

Len's Life – Life Or Death

By

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The two of them were trapped and time was running out. Water was filling the compartment and they were desperately looking for a way out before they were taken down with the ship, *HMS Pakenham*.

'This way!' the Captain shouted through the gushes of water.

'Captain, Where are you? I can barely see you!'

'Over here, this is the way out! Get over here.'

'Yes, sir.' Len waded his way through the ice-cold water toward his Captain. 'It's freezing sir.'

'Then warm yourself up and help me with this latch.' They pulled and pulled. 'Blast! Damn thing is wedged. We need another exit!'

'Are we going to get out of here, sir?' Young Len was coming to terms with the reality of the situation.

His captain paused and looked his young comrade in the eye. 'Yes, private. You're going to get out of here.'

'Am I going to see my family again?'

'Of course.'

'And you?' A pause.

'Where's the next exit?'

'The other end I think, Captain.'

'OK, the other end. Keep up!' The water was up to their chests and rising fast. 'Over here, there's another latch. Help me.' They rushed to the latch and starting pulling. 'C'mon Private, pull!'

'It's moving, sir! It's moving! Haha!' The latch opened and a giant spray of water hit them both. Len managed to hang onto the door, his Captain was swept away to the back of the room. 'Captain! Captain! Come back! Please come back!' Len swam through the opening they had opened and waited on the other side. He needed to close the latch to stop the flow so he could escape. Time was running out.

'Len!'

'Captain? Captain! Where are you?'

'There's no time, you go! I can't get there in time and my leg is caught.'

'I'll come back.'

'No! If you come back, you won't make it out.'

'I can't leave you, sir! I just can't.'

'Leave me. Just get the hell out of here!'

'But I wa...'

'That's an order, Private! Go!' Although it could not be seen because of the water on his face, Len was crying.

He couldn't think of anything profound to say.

'Thank you, sir.'

'Get out of here!' Len closed the hatch against the flow of the water and left his Captain, his friend, to die.