

## Stan Rogers "White Squall"

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[The town of Wiarton is situated at the mouth of one of the deepest Great Lake ports. For years, over 30% of the Captains and First Mates employed in shipping on the Lakes came from this quiet fishing town in the Bruce Peninsula. There are very few families in the town, even now, who have not lost a close relative to the fury of the lakes.]  
Now it's just my luck to have the watch, with nothing left to do  
But watch the deadly waters glide as we roll north to the 'Soo',  
And wonder when they'll turn again and pitch us to the rail  
And whirl off one more youngster in the gale.  
The kid was so damned eager. It was all so big and new.  
You never had to tell him twice, or find him work to do.  
And evenings on the mess deck he was always first to sing,  
And show us pictures of the girl he'd wed in spring.  
CHORUS  
But I told that kid a hundred times "Don't take the Lakes for granted.  
They go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted."  
But tonight some red-eyed Wiarton girl lies staring at the wall,  
And her lover's gone into a white squall.  
CHORUS  
Now it's a thing that us oldtimers know. In a sultry summer calm  
There comes a blow from nowhere, and it goes off like a bomb.  
And a fifteen thousand tonner can be thrown upon her beam  
  
While the gale takes all before it with a scream.  
The kid was on the hatches, lying staring at the sky.  
>From where I stood I swear I could see tears fall from his eyes.

So I hadn't the heart to tell him that he should be on a line,

Even on a night so warm and fine.

CHORUS

When it struck, he sat up with a start; I roared to him,  
"Get down!"

But for all that he could hear, I could as well not made a sound.

So, I clung there to the stanchions, and I felt my face go pale,

As he crawled hand over hand along the rail.

I could feel her keeling over with the fury of the blow.

I watched the rail go under then, so terrible and slow.

Then, like some great dog she shook herself and roared upright again.

Far overside. I heard him call my name.

CHORUS

So it's just my luck to have the watch, with nothing left to do

But watch the deadly waters glide as we roll north to the 'Soo',

And wonder when they'll turn again and pitch us to the rail

And whirl off one more youngster in the gale.

But I tell these kids a hundred times "Don't take the Lakes for granted.

They go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted."

But tonight some red-eyed Wiarton girl lies staring at the wall,

And her lover's gone into a white squall.

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