



Wanchai beckons. It watches as the liberty boats shuttle back and forth between the anchored ships and Fenwick Pier. Another evening approaches, bringing with it the nightly pilgrimage: hundreds in search of a memorable experience to be related and expanded upon the next day, hundreds seeking the golden nectar, happy faces laughing . . . smiling . . . anticipating.

It is a large liberty party. A heavy cruiser is in port for five days R&R, but Wanchai can handle a hundred times this many. Loud, boisterous singing emanates from the China Fleet Club at the end of the pier. Those English and their drinking songs! The sailors begin to enter the "district". The touts, tailors, rickshaw drivers, hawkers and beggars swing into action—"Business will be good tonight; these guys are loaded." Where will the action be? The America Bar? The Happening? The Round Up?

Inside, the electric madness penetrates the soul. Gyrating silhouettes respond to the amplified stimulus. Proud Mary keeps on burning. The strobe lights blink on and off as the normal world disappears for a moment. A pretty hostess smiles and sits next to sailor Joe. Does she really like him or is she just hustling drinks? Who cares? He doesn't; he will be gone in a couple of days. But you'll be around for a while. You're from the "Station Ship". Rough duty, huh?

