

The Prize of My Life

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I never thought I would be on board a cruise ship. Me who gets seasick at the sight of water. I had entered a competition where you just wrote your name on the back of your till receipt and thought no more about it. Nine months ago I received a letter from the competitions organisers to say I had won first prize, a three week cruise - but to take up the prize I had to be one of the passengers. Help! I thought I cannot go, I will never survive that long on a ship. I was allowed to take three friends as well so when they got to hear about it they told me even if they had to drug me I was going so they could also. With friends like this, I stood no chance.

We left home at 3am on that Sunday morning with me still having fits, even though the doctors had prescribed me tablets to help. It was not yet bright and no-one else seemed to be moving, every movement we made sounded like an earthquake. We got a taxi to the railway station. The 4.15am train was ours. It would take two hours to get to our port which I felt had a very apt name "Green Face Port". On the way down we slept on the train.

Arriving at Green Face Port we were guests of the port officials for breakfast. I cheated and did not have the fry. I thought this might just be asking for too much. I certainly did not starve. The best of all was they had apple juice as well as orange. My friends did themselves proud. Now that we are on our journey, I think it is safe to introduce them to you. Paula, an accountant without much idea on how to save her own money. Paula is 24, tall, black hair, good figure with a quiet personality. Gwen - a bit like her name might lead you to think, is medium size, slightly overweight, long fair hair with a beautiful shine. Gwen works with children and so with this temperament, no matter what I say, nothing will arouse her to clobbering me over the head. Rebecca - a nurse with thought for others, but with bounce and devilment in her. Rebecca has what you might say is a well groomed body, short hair with a great kick in it. As for me? Of course I'm perfect in every way!!! Or so I say, others might not agree, but they must be wrong.

We boarded the ship to music playing on the deck. They were playing marching tunes, I am not sure - was this a gentle hint to hurry us up or an extremely pleasant way to greet the passengers. Either way I really did enjoy the music and forgot where I was. We were given a two bedroom suite with a sitting room. It was as if we were entering a palace. I would hate to think of what it would have cost. The taps were gold in colour and the couches a beautiful deep creamy colour. The bedrooms were colour co-ordinated - one in lemon the other in heather. You would find it very hard to believe just how much one can do with a ship's cabin.

We sat around talking and laughing at just about anything, we were in great form, nothing to worry about - all our expenses were paid with extra money for the ports and best of all, no work and no-one to want things done by yesterday. Suddenly there was a huge gurgling sound and we rushed on deck - we were leaving on our great adventure.

The sun had risen and was now high in the sky, the birds' tunes were as gay as my heart. We decided to explore the restaurant as we were now feeling a little bit peckish. The atmosphere was one I had never felt before. We were out of our league, as far as money was concerned. There were people of all sorts of titles, business owners and those whose bank balance did not need to have the monthly salary coming in.

After lunch we went our separate ways. I went for a stroll around the deck. I sat down at the very top, it was like the nearest thing to being in heaven. The ocean seemed to stretch for an eternity with the sky meeting as if a young child had coloured the whole page in with different shades of blue. Suddenly I was brought back with a bang. A really delightful, strong masculine voice said - "could he tempt me to a drink". Of course he could. This was the beginning of a really, really happy time. I might even say the start of a new chapter of my life.

