

**E.M. Forster (1879-1970), *Collected Short Stories*, Penguin Books, 1976
(first edition 1947), "The Machine Stops", pp.111-113.**

He broke off, and she fancied that he looked sad. She could not be sure, for the Machine did not transmit *nuances* of expression. It only gave a general idea of people – an idea that was good enough for all practical purposes, Vashti thought. The imponderable bloom, declared by a discredited philosophy to be the actual essence of intercourse,

was rightly ignored by the Machine, just as the imponderable bloom of the grape was ignored by the manufacturers of artificial fruit. Something 'good enough' had long since been accepted by our race.

'The truth is,' he continued, 'that I want to see these stars again. They are curious stars. I want to see them not from the air-ship, but from the surface of the earth, as our ancestors did, thousands of years ago. I want to visit the surface of the earth.'

She was shocked again.

'Mother, you must come, if only to explain to me what is the harm of visiting the surface of the earth.'

'No harm,' she replied, controlling herself. 'But no advantage. The surface of the earth is only dust and mud, no life remains on it, and you would need a respirator, or the cold of the outer air would kill you. One dies immediately in the outer air.'

'I know; of course I shall take all precautions.'

'And besides —'

'Well?'

She considered, and chose her words with care. Her son had a queer temper, and she wished to dissuade him from the expedition.

'It is contrary to the spirit of the age,' she asserted.

'Do you mean by that, contrary to the Machine?'

'In a sense, but —'

His image in the blue plate faded.

'Kuno!'

He had isolated himself.

For a moment Vashti felt lonely.

Then she generated the light, and the sight of her room, flooded with radiance and studded with electric buttons, revived her. There were buttons and switches everywhere – buttons to call for food, for music, for clothing. There was the hot-bath button, by pressure of which a basin of (imita-

tion) marble rose out of the floor, filled to the brim with a warm deodorized liquid. There was the cold-bath button. There was the button that produced literature. And there were of course the buttons by which she communicated with her friends. The room, though it contained nothing, was in touch with all that she cared for in the world.

Vashti's next move was to turn off the isolation-switch, and all the accumulations of the last three minutes burst upon her. The room was filled with the noise of bells, and speaking-tubes. What was the new food like? Could she recommend it? Had she had any ideas lately? Might one tell her one's own ideas? Would she make an engagement to visit the public nurseries at an early date? – say this day month.

To most of these questions she replied with irritation – a growing quality in that accelerated age. She said that the new food was horrible. That she could not visit the public nurseries through press of engagements. That she had no ideas of her own but had just been told one – that four stars and three in the middle were like a man: she doubted there was much in it. Then she switched off her correspondents, for it was time to deliver her lecture on Australian music.

The clumsy system of public gatherings had been long since abandoned; neither Vashti nor her audience stirred from their rooms. Seated in her arm-chair she spoke, while they in their arm-chairs heard her, fairly well, and saw her, fairly well. She opened with a humorous account of music in the pre-Mongolian epoch, and went on to describe the great outburst of song that followed the Chinese conquest. Remote and primaeval as were the methods of I-San-So and the Brisbane school, she yet felt (she said) that study of them might repay the musician of to-day: they had freshness; they had, above all, ideas.

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CODE SUJET : EHP

SUJET JURY

SUJET CANDIDAT N°

The Sinking Of The Lusitania.

By Our Naval Correspondent.

The Times, May 10, 1915

The Creation of Panic

The diabolic character of Germany's action in destroying the Lusitania must rivet attention, but it is essential that the British public should not be distracted thereby from a recognition of the real motive of the crime. It is important and urgent to keep in mind the fact that it is the moral and sensational effect produced by the destruction of the big ship, and the wholesale massacre of those on board her, that have been sought for. In this way, it was hoped that the purpose of its promoters might be attained. They well knew that there was no immediate strategical advantage to be secured by the sinking of a great passenger ship like the Lusitania, but if it serves to arouse public opinion in this country in such a way as to bring about a diversion of the Navy from its proper business it will have justified its committal in the minds of those with whom a so-called "military necessity" overrules everything.

