

sometimes, to take your mind off the "hostesses." The Italian waiters had all been stewards or sailors on the sunken ships. We Americans treated them as human beings and they were pathetically grateful.

The Italians were starved for cigarettes. Each of us got a pack a day and I shared mine with my favourite waiter. It paid off. One evening when we were working on the "Liebenfels" this waiter took me aside in the darkness and said, more or less: "Look, Signor Dorcy, you have been kind to me; I do not want to see you killed. So I tell that the sabotage officer who sunk all those ships, he rigged up booby traps in each ship."

"Where?" I asked, anxiously, thanking my lucky stars we had not yet "found" any.

"He was a methodical man, without imagination," said the waiter. "He put bombs in each ship near the bulkhead between Holds One and Two and Holds Four and Five. And he put booby traps thus and so, in each ship. If you turn a certain valve—boom! No more ship."

"And no more Dorcy," I murmured.

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I got a pretty good idea just where the fatal valve was, and where the booby-trap bombs were. We managed to find them and make them harmless. But it seems to me a cold fact that, had this waiter not told me how to find these infernal machines, the whole salvage operation probably would have failed, or at least been delayed long enough to allow Rommel to take Egypt.

On July 1 we bounced the "Liebenfels." We had set a world record of twenty-nine working-days. A tug put a line on the raised ship and lugged her out of the channel. The bottleneck was partly open. A small tanker slid in and tied up at the docks. Other ships followed. The flow of material into the harbour grew from a trickle into a modest stream.

Two other ships had to come up the—"Frauenfels," a sister to the "Liebenfels," and the "Tripolitania," a small Italian coaster. And then there was the Italian ship "Brenta," close by. We didn't have to get the "Brenta" up—but we had to pull her sting. Deep in her holds were twenty-eight big mines and twenty-six torpedo warheads. They were all alive, and we could not take the chance of a passing ship setting them off. The explosion would have wrecked the whole harbour.

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Finally, we bounced the "Frauenfels" and the "Tripolitania." Working blind, we got every mine and warhead out of the "Brenta." The raising of three ships and the destinging of the fourth opened the channel completely. Supply ships streamed in. Soon the long road through Asmara and Khartoum and up toward the caving Allied front was alive with trucks and guns and tanks, hurrying northward. Soon the radio and newspaper reports began to look a little better. On October 25, General Montgomery made his historic break-through at El Alamein—with the supplies the "Intent" the "Resolute," a sister tug, and the "Chamberlain," a steam schooner, let in through the uncorked bottleneck.

