



Meanwhile, on the deck, the captain's first mate was calling to the troubled men: "Hear me now, every one of you! Please, each one, draw one stick from this vase. And anyone whose stick is stained in red is the one who invited this storm by somehow angering some god or goddess."

So, one by one the passengers and sailors came and drew their sticks uneasily, for each one had started thinking, "Oh, it must be *that* sin of mine that brought this storm!"

"Phew! I knew it was not me! Look at my lot, everyone!" said the lumber merchant with a great relief, since he had known that there was a risk of being thrown into the sea as a human sacrifice if he had drawn the wrong stick.

"Oh, thank god, me neither! I am often lucky at lotteries, so I feared I'd pick the red one. But my good god never makes a mistake, ha-ha" said the apprentice cook with tears in his eyes, and he resumed his prayer to Baal.

"Look! I am not the one to blame either. But poor my child, he is not to blame either, but you ruffians mercilessly threw the innocent boy into the cold water to be bitten by ravenous sharks!" cried a puppeteer, who had just lost one of his dear puppets.

Thus, one after another the sticks were drawn from the vase, but none had a red mark on it. There were only a few remaining in the vase.

"Now, who have not drawn yet?" asked an astrologer.

"I made the lottery, so I draw last according to the usage," said the first mate, shaking the vase to mix the sticks, as he had done each time a person picked his stick.

"I don't see Captain. Where has he gone?" asked the gambler.

"And that athlete...that narrowly got on board with that hop skip and jump," said the chef.

"Ah, that monk," said a fire worshipper, "we left him sleeping below. He's making such a terrible noise one would suspect he is a...speak of which, here he is."

"There is no need for further drawing!" exclaimed Yunus, who had just climbed up to the deck, helped by the captain. "This storm has arisen on account of my misconduct, and is a work of my god Allah the Highest!"

The captain explained to them how Yunus had disobeyed and escaped from his god, and grabbing the last few lottery sticks from the vase, he thrust the red-marked one toward the stormy heaven and shouted:

"I solemnly ask the god of this man Yunus! On account of this red stick, do you mean to sink these innocent sticks as well into the sea?"

However, the storm only increased its violence.

"Alas, my Jove! the anchor cable is broken!" shouted the boatswain. "We are done unless the storm stops."

People gathered round Yunus and unanimously showered accusations and complaints upon him.

"Hey! We are in danger of losing our lives owing to your presence here!" the chef.

"Pray tell, what manner of a man are you?" the fire worshipper.

"And on what account did you come to the sea?" the chef again.

"Where are you from?" the astrologer.

"I am a Hebrew from Gath," Yunus answered. "I fear Allah, the god in heaven, who made the sea and the earth."

"And what made you think you had any business running away from such a mighty god of yours?" the astrologer.

"Hey, we are not willing to get involved in a quarrel between you and your god," the gambler.

"What could we possibly do to escape this violent storm?" the first mate.

A wave jumped aboard and flooded almost the entire deck.

"Throw me into the sea. Then, it will be calm," said Yunus, knowing that the time had come for him to perish. "I know it very well. It is me alone that Allah wants to feel this storm, and if you get rid of me, the

ship and all of you will be safe."

However, the sailors went back to the oars and tried once more to row the ship toward a nearest harbor. Nonetheless, the rough sea and the violent winds pushed her farther away from the coast until the land disappeared from their view.

Now, the people urged the captain to make *the* decision.

The captain tore his coat and grabbed Yunus from behind by the shoulders and said with his face looking to the rain-pouring heaven: "Oh, god of this man Yunus, who is said to have created the earth and the sea, if you are not a merciless god, please do not take our lives just because this man is with us! But if you cannot pardon him, then we shall but have to put him into the deep sea, for we cannot go against your will. We can act only as you ordain, and our hands shall be clean of the life of this man. So, please show mercy to us and save at least our lives."

So saying, the captain pushed Yunus forward and the latter jumped overboard.

In a moment, there shone a bright golden light along the far swelling horizon as if it were a golden bow, and the dark clouds gave way to the blue sky, which expanded quickly from the horizon upwards and over. And, as Yunus had prophesied, the sea grew calm and flat, and it was as if someone had laid a vast blue carpet across the ocean.

At this the people were filled with awe and gratitude, and did not forget to pray and give praise to Allah, Yunus's god, with thanks for saving their lives. The ship dog, feeling at ease now, resumed barking at the noisy rats and the ferrets, which quickly were absorbed in the hull.

Suddenly, a shout was heard over the noise of numerous prayers:

"Ahoy, look! Yunus is there!" It was the helmsman at helm shouting with his right hand pushed to the starboard side, which was the opposite of the prophet's jumping. "He is alive! Let us go rescue him while he is afloat!"

The men rushed to the starboard and discerned that Yunus was drifting in the distance, and he was holding to a wooden puppet that had spilled from a wooden box of the puppeteer.

"(Aside) But if we rescue him, will not the storm come back?" everyone.

"Lower away the boat!" the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir," the first mate.

"Ahoy, Yunus, we will come and rescue you in a moment, so hang in there!" the helmsman.

But no voice returned from Yunus.

As soon as the boat was on the calm water, the captain jumped into it, followed by two sturdy sailors and the dog. The three men rowed the boat toward Yunus as hard as they could. It was when the boat got within a stone's throw from Yunus that a sailor who had just climbed up to the mast-head of the ship shouted with his eyes popped:

"Captain, beware! Something big is coming! It's fast!"

"Where away?" the captain.

"There!" the sailor pointed in a direction beyond Yunus.

Captain and the others in the boat stopped rowing and turned their heads in the pointed direction. A huge roll of water was seen to rise and fall repeatedly as it approached.

The dog ran to the bow and began barking furiously at the strange apparition.

"Wha...what is that?!" the lumber merchant.

"Alas, it's Hydra the sea serpent!" the astrologer.

"I bet it's a kraken! A giant squid! Look, it's white!" the gambler.

"No, that's a whale!" the pop-eyed sailor on the mast-head, "It has flukes."

"It's going to attack Yunus!" the chef.

"It's opened the mouth! It's gonna bite him!" the fire worshipper.

"Ah, poor man! He is done at one gulp!" the first mate.

"Look, there goes the jet! So, it's a whale!" the astrologer.

"Ye, bloody monster, get this!" shouted Captain fiercely, as he stood up at the bow of the boat, and lanced a long boat-hook, which had been in the boat.

It flew high and landed on the vast white forehead of the sea monster, scratching and leaving a red thin line across it.

Whether offended by this or not, the monster wriggled the body and with its snow white flukes scooped and flipped the boat high in the air. The three men in the boat (to say nothing of the dog) shrieked as they were thrown into the air and down into the water and they did not come to the surface too soon. When they popped up near the capsized boat and coughed and spat out the bitter brine, the monster jetted again raising an instant rainbow.

"Captain, are you alright?!" asked the sailors and passengers on the starboard of the ship, which rolled gently as the waves caused by the white whale's exercise reached her.

"Ye, crook-jawed man-eating fish!" shouted Captain as he clutched at the boat, "if you claim to be on a god's errand, show us a sign now!"

The whale gave a glance at the captain with its left eye, and blew again and swam away dividing the peaceful green sea.

"That was the fate of Yunus, a runaway prophet that disobeyed Allah. How terrible!" the first mate. "But Yunus, did you really hear the voice of Allah? and yet run?"

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