The Liberated

Bill Brown*

*Iowa State College

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Abstract

"HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” The voice is strange. It doesn’t make sense as you shuffle slowly along the passageway in the early morning. As you pass the midships hatch, you pause. The early morning air still carried the foul, rotten smell that was there when you went to bed...
dressed well, and she had brains or she couldn't live in a place like that. He'd have to call her the next time he was through.

"Where have you been, Jo?" a smoothly painted blonde asked when Joanne entered the apartment. "There's a convention down at the Broadview, and all those guys are hotter'n minks and loaded with dough. I've had three at ten bucks a crack, and I'm all ready to go again."

Joanne went into the bedroom and began to apply fresh lipstick. The brown suit she was wearing would be all right for the rest of the evening. She removed her new shoes and wriggled her toes in the welcome coolness of the air.

"Are you about ready?" the girl called from another room.

"Aw Hell, Jacque, you go ahead; I don't think I want to work tonight."

—Dwyer Duncan, Sci. Sr.

**The Liberated**

"HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."

The voice is strange. It doesn't make sense as you shuffle slowly along the passageway in the early morning. As you pass the midships hatch, you pause. The early morning air still carried the foul, rotten smell that was there when you went to bed.

"Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus."

You look outside the hatch with buggy eyes. They still smart and sting from the rubbing you gave them a few moments ago in an attempt to wake up.

A line of human forms silhouette themselves against the morning dawn. You wonder how and where they came from.
A woman, you think. How did a woman get here? There are no women on a ship. Yet, the voice.

"Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death."

And, again the voice comes. Now there are two. Both women.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Your eyes become accustomed to the thin light of early morning. The silhouettes along the life line begin to come real as your tired eyes start to focus sharply. Thirty-five, 36, 37. Yes, there are 37. You remember what the old man had said yesterday, "Tomorrow we are taking on 37 passengers. You will make the ship and all its facilities as convenient as possible for these people."

They are here. The 37 that would be with the ship till it got to Hong Kong.

Thirty-seven people. Eighteen men, fifteen women, and four children, who had never tasted an American ice cream cone. Thirty-seven living human beings who hadn't seen an American face, tasted an American cigarette, read an American newspaper, or had ham and eggs for breakfast for six and a half long years.

The faces you see in the early dawn are tense and drawn. Wild eyes look about in bewilderment. Long fingers, attached to boney hands, slowly count the thin beads on a worn Rosary. Tight thin lips chant prayers of thanksgiving. Bearded grins come from some of the men as they gaze at a package of cigarettes in their coarse hands. The children madly gulp the milk that has been given them by the chief cook.

As you gaze you feel sick. The bottom of your stomach feels loaded down with a combination of crackers and a lead brick. You turn and go down the passageway to the radio shack. The voice fades as you walk.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

—Bill Brown, Sci. So.