The whole point of the outrage lies in the impression it may create upon the imagination of our people and upon that of neutrals. The Lusitania was aimed at because she was a big vessel, looming large in the eyes of the world. This made her also an easy target. She carried many hundreds of non-combatants, including a large number of citizens of the United States. Therefore, the noise of her destruction would carry farther; the blow was calculated to work upon the nerves of a wider circle of people. It was confidently relied upon that the psychological effect would be a demand for the protection of such vessels, and it was hoped that an outcry for convoy, or some other method for securing safety, might irresistibly affect the Government of this country and cause a disturbance of the Admiralty's settled naval policy.

The Question of Escort

There are already indications of a foolish revival of the question, "Where is the Fleet?" German-American papers are endeavouring to convince the people of the United States that, in view of the warning given, the British Admiralty was negligent in not providing the Lusitania with an escort. Anything to divert the destroyer flotillas from their proper functions. "The British Navy cannot take care of you, so you had better stay at home," is the advice of the hyphenated Americans to intending passengers. It is expected that this cry will touch the pride and self-esteem of the British nation..and that it may find an echo over here. Unthinking

advisers in this country, it is hoped, will say that at least the British Navy ought to protect its friends. This is to play into the hands of the enemy and further their design. Every recent manifestation of submarine activity has had for its object to engender a belief in the uselessness of naval effort against under-water attack. This is the reason for the attacking of neutrals after the attempt to enforce the " blockade " upon our own vessels had hopelessly failed. The torpedoing of the Lusitania is but the climax, so far, to the policy which has for its object the foiling of the efforts of our Admiralty and interference with their plan of campaign. This is the end to be attained, and as a means towards it Germany is trying to create an impression of helplessness among our people. 30
Excuses for this dastardly action, which has brought dishonour on the calling of the sea, will doubtless be found in Germany. Already an entirely unwarranted story has been put about that- the Lusitania was armed. The allegation is of German origin, and its repetition in English newspapers without inquiry has drawn an official repudiation. It is a cardinal error to assume because the warning was issued in America that the blow was struck at the United States. It was aimed at the British Navy. Our naval authorities have their own plans for dealing with the submarines. That they have been successful up to a point is proved beyond doubt by this outrage. The end will come soon if we permit emotional naval effort prompted by unreason and panic to supersede the intelligent direction of our fleets and flotillas by those who have made this matter their life study. 35 40 45

A Silent Service

I said on Saturday that an Admiralty announcement on the subject of the protection of our national interests at sea, will be awaited with interest. Mr. Churchill has a unique opportunity of explaining to the whole world the silent service performed by the Fleet, the working of sea power, and its influence on the war. There was nothing particularly brilliant in the torpedoing of a huge target such as the Lusitania presented at short range. It is probable that hardly anybody, and her captain least of all, supposed that the warning given was anything more than mere bluff. He seems to have kept to his customary course, and, according to the evidence of one of the seamen of the ship, to have slowed down on arriving off the Irish coast. But even if the vessel had been proceeding at full speed, providing she was placed favourably for the discharge of a torpedo from a lurking submarine, this alone would not have been sufficient to save her. As I have pointed out over and over again, the rate at which a ship is travelling is no certain protection against torpedo attack if all the other circumstances are favourable and if the speed is a known factor. 50 55 60

But at this moment, criticism is worse than misplaced; it is anti-British. Travelling at sea is dangerous always. It is not made more so by the submarine, but the danger is a different one. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the assailant was of a different class to other under-water craft which have been operating in our waters. If a few boats await in ambush a certain vessel which offers facilities for attack, and concentrate their efforts upon her, it must be only by sheer bad luck that she is not caught. The paramount purpose of war, by sea as by land, is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. Although, therefore, the distress caused to a country by serious interference with its commerce must be apparent to all, it cannot be permitted to divert naval strength from its proper use. Nor need there be any question of reprisals, for there are already legitimate methods for dealing with submarines, but they take time and call for ingenuity in execution. We may safely assume that all contingencies are being provided for as rapidly as circumstances admit. 65 70

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SUJET JURY

SUJET CANDIDAT N°

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—MAY 21, 1913.



Punch, 21 May
1913: Under his
master's eye

Scene
—Mediterranean,
on board the
Admiralty yacht
Enchantress

Mr Winston
Churchill: 'Any
home news?'

Mr Asquith: 'How
can there be with
you here?'

UNDER HIS MASTER'S EYE.

SCENE—Mediterranean, on board the Admiralty yacht "Enchantress."
MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL. "ANY HOME NEWS?"
MR. ASQUITH. "HOW CAN THERE BE WITH YOU HERE?"