

The next day, a Wednesday, saw the loss of two more of the working crew aboard the Divine Vessel. The daily weather report had shown that a typhoon was making its way east from the Philippines and on their current bearing of one hundred and fifty four degrees they could expect to collide with it in about five days. Alfredo Morra, the second mate argued hard with Oddbjorn, the chief officer, about the his decision to stick to that bearing saying that it would risk the ship and all those on board. Naturally the chief officer's superiority backed up by the agreement of Captain Pimento won the argument, but Alfredo received a severe bash on the head just to settle to matter.

Vyas Lui, the third mate, also ran into trouble with Oddbjorn that same day. He had been catching up on some paperwork left over from Japan, and had found some discrepancies in the log of what cargo they were supposed to have on board. They seemed to have approximately ten unaccounted for containers somewhere on the ship. The cargo was normally the chief officer's concern, but keen to progress himself, Vyas had seen no harm in tackling the paperwork on his chief's behalf.

'Yes, this is indeed very strange, third mate,' said Oddbjorn putting on a show of concern as he browsed the report that Vyas had just presented him with. 'What do you propose we do about it?'

'Well, we should begin a comprehensive top to bottom search of the containers to locate these additional ones,' said Vyas carefully, trying to make sure he remembered the correct procedure he had learned at naval college. 'We will then need to open them up and itemise their contents, there is no telling what we might have accidentally taken on board.'

‘Yes, very good third mate. One moment please,’ replied Oddbjorn as he reached for the phone and dialled the captain’s extension. ‘Yes Captain, it’s the chief officer here, I am in the main deck office with Third Mate, he seems to have discovered a rather serious problem we have with our cargo...yes, I suggest you get down here as quickly as possible and help me sort out the situation.’ Oddbjorn put down the phone and flourished his broad gleaming smile at Vyas. The indent in his smooth tanned skull had begun to show signs of life. ‘Well, Vyas, I am very pleased with you. This is really excellent work, really excellent. We’ll just wait here for the captain to come, and see what he recommends we do. Personally, I see a promotion in it for you.’

A modest smile spread over Vyas’ lips. He hadn’t heard the captain entering the office behind him, and he only felt a flash of pain as the fire extinguisher smashed across the back of his skull before everything went black.