

Sailing into Allegory

Part Four

Days after leaving that island of pleasures, both Virg and I would experience an occasional tingle of excitement. Even though the place was an aberrant one, neither he nor I could forget the passions we experienced there.. Gradually, most of those feelings faded, but not completely. I am human, after all.

One evening, as we were Westing on a brisk beam reach, he and I had a long talk about what our voyage had been. Each island we'd sailed into had left us emotionally drained. Each primitive society, yielded a gut wrenching experience.

After long discussions about what might be next for us, we agreed that we'd seek no primitive societies, no mysterious island. No city where the people had not yet advanced. We agreed, instead, to make our way to some "modern" land. There we could regain our sense of values and recharge our wanderlust.

We'd left the Andaman Sea and the Nicobars at our wake. *Sine Spe* flew at near hull speed and entered the Bay of Bengal. Our heading had us on the 5 degree North latitude and at about 88 degrees longitude, the unexpected happened.

As dawn broke over the Eastern horizon, and warming our backs, we saw ahead on our bow, still some distance away.....land.

We checked to discover that, here, at this position, lay an uncharted island.

Had it not been daylight, we wouldn't have seen it and likely would have dashed the boat upon some reef or beach.

Island, Yellow

As we approached the land, Virg and I agreed that we wouldn't go into the first port we saw. For several days we cautiously navigated around the perimeter of island. The previous landings had made us wary of visiting an unknown anchorage before we investigated.

What we observed gave us confidence that this, as yet unidentified place, might be a safe place.

The island was quite large. We estimated it to be around 25 miles long and a bit less wide. Sandy beaches and rock outcrops made up the shoreline. Some cities had, what looked like, efficient harbor facilities. We deemed it odd that such a large land mass wasn't marked on our charts. Perhaps the charts we carried weren't up to date. It was a question that would be answered in the next few days.

On our trip around this mysterious island, we'd seen a half dozen moderately sized towns.

They weren't villages as we'd seen before, but each town had modern houses and large buildings.

To our surprise, we saw many cars and trucks running back and forth. There had to be roads connecting each of the communities. Our enthusiasm and curiosity was bubbled up in us and we decided to make a landing.

We chose the largest of the cities we'd seen on our circumnavigation. Even from a mile off shore, we could clearly see civilized activity. Turning the boat into a protected harbor we noted navigation buoys marking a channel that took us into a wharf. Small boats and larger ships lined all but a small section of the quay. We headed the boat to that vacant part.

We had just finished tying up at the dock, when a uniformed man with a badge and clipboard, approached.

In an authoritarian voice, he said, “ Good day gentlemen and welcome. How long do you intend to moor here?”

Virg and I hadn’t discussed that point because we were unsure of what we might find at this island. Just how many days we’d be would be based on whether we found what we were looking for... In our dreams.

I spoke up. “Sir, we haven’t made any plans as yet, but I think it’s safe to say at least 24 hours”

“Give me a moment while I tally up your costs” was the official’s reply.

“ We charge \$100 for each 24 hour stay. There’ll be a \$50 visitors fee and if you intend to go into town, you will have to pay \$25 dollars each day you are off your boat. It’s for protection of our citizens.

We require a 3 day prepay for moorage. If you depart before that time, you’ll be rebated 50% of the money.

We looked at each other and while the prices seemed a bit steep, we decided to pay. We so wanted to be back in the modern civilization that it was worth it.

Virg and I spent the next two days walking around the city, talking to the people. Once we hailed a taxi only to find out that he charged an outrageous amount to drive even a short distance. We had to reject the idea of taking the cab to the other side of the island. It would have taken all of the money we had with us.. Food and drink prices were unbelievable. Besides being higher than we’d ever seen, there was a tax as well. In fact, everything had tax upon tax.

Questioning some of the citizens, we learned that they had what they called a “Democracy” and elections were held regularly. It seemed like no government representative lasted their full term. Most had been found to cheat expense accounts and pocketed, what we would call, “Undertable” payoffs.

No one seemed to be innocent of gouging or overcharging for products and services.

In those two days, we had discovered that not only did the government cheat it’s citizen, but owners of business’ underpaid their workers and the workers themselves cheated and stole from the bosses.

It seemed that everyone in the city coveted money and property in grand style.

We slept on our boat and ate there as much as we could. Buying anything in the town was draining our savings.

No matter where we went or who we talked to, the subject of money or possessions was the main topic.

They gloated over “besting” someone, who most likely had boasted about gaining over the other.

Their avarice was palpable. No matter that we tried to convince them that being generous and giving was a good thing. They laughed at us. The common response was “ How would I benefit by giving it away?”

No amount of argument could change them.

When we asked as to why this island wasn’t marked on marine charts, they would laugh and say,

“We have no idea, but if they want to put us on the map, they have to pay us a large fee”..

Virg and I made plans to slip away as quietly as we could this very night. We’d leave our moorage deposit. We were sure that one way or another, the dock official would charge another fee or tax that would eventually cost us more.

That evening we set sail and silently moved away from the dock, out between the buoys and back to the Bay of Bengal.

In a blank space on our charts, at the proper coordinates, we drew a circle and wrote name for that island now fading from view.....

“Avaritia”

Winds came from the East and moved us toward the island country of Sri Lanka.

Without much discussion, Virg and I decided to end our voyage at that place.

Our plan was to head to Trincomalee, a large port on the Northeast coast of Sri Lanka. There we would strip the boat of everything we could sell and leave the hull to rot. We'd been on the boat for almost a year, but we shared no kind feelings for the vessel. It had been troublesome in the first place and the memories we had of the places we'd been made the boat an abhorrence to us. With the money we had managed to keep, even after two days in that island of voracity we'd just escaped from, and the cash we might get from selling off equipment, we could fly home. We pointed the boat Northwest and began the end of our voyage.

The only good thing to come out of this misery was the friendship Virg and I shared.. After selling most of *Sine Spe's* gear, we had a week in Trincomalee city. Our hours there were spent in quiet little hotel bars and outdoor restaurants. It was pleasant and helped wash away our bad memories. In those seven days of decompression, he and I talked about our cruise. We were going home and to go our separate ways. It hadn't taken long to agreed to never speak of our cruise to anyone ,,ever

We concluded that it was best to let you, the reader decide for yourself What the meaning of it had been !.

Before we parted, we signed each other's personal journal. Inside the cover on the Front piece of each book we wrote our names and home location.

In mine, he signed "*Virgil Maro, Andes N.Y.*"
I wrote on his... "*Dan T. Alighieri, Florence Oregon*"

We turned and walked away from each other,
putting a finality to each of our own personal
....**Hell !**

Fini

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