

There was a large run in the mauve scarf Margaret was knitting for her granddaughter. She had only just noticed and was considering whether she had to undo the last metre and a half or whether she would just leave it and make it part of the pattern. Usually she didn't make such mistakes but after drinking the rest of the miniatures, including two bottles of Jack Daniels, which she hated, she was liable to make all sorts of mistakes.

She was sitting on the small sofa in her cabin. All the lights were on as she needed to be able to clearly see the knitting that spread out across her lap and down her leg. The knitting continued across the floor and curled in a pile around her slacks and blouse that she had taken off earlier. She was now wearing a pink nighty bought in China just in case she 'got lucky' on the voyage, and as her pyjamas were covered in baileys stains. It was a little too small for her and the camisole top part stretched across her large chest and her small droopy boobs. It also pulled across her hips but as long as she had hoiked it up it was quite comfortable. She huffed and chucked the knitting onto the bed dramatically, unfortunately releasing a few more stitches.

'I'm bored,' she said out loud and walked across to the mirror, talking to herself. Rubbing her hands together in front of her, as if she was cold, she then placed them over both her eyes and took a deep breath. She had been doing this on and off everyday since she met a monk on Oxford Street who had stopped to sell her a book on Buddhism. He described the healing powers of 'cupping' as he had called it and surprisingly it felt rather nice. He had tried cupping other parts of her body too, back in his 'monastery' flat in Soho, but she thought it worked best on her eyes. She tried to focus whilst she rubbed her hands again, warming them up whilst staring

at herself in the mirror.

'Romance, romance, romance, that's all I want,' she repeated in her head. 'Just a little romance.' The tight buns of Millan, able bodied seaman number two, came into her head. She cupped again and then stumbled as the ship pitched deeply in the water, banging her head on the mirror.

'Millian,' she drunkenly slurred, imagining his greasy black curls, wondering if he was covered in dark curly hair anywhere else. And feeling that familiar yet never satisfied tingle somewhere beneath her pink nighty she opened the cabin door and wandered off down the corridor.

'I know you're only hiding,' she sing songed, holding onto the hand rail but still stumbling over her bare feet with the roll of the ship. 'You hairy little man.'

She made it down the stairs to Millian's cabin and leant up against the door. After cooing his name several times she slumped down and watched the corridor pitch up and down with the movement of the ship. Small black balls were scooting around the floor and many of them gathered in a nearby corner and then tumbled into the nook of her bare knee. She picked one up and brought it close to her face to examine it.

'Ugh, shit,' she said with sudden sober realisation and threw it on the floor. Unfortunately she wasn't sober enough to wonder why there was rabbit shit running, bouncing and getting stuck in peoples shoes all over the Divine Vessel, so she hauled herself up with the help of the handrail and continued her search.

It was very dark on the main deck and somewhat noisy too. Margaret could hardly hear herself think above the roar of the engine, the howling wind and the waves breaking and occasionally flooding the deck, which wasn't a disadvantage really, as her head was only thinking about one thing.

'Milly,' she called out. 'Mr Milly Willy, Mr Million Dollars. I know you wouldn't have left the ship without me.' She started the long walk along the side of the ship holding the handrail with one hand and balancing with

the other. The ship was rolling and pitching and the walk reminded Margaret of a fairground ride she had been on as a child. Her feet were soaking wet and her nighty was gradually getting drenched from the spray from the waves. She thought she must look rather sexy all tousled and damp in her nighty and was looking forward into running into Millian, or anyone really, even the cleaner would do. Of course, she didn't consider how incredibly stupid it was to wander around the main deck in the middle of a brewing storm, but that was probably thanks to Mr Jack Daniels. Finally, and somewhat miraculously, she reached the part of the walkway that went underneath the containers and zig zaged to the front of the ship. It was dryer here, but very dark, and Margaret stumbled around stubbing her toe on something metal and falling against a large steel handle of a door. Struggling she pulled the door open and instinctively reaching for a switch, found it and flicked on the light. A dull glow filled the room and Margaret tried to adjust her eyes.

'Millian,' she cooed. As she became adjusted to the light all she could see was the dark green metal walls of what was a mostly empty store room with long wooden shelves on one side. Most of the contents of the shelves had now emptied themselves on the floor and were rolling around with the movement of the ship. In amongst the chutney lids, forks, spoons, rolls of Clingfilm, egg slicers and rolling pins was a small black torch. Margaret steadied herself against the door, bent down and caught the torch as it rolled towards her. She kneeled on the floor and pointing it directly up at her face she turned it on. The light was very weak, the batteries were just about to go, but Margaret hardly noticed, and pleased at her find continued her search out on deck.

She lurched from side to side as she made her way again down the metal corridor, trying as many doors as she could whilst calling out the able bodied seaman's name over and over. Most of the doors were locked with huge padlocks and some she just wasn't strong enough to open at all. She could just about see the bow of the ship with her weak torch when she stopped at another

large metal door. It had a padlock, which held it shut, but the padlock had not been closed. Leaning against the door she took a breather. The ship was really moving now and Margaret was beginning to sober up in the fresh air. She had noticed that she was shivering in her wet nighty and although she considered that if she was to be caught, or if someone found her, they probably wouldn't be able to resist her looking all pert, albeit because of the cold, she probably ought to go back, or at least take a rest. She managed to take the padlock off the door and pulled hard on the handle opening it with a creak just far enough for her to slip into the dark room. Shining the torch about she called out weakly, 'Millian, Millian.' She began to feel a bit foolish now. She remembered that the new captain had told her that he had left the ship. Why on Earth would he be in this pitch black locker?