

Monday 5th March 2068, 2:00 p.m. In the North Sea

The crew of the Saucy Lady huddled miserably below decks. They were unbearably cold; even with their oilskins and thermal undergarments the cold seemed to seep into their very bones.

They had managed, very precariously, to get to the galley to make some hot drinks. Now they had gathered, aware that International Rescue was on its way. Some of the men began muttering prayers under their breath. Others just sat silent, immersed in their own private thoughts. One younger man began to sing part of a hymn.

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who biddest the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!

He finished the first verse and would have continued, but looking around at his companions, hastily coughed, and was silent. Suddenly the youngest of the men stood up, rocking slightly with the rolling of the boat.

"We are all going to die!" he almost screamed to the rest of the men. "I must do something! I can't wait here for it to happen!"

"Don't be a fool!" Captain Bowers shouted. "Sit back down here! We are safer here than on deck."

But the young man turned and lunged for the stairs leading to the deck. Several of the men tried to grab him, but it was difficult just trying to stand let alone moving quickly to try and stop him.

He began scrambling up the steps towards the deck. None of the rest of the crew was entirely sure what happened next, but a large wave crashed over the deck and swirled around the top of the stairs. The young man was flung backwards down the stairs to fall in a crumpled heap at the bottom.

"What do we do, Skipper?" one of the men asked. "We really shouldn't move him, but we can't leave him lying here."

Very, very gently they placed a board underneath him. Staggering backwards and forwards, they managed to carefully move him away from the stairwell and into the drier part below decks where they had been seated.

"Looks pretty serious," one of them remarked. They piled rugs and blankets on him to try and keep him as warm as possible.

"Well, I hope that International Rescue has medics aboard, because this fellow is going to need some treatment and fast," observed Captain Bowers.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 08/08/2004
