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Scott O'Dell

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Jim Lynne is idly playing darts in Liverpool when his brother, Ted, calls him over to a table to ask a question about the ship that he is working on. It seems the ship, enigmatically named the 290, is not the cargo ship that people are saying it is. Whatever its purpose, it is certainly built for speed. But Jim thinks he knows that purpose: it is being built for the Confederate navy.

And so launches the story of the intertwined fates of a ship and a boy. The ship would go down in history as one of the most famous vessels of the Civil War. Originally the 290, she would come to be known as the Alabama. Jim, whose father is a slave trader, will have to reconcile his own hatred for slavery with his love for the ship he made and the captain who sails her. Destiny will give him a chance to do just that...

"Once again [Scott O'Dell] is able to refract universal themes of liberty and self-awareness through history's prism."
-School Library Journal

"The author displays his distinctive gifts for distilling significance from historical matter and for dealing with the sea. ... With lively conversation and with increasing tension, from confrontations at sea and aboard Jim's ship, the author crisply tells the story, skillfully integrating historical elements. ... Immediately captures the reader's interest." -Horn Book

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