

The Treasure Punt #22

When Captain Blackbird got wind of Rosy Riproaring's reputation as the North Atlantic's most prodigious treasure hunter, naturally he wanted her to travel south and join The Bountiful, based in Kalk Bay.

"I don't know about that," first-mate Long John Platinum cautioned. "She'll be the first buxom beauty, or any beauty at all, ever on this boat. How will she fit in?"

"Like a bung in a hole," suggested coxswain Robert Redbeard, who often went off-course.

"Arrrrrrr," Blackbird exhaled breathily, and with unusual gusto, "I'm going ashore to whisper in Stewy Bigspender's ear."

It was dusk, and Blackbird rushed down the gangplank past Kalkies, the fish and chip store, and sped, as best as any wooden-legged pirate can, towards the Nelson's Arm in Simonstown.

When he arrived at the pub, Stewy Bigspender was sitting alone, dressed in fine attire, and was pleased to see his old shipmate.

"Blackbird!" he exclaimed, hugging his latter-day leader. "This headhunting business just ain't like the good old Bountiful days. It's lonely, and for the birds, I tell 'yer. Won't you have me back?"

"Not yet, yer bleeding-heart bugger, not until you've got me Rosy Riproaring!" Blackbird countered, his voice throaty, lustier than a walrus bull in spring. "I want her, and I'll pay you handsomely, you have my word."

"Me matey," Stewy responded comradely, tapping Blackbird's chest with his bling-laden forefinger, "placing Rosy on the Bountiful would really be her rock-bottom, of that I'm sure."

"There's a ruby in this for you," Blackbird winked with his good eye.

"Make it an emerald too, and I'm on," agreed Stewy, too readily for Rosy's good.

So Stewy Bigspender, pirate head-hunter extraordinaire, single-handedly travelled north as directly as his little dabchick could take him. Within but a few months he was sitting directly across the fire between the withering walls of the Ice Hotel's lounge in Jukkasjarvi, Scandinavia, staring at Rosy Riproaring. 'Better do this quickly,' he thought, wary of the hot coals in the crackling hearth.

"But I'm happy where I am," said Rosy, warmly wrapped in a polar bear pelt, white as the driven snow except around the mouth and jowls, which she had nabbed off the back of the King of Denmark during a rite of passage ceremony. The beast's head lay limply between her not inconsiderable bosoms, its jaws open and with a ripe seal pup stuffed between its teeth.

"One can never be happier than off the sunny shores of Southern Africa," said Stewy. "You'll dispense with that coat every month of the year, and wear a leopard skin leotard instead."

This thought pricked fashion-conscious, sun-loving Rosy Riproaring's interest.

"My, come think of it, you can even throw the leotard overboard, and be as natural as a wolf in its lair," sneaked in Stewy to the Swede. Stewy's success as a head-hunter was founded partly on knowing just which specific ideals most appealed to his crafty candidates and cultured clients.

Rosy rose knowingly to her feet, adopting a jolly Angelique leg-parting pose, the bearskin revealing a creamy leg longer than the Aurora, which did nothing to distract the single-minded Stewy from his task.

“But, what about the boys?” Rosy enquired, with her back to the burning birch branches. “On The Virago, I’m one of the girls. We’d never take a Bjorn or any other bloke on board.”

“Oh, don’t worry about them,” Stewy assured. “I know most of them personally – Blackbird, Long John Platinum, Rupert Redbeard, Yardarm Rockbottom, sailors Simon, Siphon, Sergio, and a whole lot of other ordinary S-men – there’s not a One-Eyed Dick amongst them, I promise.”

Rosy raised her eyebrows.

“Actually, they’re a soft bunch, to a man, placid as pears, flaccid as feathers,” Stewy reassured, always wary of saying too much.

An icy silence descended, as Stewy had designed.

Rosy retreated thoughtfully, but not too far, or the polar pelt may have spontaneously ignited, as she mulled the prospect of a new, South Atlantic adventure.

“Whatever the spoils on The Virago are now, Blackbird will surely double them,” Stewy Bigspender added with perfect timing.

“It’s the sun I’m seeking,” answered Rosy, casting her sight out on the sagging snow on the eaves, her eyes glinting in prospect of a copper-tone tan.

“Look, I’m darker than a brown bear, and its winter down there!” Stewy exclaimed.

Mind made up, Rosy thrust out her hand and sealed the deal.

But before Rosy Riproaring’s probation on The Bountiful had ended, long before Stewy could spend his post-guarantee placement fee, matters had deteriorated disastrously.

“You scurvy bilge rat,” Blackbird shouted at his new soft hand during Rosy’s first week at work, when she had eschewed his lewd advances, before he showed his sexist slip and banished her to the galley.

“You know, me name’s got nothing to do with the length of me trousers,” murmured Long John Platinum into Rosy’s ear, after suggestively sidling up to her.

“Well, blow me down,” Rupert Redbeard shouted out every time he saw her.

“You’re finest pirate booty I never laid me hands on,” said seedy Yardarm Rockbottom ten times or more.

“Shiver me timbers!” shouted one of the S-men on the first sight of Rosy.

“Prepare yer’self to be boarded!” blurted another.

When a third simple sailor suggested that she scrape the barnacles off his rudder, Rosy Raknison beat a hasty retreat to Sweden, and reunited with The Virago.

Treasure Hunting Tip: Continuing the theme of the need for recruiters to always be honest brokers, never mislead candidates about client companies. Like a client company produces a person specification, candidates also have a ‘cultural spec’ of the places they desire to work. Placing candidates in undesirable, toxic companies is as bad as misrepresenting a candidate to a client.