

Alif's father, Arvid, a tall, well-built man with a bronzed weather-beaten face that supported a thick, white, walrus-like moustache. I noticed that he too was in a despondent state. He also looked westward and sighed deeply. It was some time later when I picked up what I surmised to be a dog collar, while I was drinking coffee in the *Cape Alava's* immaculate galley, that the reason for their depression was uncovered.

"The collar belong to Oley—he vas a pet seal of ours," Alif explained. His eyes moistened slightly and were focused past any object in the boat. "Arvid and A shot Oley's mother yust as he was born. Ve could have got two bounties, but—vell, ve thought, yust for heck, ve vould keep Oley. So, A got a baby bottle and a rubber thing, and fet it canned milk."

Alif's father confirmed this by nodding his head and then interjecting, "Ya, and A put sardine oil in his milk too."

"Vell," Alif continued, "ve raised Oley till he vas full grown. He would yump out the boat and swim for five-six hours, but never vould he get out of sight."

"And all the time he vas getting in our vay ven ve ver fishink," Arvid again interjected.

"Ya, and all the time he vould beg for herring," Alif went on, as if this would justify what he was about to say.

"So yesterday, ven ve got news that a blow vas coming, Arvid and A decided to turn Oley loose for goot. Ve threw him off near Destruction Island, ran ten hours to port here." There was a long pause while Alif worried a piece of leather thong on his coat. Then he said quickly, "Vell, ven ve docked dere vas Oley." I felt a pathetic feeling of pride as these words were spoken. "Ya, and he vas so pooped he couldn't yump in the boat—ve had to drag him in," Alif continued. And then with deliberation he said, "He vas so pooped he yust die."

The wind was becoming more gusty outside, but still the solitude of the cold blue sky prevailed.

What is a Lever?

Don Meadows

A LEVER is a bar with which you do work; if you work in a bar, you are a bartender; a bartender often has to listen to a bore; bore refers to the size of a gun barrel; a barrel is the spool of a winch; when you use a winch on an object, you pull it with a cable; a cable is a telegram that has been sent across an ocean; an ocean is what a ship sails on; when a ship is away from land, it is asea; a C is what I usually get for a grade on a theme; a theme is a series of notes of music; music is what you hear on a juke box in a bar; a bar is where I sit and wonder if I'll ever get to know all there is to know about a lever.