN** No.

**CARTER** That we do know.

*CARTER drains the liquor and hands the measure back*

**CARTER** Pound a tub.

**CAPTAIN** You said two!

**CARTER** Thass for jack.

**CAPTAIN** This is jack

**CARTER** It ain't geneva so we'm down to jack and nantz.

**CAPTAIN** Nantz?

**CARTER** I arn't so sure either Cap'm. Could be nantz could be jack. Now I'm prepared to take the risk and pay y'a pound a tub for what might turn out on closer inspection not to be Geneva not to be Jack but Nantz.

**CAPTAIN** A pound!

**CARTER** Good! Thass more like it. *(he shakes the CAPTAIN's hand)*  
Have y'never dealt with a free-trader before Cap'm?

**CAPTAIN** No sir.

**CARTER** First thing you gotta learn is a free trader's an honest man cus e d'break the law. And if you break the law you gotta be honest. If I offer you a pound then a pound is a fair price.

**CAPTAIN** How many d'ye want?

**CARTER** Four hundred and eighty.

**CAPTAIN** Break bulk there!

**CARTER** Fast and steady mind.

*They watch the unloading*

**CARTER** See the gannets fishin Cap'm. There's always one oo range high and wide. Huntin while the others dive. Thass me.

# *The King of Prussia*

## **Extract No 2**

*St. Malo*

*A prison cell*

**HARRY CARTER** *stands at the window with his back to the door  
He works with a backstaff, shooting at the sun*

**SONG**                      Here sits a man denied liberty  
                                    A sailor who's accustomed  
                                    To roaming the seas  
                                    Here sits a man innocent of crime.  
                                    Locked in a prison cell  
                                    Biding his time.

*Enter CARTER*

**CARTER**                      Brother.

*The door shuts behind CARTER*

**HARRY**                      That you John?

**CARTER**                      Gather up your stuff.

*He impatiently watches HARRY slowly and meticulously fold his clothes and pile his books*

**CARTER**                      Got the Stackhouse party workin with us.

**HARRY**                      Thass good.

**CARTER**                      Too damn good.

**HARRY**                      How's that?

**CARTER**                      I bought ten ton off the China ship?

**HARRY**                      What.

**CARTER**                      Jack.

**HARRY**                      What price?

**CARTER**                      Pound.

**HARRY**                      That's good goin.

**CARTER**                      She's took it to Bath and flogged it for six.

*HARRY stops what he's doing to reflect on this*

**HARRY**                      Who?

**CARTER** Stackhouse party.

*HARRY resumes his packing*

**CARTER** Tis all gone for profit. And I tellya somethin else. She a be pushin for less pay for the farmers. We'll have a riot on our hands. And all that goodwill built up over years gone for nothin.

*He knocks on the door to be let out*

Guard! See what she gotta learn is there's a network of folk whose dependant on each other. And they all give and take. And the minute there's one oo start to get greedy then the whole damned network's busted. Guard!

*He bangs hard on the locked door*

Why d'e lock the door? Guard! Whass the French for guard? Whass the boy's name out there?

**HARRY** Albert.

**CARTER** (*shouts*) Albert! Where be to! Venez y!

*He rattles the door but its locked*

**HARRY** Got all the papers?

**CARTER** You ready?

*HARRY has packed his bag and slung it over his shoulder  
He looks around to check he's left nothing behind*

**CARTER** Guard! Oy! Come ere! Hell's e to. (*yells*) Guaaaard!

*His voice echoes down an empty corridor*

*HARRY whistles a short low whistle  
The **GUARD** immediatly appears*

*The **GUARD** and **HARRY** speak French*

**GUARD** Qu'est-ce que vous voulez Henri?

**HARRY** Tu vas nous liberer Albert?

**GUARD** Non.

**CARTER** What d'e say?

**HARRY** Porquoi non?

**CARTER** No? E say No?

**GUARD** Je dois observer la consigne.

**CARTER** What d'e say? Show im this!

*CARTER waves the Governor's letter at the **GUARD***

**HARRY** Mon frere tient une lettre d'elargement.

*He passes the letter through to the **GUARD**, who glances at it and hands it back*

**GUARD** Cela s'applique a la paix.

**CARTER** Whassamatter with it?

**HARRY** Que signifie cela?

**GUARD** Elle n'est pas valable maintenant que nous sommes entre en guerre.

**HARRY** Depuis quand allons-nous en guerre?

**GUARD** Depuis une demie.

**CARTER** What the fuck is goin on!

**HARRY** E says since war was declared tis no longer valid.

**CARTER** War?

**GUARD** Vous attendrez ici jusqu'a ce qu'on vous transporte a la Prison a Josselin.

**CARTER** How long we bin at war?

**HARRY** Half an hour.

*CARTER sits heavily onto the bench*

**CARTER** How long's it gonna last?

**HARRY** How long was the last one.

**CARTER** Thirty bloody years! Thirty years! I be an old man!

**HARRY** You'll be fifty eight.

**CARTER** I'll be dead. So will you be cus I willa killed ya.

**HARRY** You gotta find something to occupy yourself. Like Cain, oo built a city in 'is mind.

**CARTER** Built a city did e?

**HARRY** Yes. Cain did.

*CARTER concentrates*

*HARRY unpacks his bag, meticulously laying out his belongings on the floor*

**CARTER** She's done this. Stackhouse. She got war declared.

**HARRY** Build a city.

**CARTER** O yeah. You bet your life. God elp the business now. I knew I couldn't trust er. She's got me out the way. Whatever possessed you in God's name brother to put into St. Malo with no papers?

**HARRY** I'm learning how to navigate.

**CARTER** Where from? One enda the cell to the other? (*at door*) Guard!

**HARRY** Don't harass im. E's the only friend we got.

*CARTER slumps in the corner*

**HARRY** Approaching Plymouth Sound from the Westward  
Give Penlee Point a berth of half a mile.  
Bring the red obelisk on the Hoe  
In line with Plymouth New Church.  
Keep that mark on til Cawsand's open.  
Steer East until the New Church appears  
Between the red beacon and the western end of the Citadel.

**CARTER** Aw God Jesus Christ Al-buggerin mighty in hellfire and damnation.

**HARRY** Please brother. Quit the profanity.

**CARTER** Wanna cut me 'ands off while you'm at it?

**HARRY** I don't allow profane words on deck.

**CARTER** We in't on the bloody deck. Thanks to you we'm locked up in a cell!

**HARRY** Out of consideration for your brother and fellow prisoner.  
Please.

**CARTER** I can't even swear.

**HARRY** Build a city.

**CARTER** Fuck that.

**HARRY** Start with the people.

*They sit silent on the floor at either end of the cell*

*HARRY opens his bible and reads*