

# The Sad Tale of Richard Parker

(enter Geoff as Capt Jack Matthews, verse 'when we set sail' pacing up and down)

Matthews: Dickey? Dickey? is that you lad?

Parker: Aye, aye Captain Jack!

Matthews: Aye aye Captain Jack? Have you been drinking lad?

Parker: No sir, sorry sir, I'm just excited.

Matthews: well calm yourself lad, I need to have a serious chat with you.

Parker: Serious?

Matthews: Mrs Matthews is concerned for you Dickey.

Parker: Why? what have I done?

Matthews: Its not what you have done Dickey but what you want to do.

Parker: I don't understand

Matthews: I think perhaps you do. Lad you know Mrs Matthews and I have tried to look out for you since your poor father passed

Parker: yes sir you and Mrs Matthews have been very good to me sir, taking me in and all.

Matthews: And we were happy to do it, Daniel Parker was a fine man, a fine skipper and a fine cricketer.

Parker: yes sir, and I would like to be like him

Matthews: ~So I hear. Look at me Dickey. Mrs Matnette tells me you want to sign up on the Mignonette.

Parker: She's a grand yacht sir, bound for Australia, I could be a made man sir, they are looking for a cabin boy and the skipper Capt Dudley has said he will take me on sir.

Matthews: That's as maybe Dickey, but you know I'm an experienced skipper -

Parker: yes sir.

Matthews: I have looked over the yacht Dickey, she's not sea worthy, especially not for a voyage half way round the world. If you want to go to sea why not join your brothers. Dan and Flop would take you on their hoy

Parker: I don't want to be a fisherman, I want to be a yachtsman like you and my father.

Matthews: And how do you think we learnt our trade lad, out there on Southampton Water fishing, rowing the ferries working our way up on rich man's yachts in the racing season.

Parker: I'm 17, I don't have time to learn that way, if I take this voyage as cabin boy I will get to learn from the other men, I'll learn more in six months than in six years in Itchen Ferry. And Captain Dudley has said he will teach me my letters and that I will be able to write my own name by the time we reach Australia.

Matthews: Dickey, I stand here on behalf of your father and I know what he would say, I have to forbid you to go, there will be other adventures to be had,

Parker: No, this is my time, this is my adventure, this is where I make my mark, you can't stop me, you're not my father. Anyway its too late, I've made my mark, we sail on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

(Rushes out)

Matthews (shaking his head): Dickey, Dickey, headstrong boy.

Dudley: (taking a swig from container spits out) Lads, lads, we have had another set back

Stephens: Another, how much bad luck can there be on one voyage?

Brooks: Yes makes you think we might have a Jonah on board (looking at Stephens)

Stephens: What do you mean by that?

Brooks: Nothing, just observing that some people have had more than one ship go down under them. What is it Captain?

Dudley: Salt water has got into the case, the turtle blood is useless

Parker: But surely sir, a little seawater won't harm?

Dudley: send you mad boy, send you mad, Ned toss it overboard

Parker: what's to be done sir, with not a drop of water, I don't want to die out here sir, it's my first voyage, its my first voyage.

Dudley: we're not done yet lad, have I not promised to look after you?

Stephens: well it looks like we are down to our own piss then sir

Parker: what does he mean sir?

Brooks: we have to make our own drink

Stephens: Are you 8 or 18 Dick?

Parker: That's disgusting

Dudley: Necessity Dick. We need to catch more wind, Ned let's take the dinghy bottom boards up. We can fix them upright at the stern. Come on, come on lets go to it,

Brooks: Why did I let you persuade me?

Dudley: What? What are you saying?

Brooks: I wanted to withdraw from the voyage, my friends called me a fool for signing up, but you kept on and on, 'think of the money Ned', 'wouldn't you like to see Australia Ned', 'You know me Ned, trust me Ned' Mignonette was built as an inshore boat, I should have signed for O'Neill stuck to racing but no you said, make a new start in Australia, make yourself a new life

Dudley: Brooks! get a grip man what's wrong with you! I gave you an order, now get on with it.

Brooks: Sir, yes sir.

Stephens: a man in need of a drink

Dudley: we all are men in need of water.

Stephens: Brooks is missing something stronger, why do you think he never rose above being an AB and cook.

Dudley: That's enough, I always found him a first class hand, we were lucky to have him on the voyage.

(verse- the voyage pleasant. Dudley and Stephens take two end chairs and place by small table)