

GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS

**THE MUTINY
ON BOARD
HMS BOUNTY**

William Bligh

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**BARONET
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A Dream of Becoming a Sailor

CHAPTER 1

The Call of the Sea

When I was a boy in Plymouth, England, I dreamed of becoming a sailor. Or, better, a ship's captain! Captain Bligh, Captain William Bligh. I dreamed that one day, men would know me as one of the greatest navigators to sail the seas.

I was sixteen years old when I began my life and career as a seaman. I was an intelligent boy, with sharp eyes and a quick mind, and soon knew the ways of the sea as well as any great navigator.

The year was 1771 and England was Queen

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of the Seas. The British navy had established the greatest sea empire in history; our fleet dominated the white-capped ocean from North America to India.

Ship life in the British navy was not easy. The work was hard and the discipline was harsh. The crew consisted mainly of men who were hiding from the law or common riffraff kidnapped off the streets and forced into naval service by gangs hired for that purpose.

Severe treatment was sometimes the only way a captain could keep his ship sailing and his men healthy. Food was often rotten, and fruit was scarce. Fresh water and fruit were rationed early in the voyage to prevent shortages later, for these shortages led to death and outbreaks of scurvy—a disease which left a sailor weak, with gums as soft as pudding and with bleeding from his mouth and nose.

But I enjoyed this rugged life, and I learned quickly and well how to navigate by



Hard Work in the British Navy