

Chapter 17 Mr Fogg Tries to Find a Ship

The steamship *China* had left for Liverpool three-quarters of an hour earlier!

When it left New York, the *China* seemed to have taken with it Mr Fogg's last hope.

No other boat would suit his plan. The French boat would be leaving only on the 14th, two days later. The German boat was not going directly to Liverpool or London; it would be calling at a French port – and Mr Fogg would not be able to get from there to London in time.

One steamer, it is true, would be leaving the next day, but it was no use considering that one, because it was a slow boat, using sails rather than steam.

Passepartout was extremely upset. Three-quarters of an hour too late! It was his fault, he thought. Instead of helping his master, he had succeeded in making him late. When he looked back on all the things that had happened during the journey from London, when he added up all the money spent uselessly, when he thought of losing the bet, he felt completely to blame.

But Mr Fogg did not blame him and said simply: 'Well, we will think about the matter tomorrow.'

The travellers went to a hotel, but Mr Fogg was the only one who slept.

The next day was December 12th. From the 12th, at seven in the morning, to the 21st, at 8.45 in the evening, there were nine days, thirteen hours and forty-five minutes left. If, then, Phileas Fogg had set out the night before on the *China*, one of the fastest ships of the Steamship Company, he would have got to Liverpool, and then to London, in time.

Phileas Fogg left the hotel alone, having told his servant to wait for him and to let Aouda know that she must be ready to leave at any moment.

Mr Fogg went to the port and looked among the ships for any which were getting ready to sail. He found more than one; for in this busy port there is not a day when a hundred boats do not leave for every part of the world. But most of these were sailing boats, and they would not suit Phileas Fogg.

At last he noticed a fine-looking steamer. The clouds of smoke that she was sending out showed that she was making her final preparations.

Phileas Fogg called for a small boat, got into it, and in a few moments found himself at the side of the *Henrietta*. The captain was on board, and came immediately at Phileas Fogg's request. He was fifty years old, a rough-looking, unpleasant man. His large eyes, red hair and large body did not give him an attractive appearance.

'The captain?' asked Mr Fogg.

'I am he.'

'I am Phileas Fogg, of London.'

'And I am Andrew Speedy, of Cardiff.'

'You are about to leave?'

'In an hour.'

'You are heading for...?'

'Bordeaux.'

'You have passengers?'

'No passengers. Never have passengers. I prefer goods. Goods don't get in the way, and they don't talk.'

'Yours is a fast ship?'

'Between eleven and twelve miles an hour. The *Henrietta* is well known for its speed.'

'Will you take me and three other persons to Liverpool?'

'To Liverpool? You might as well say China.'

'I said Liverpool.'

'No!'

'No?'

'No. I am setting out for Bordeaux, and I shall go to Bordeaux.'

'Whatever the price?'

'Whatever the price.'

The captain spoke in a voice that showed it was useless to reason with him.

'But the owners of the *Henrietta*—' argued Phileas Fogg.

'The owners of the *Henrietta* are myself,' replied the captain.

'The ship belongs to me.'

'I will hire it from you.'

'No.'

'I will buy it from you.'

'No.'

Phileas Fogg kept calm. But the position was serious. In New York it was not as simple as it had been in Hong Kong, nor was it as easy dealing with the captain of the *Henrietta* as it had been with the captain of the *Tankadere*. Until now the gentleman's money had always been able to get over every difficulty. This time money failed.

They could not cross the Atlantic by balloon; that would be too dangerous and, in fact, impossible, so a way must be found of crossing the Atlantic in a ship. Phileas Fogg suddenly seemed to

have an idea; he said to the captain: 'Well, will you take me to Bordeaux?'

'No, not even if you were to pay me forty pounds.'

'I will pay you four hundred pounds.'

'For each person?'

'For each person.'

'And there are four of you?'

'Four.'

Captain Speedy did not know what to think. Sixteen hundred pounds to be earned without changing any plans; it was well worth the trouble of forgetting his dislike of passengers. Besides, passengers at four hundred pounds each are no longer passengers, but valuable goods.

'I am leaving at nine o'clock,' said Captain Speedy simply, 'and you and your people will be here?'

'By nine o'clock we will be on board,' replied Mr Fogg.

It was half past eight. Fogg left the *Henrietta*, took a carriage back to the hotel, and picked up Aouda, Passepartout, and even Mr Fix, to whom he kindly offered transport. All this was done by the gentleman with the calmness which never left him even when he was in the greatest trouble.

By the time the *Henrietta* was ready to sail, all four were on board. An hour later the steamer left the Hudson River. During the day she steamed along the shore of Long Island, and then she went out onto the open sea.

At twelve o'clock the next day, 13th December, a man began giving orders to the ship's officers, telling them in what direction the ship had to go. You might suppose that this man was Captain Speedy. Not at all. It was Phileas Fogg! Captain Speedy himself was locked up in his cabin and was roaring with anger – which was not surprising.

What had happened was very simple. Phileas Fogg wanted to go to Liverpool; the captain would not take him there. Then

Phileas Fogg had agreed to pay to go to Bordeaux, and during the thirty hours that he had been on board he had spent money so cleverly and wisely that the officers and men – who very much disliked their captain – belonged to him. And that is why Phileas Fogg, and not Captain Speedy, was master of the ship; why the captain was shut up in his cabin; and why, lastly, the *Henrietta* was making her way not towards Bordeaux but towards Liverpool. Seeing Mr Fogg sail the ship, it was very clear that he had once been a sailor. But how this adventure would end, nobody could tell.

Aouda felt very anxious about it, although she said nothing. Fix was so surprised that he too said nothing. Passepartout found the whole affair extremely exciting!

‘Between eleven and twelve miles an hour,’ Captain Speedy had said, and this seemed to be true.

If, then, the sea did not get too rough, if the wind did not blow from the east, and if there was no accident to the ship, the *Henrietta* would in the nine days, counting from 12th December to the 21st, cross the 3,000 miles separating New York from Liverpool.

At first conditions were good. The wind was not too strong, and blew from the right direction. The sails were raised, and the *Henrietta* travelled as fast as any of the regular steamers.



Passepartout was very, very happy, preferring not to think about what might happen later. The officers and men had never seen anyone so happy and excited. He made friends with the sailors, calling them by all sorts of friendly names, and giving them all kinds of good things to drink. He made others feel as happy as himself. He had forgotten the past, with its troubles and dangers. He thought only of the end of the journey, which was so near, and he sometimes became terribly impatient.

Fix did not understand anything at all. The taking of the *Henrietta*, the buying of her officers and men, and Fogg behaving like a regular sailor – this was too much for him. He did not know what to think. But, after all, a man who began by stealing fifty-five thousand pounds could finish by stealing a ship. Of course, he really believed that Fogg was not going to Liverpool at all, but to some part of the world where a robber might find a safe place to live. This plan now seemed most reasonable, and Fix began to be sorry about having any involvement in the affair.

As for Captain Speedy, he kept on roaring in his cabin, and Passepartout, whose duty it was to give him his food, did it only with the greatest care, in spite of his great strength.