

### The Treasure Punt #3

A tremendous racket was heard in the background from Captain Blackbird's cabin as the super sailors of *The Bountiful* contemplated the notions that treasures were rare and usually hidden, and might be found in any of Northerly, Southerly, Easterly or Westerly directions.

"I don't deserve to die," wailed simple sailor Simon, as two ordinary deckhands battled to bind his hands together, his body wreathing and limbs kicking. "I'm a treasure hunter, and this is a treasure hunting ship," he bleated for his very life.

This commotion led Blackbird, his Coxswain (who hailed from India and through pertinent nominated determinism was named Navi), first-mate Long John Platinum, simple sailor Samuel, and the other crew, to intervene, and get the plank walking episode behind them. Though always enjoying the drama of plank walking, they couldn't bear when the ritual turned its recipient into a sheep or a goat.

"Shut yer flippin gob!" ordered Blackbird. "We agreed treasures are rare, and look at you, you anonymous nobody. You could just as well be simple Simon, or simple Siphon, or simple Stephen for that matter."

The other sailors were impressed by Blackbird's invective, remaining silent as they pondered the word anonymous, which was new to most of them.

"But I'm not a simple Simon at all," simple Simon said. "I'm a special Simon, like the treasures we seek. I'm rare, I tell you, very rare. I just don't hide in hiding places."

The two deck hands, now done with the knots tying Simon's wrists together behind his back, pushed him forward as Long John Platinum affixed the plank to the deck, before going to the end of the plank and jumping up and down to test its springiness, like an Olympic diver.

"It's good," he said, alighting from the plank to give way for sailor Simon, who was ceremoniously plonked at its near end by the two burly deckhands.

"Argue for your life then, simple Simon," instructed Captain Blackbird. "You say you're rare, then prove it to us!" he challenged.

Simple sailor Simon walked slowly but deliberately down the plank, until reaching its very far end, about eight feet off the mid-ship deck of *The Bountiful*. The boat's draft at that point was about fifty feet above the water. He stood motionless for some while, as the other sailors all waited expectantly for him to speak. But he remained silent, though rhythmically bending his knees back and forth, giving the plank some play. As Simon's energy quickened the plank responded playfully, springing to and fro in wider and wider arcs, until Simon was airborne, with each jump taking him higher and higher. As he descended from the highest elevation achieved, at least six feet above the plank, he bent his knees for the landing and then using both the leverage of his legs and the pliability of the plank, he launched himself a full thirty feet into the air. During the time between lifting off and landing again, simple Simon was able to complete a quadruple backward somersault, a multiple javelin arc, a tornado twist, and a torpedo nosedive, before landing perfectly once more and coming to an immediate rest. In any competitive gymnastics event, the judges would have no choice but to have awarded him a full consensus ten out of ten. And all this, with his hands tied behind his back!

What else could Blackbird be, but impressed.

“Simple sailor Simon, you are a rare bird indeed,” the Captain concluded, ordering the deckhands to release their captive crew member, and announcing his promotion to Able-Seaman.