

Always Listen When a Boat Speaks

Part III (Final) ***We Are Alone, Together.***

Lester wasn't here to guide me. Without his directions, any further racing would be out of the question. I entered a couple local events. Finishing last in each one.

Asked what happened, I lied telling them I was having health problems and that my racing days were over.

Competitors expressed sympathy. I sensed in those sympathetic words, "Crocodile tears". All happy I wouldn't be out there, beating them.

"Sasayaki" and I were no longer a threat. No longer winning with my helping ghost.

I missed the company of Lester Black.

It wasn't long before I had "new" company

At first, the sounds were like breezes blowing leaves along the ground. Then it was whispering sounds getting louder. They were ...Voices!

Not one voice, but many! All different. Men, women and children. I heard laughing, weeping, angry shouting, pleading and sometimes, singing.

Each whispered in its own time. Not a jumble of sounds, but discrete individual voices. Each wanting to be heard above the clamor of the others.

I couldn't make out what was being said, but I thought they were trying to speak to ..Me !.

I said nothing to them.

I left the boat each evening, returning the next morning. Returning to ***"Sasayaki"*** and the whispering babble of the invisible crowd.

Each new day, I could pick out words. Not understanding them though. One evening, as I was about to leave, I heard a hushed female voice... singing! I was stunned.

I could understand each word she sang. The song stopped suddenly. All was quiet save the cacophony of many other voices.

I boldly spoke out, "What beautiful singing".

Breathlessly I waited for a response. Then, I heard her crying.

"I miss life so much". She sobbed.

"Can you tell me your story?" I was talking to thin air.

"I know you exist, I can't see you, but I had a friend who like you was a shadow".

There was a moment of silence, and from the emptiness, a charming voice spoke.

"I never said goodbye to Lester. I miss him." She sighed,

"Lester? .. Les Black ?"

"Yes, my husband." She wept.

How could this be? How could I meet the wife of my invisible mentor?

"You must be Alice, Be at peace, he is well. "

Alice Black's gentle voice then whispered.

"I beg you, please. Rid yourself of this boat. Walk away from it. It's a dark and evil thing."

Without another word, she began singing again. That sweet voice fading until it drifted off into the hushed rustle of the other voices. Shortly, I no longer could hear her. It was at that moment, I knew why she had come. She tried to warn me.

Lester and Alice had come from their world to warn me way from my boat, Sasayaki !

I sat in my cockpit for several minutes to rid myself of the shock of Alice Black. I was troubled by the message they both had tried to deliver. I wondered if I hadn't just "Conjured" them up for god knows what reason. Were they real ? Well, there was all of the racing wins. I could have never done that without real help.

Quietly at first, then growing in intensity, other voices grew louder. Each individual seemingly trying to gain my ear. There was an urgency in each voice. I strained to hear the words directed to..ME !

It took some effort, but soon I identified specific people. I labeled each one with nicknames, like, "Angry man" , "Little boy" , "Crazy lady" , "Loud mouth" , "Missy".. A half dozen others all got nicknames.

It was late in the afternoon when I decided to call out each of them separately. I needed to know why they wanted to speak to me.

It turned out that it was a wrong move .

I should have left the boat, I should've gone home. I should've called a broker to say, "Sell this damned boat!"

I didn't.

The strongest voice was Angry man. I called out, Who are you? Why are you angry?, what do want of me?"

His voice dominant among the babble, was the most understandable.

" Kyle Woods, and I'm mad as hell ! " .

"Mr. Woods, Tell me why you're so angry?"

He owned this boat years ago and had great times for a while. His happy days ended one cold night. While Kyle slept below, an old cabin heater spewed Carbon Monoxide. It killed him!

He pleaded, "Ya gotta get out of this boat, man. Don't let it murder YOU like it did me! "

His angry voice faded away.

After Kyle, I called on each voice to speak.

There was.....

10 year old Jimmy," Little boy"... It was a hot day on a river, while moored at a marina, Jimmy jumped in the water to cool off. Between the boats, an electrical leakage was hidden. Jimmy died of Electric shock drowning.

His young voice begged me to leave the boat ! Tearfully wailing, his voice faded away.

"Crazy lady" turned out to be Mary, a girlfriend of the boat's third owner. She was standing in the cockpit as the boat did an accidental Jibe. The swinging Boom smashed her head. She died a Brain death.

She wasn't really crazy, just frantically trying to tell me that this boat was a killer.

"Loud Mouth" was William "call me Bill" Miller. Heart attack, while trying to work on the engine.

"Missy", sweet Jane Smith, was murdered in a moment of madness, by her boyfriend, one of the many owners of the boat.

One after another voice spoke to me. I listened to each whispering voice. All had been victims of murder, accidental or mysterious deaths, all had been on the boat .

Each, in turn told me that I was in great danger. Each pleaded for me to leave this boat quickly.

The last of those whispers faded. There was no hesitation on my part. I knew that I must get away from this killing thing!

It had gotten dark and there was little light in the marina, I had to pick my way around

"Sasayaki" gathering up my personal items. Arms heavily laden, I stepped off the boat.

A cold darkness surrounding me. No boat, no slipway, no marina. Just a void. I must have passed out. Slowly, shapes began to appear.

I was still on "**Sasayaki**". I tried to stand up but nothing moved. It was like I'd been glued down. I could look around, I could change positions, but not move.

Suddenly it was daylight. REAL people were walking around chatting to each other.

One young man came up to my boat and STEPPED aboard ! I tried to yell at him to leave, but my voice was only a faint whisper. What the hell was happening?

The guy was talking to someone.

"Wow, I'm going to love this boat! It's perfect, and a bargain. I guess they want to move it fast because the last owner died on it. I heard he accidentally hung himself ! "

An icy bullet hit me !

My last night on the boat, I'd forgotten a bunch of old halyards I'd hung over the boom. I remember one getting tangled around my neck.

Carrying my heavy load of personal gear, I slipped and fell. I heard a loud snap, then came darkness.

Now I knew the truth,.... the boat had MURDERED me !

I have joined the shadows here, I am doomed to remain incased within the boat,.... I am fiberglass and Epoxy, I am Sail cloth, I am wrapped up in wire stays and shrouds. My body is halyards and anchor chain,

The boat is ME!

I AM the boat,

I too will be a Navigator... Teaching, advising, controlling ..All who sail ME !

I will eternally shout in whispers, desperately trying to warn all those foolish enough to own and love this boat.

And, of course.....

I will watch all of them .. Die.

End.....

r. ahseln

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