

The Treasure Punt #30

Julie Dilemma, in drag, sat smugly in his, I mean her, Jimmy Choo shoes, the folds of her fat feet over-stretching the leather, puffing on a 'Fat Sam' Cohiba Behike cigar between quaffs of a double Dalmore 62 single-malt whisky. Her too-short BB Jamila sequin miniskirt revealed thighs resembling the cellulite surface of the moon, but she couldn't see them through the diamond-flecked Chopard sunglasses, disguising the sleep still residual in the corner of her eyes, through which she gazed darkly upon the azure Mauritian seascape from the top deck of The Kleptomaniac, her lover Toby Tenyeni's cutter.

Captain Blackbird understandably felt out of place in such refined company.

"We want," demanded Julie, "to plunder and pillage, like you, Mr Blackbird," leaning forward menacingly, cupping her pectorals in each hand and pressing the muscles together to cover the small copse of curly chest hairs clustering in the cleavage.

"I hear 'yer," replied Blackbird cautiously, sensing competition in an already overcrowded pirate marketplace. "What was 'yer thinking?"

"Let's just say we can provide some inside information," indicated Julie, as Toby Tenyeni joined the small gathering, standing behind Julie and playfully tugging on her House of Winston earrings, then leaning forward to peck the bald pate protruding from her bright sunflower floppy sunhat, but stumbling in the downward trajectory of his potbelly, his one winkle-picker sandal getting stuck between the slats in the wooden decking.

"Hey! Don't be so clumsy, you oaf!" scolded Julie richly, rearranging herself.

Blackbird politely observed the pretence in good humour, reaching down and plucking the shoe free with his hook-hand, and flicking it over to a thankless Tenyeni.

"We know the movements of government galleons, and can cut you in for a price, if you do the dirty work," Julie continued.

The Captain of The Bountiful leant forward, intrigued.

"The work, 'yer mean, he corrected. "If we do the work," he clarified, to which Toby and Julie bristled.

"We'll also be working, doing the marketing," Toby confirmed. "You'll do the operating. The deal is, for every block of bullion we'll take half," he clarified, looking furtively around in case a stray Albatross had landed on deck to listen.

"Sounds fair to me," Blackbird concurred, holding out his good hand to shake, a gesture ignored by his new business partners.

The conspirators shared pertinent information, and at dusk Blackbird rowed back to The Bountiful, anchored in Paradise Cove. For the following month his pirates enjoyed rich pickings, for surely the South African government galleons, plying the profitable one-way state-sponsored pillaging routes, their ships laden with their leaders' offshore direct foreign investments, constituted amongst the most incompetent and dispirited crews they had encountered. But a nasty surprise was in store for Captain Blackbird when he made the first delivery to The Kleptomaniac, and the loot was divvied.

"Cut your piece in half again," demanded Julie, standing in front of an eighty strong gang of bodyguards, all dressed in Muammar Gaddafi military fatigues.

Blackbird demurred in the face of an insurmountable foe. More shock was in store over the next period of plundering, as The Bountiful faced government ships

more substantially girded by protective naval vessels, similarly incentivised by the presidential guard, commission payable on the safekeeping of their stolen cargo. But The Bountiful's pirates were strategically sneaky, and outwitted their dumber adversaries, though when Blackbird delivered the next bagful of booty to The Kleptomaniac, he was instructed under the weighty aim of eighty AK47s to divide his quarter in half again.

"Now 'yer getting greedy," Blackbird snapped.

"Careful now, Blackbird, or we'll find another stinky fish from the same shoal in which you swim," warned Toby.

Thereafter the effort-reward ratio for The Bountiful plummeted ever-more disproportionately in favour of The Kleptomaniac, and Blackbird found it difficult to convince his crew to continue with the deal. Their reluctance was exacerbated by the more treacherous toiling needed to fulfil their mandate.

When the next delivery of The Bountiful's share of the booty was, under intimidation, halved yet again, it's portion now reduced to a mere slither, Blackbird concurred with his colleagues that they were caught in an unconscionable contract, naively placing themselves in voluntary servitude to a gang of rival Paarl and Polokwane pirates.

So Blackbird and his cohorts decided to play a trick on the leaders of The Kleptomaniac. To succeed they enlisted a number of friendly pirate gangs, all indebted to Blackbird for past misdemeanours, anchoring The Bountiful and the other fully-laden frigates, brigs, schooners, sloops, luggers and junks alongside The Kleptomaniac.

"Yes, I tell 'yer it's never been better, every one of these ships is brim full," enthused Blackbird to Toby and Julie, struggling to hang onto six bottles of Stroh rum nestled between his chest and biceps. "Let's celebrate, whilst the crew pack the loot in the hold."

As Julie and Toby got increasingly inebriated, all the clever pirates unloaded thousands of granite blocks wrapped in brown wax paper from their boats, packing them into the stern of The Kleptomaniac. When the boat's draft was about to be breached, LJP whistled to Blackbird to jump ship. Another ten more blocks were loaded, and the boat started flooding from aft. Porcine pirates Julie and Toby stumbled to the back of their boat to investigate, but their considerable weight pushed the stern even deeper, and The Kleptomaniac listed perilously before plunging beneath the surface.

"I told you we should have taken swimming lessons," Julie gasped between gulps of seawater, but Toby was already submerged.

Treasure Hunting Tip: Some clients are not worth having. Overly-demanding, their expectations are continually expressed on a 'more for less' basis. Don't waste the effort and other resources required to keep them. When you do make placements, candidates soon uncover their unfair, if not downright deceitful, manner of doing business, and resign, leaving you to back your guarantees with replacements. Rather take the pleasure in firing unreasonable and unethical clients.

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