**Allegory of the Dream**

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Imagine for a moment you are sleeping, dreaming of a calm, clear crystal ocean. In this dream, you are standing on a sandy shore. Basking in the warm ocean breeze, you breathe deep the find, salty air. Calm and serene, you watch as diamonds sparkle the slight waves.

For a time you bask and you gaze. But then you see a speck on the horizon. You watch as it slowly draws forward. You squint wondering what this thing is. Soon enough, the outline becomes clear. You see it is an ocean liner, a passenger ship, steaming towards you. It continues to approach and as its silhouette grows, you see it is not just any passenger ship. Even from a distance you see, it is magnificent. The curve of the hull. The silhouette of the multiple stacks. The size and the grandeur of it mark it as a monarch of the sea.

Standing there with growing excitement, you watch this magnificent thing approach—but as it gets closer, your excitement begins to fade. As it draws near you can see, something is horribly wrong. This ship is far from magnificent. Up close, you can see it is a decrepit, rusted, and run down, with so many holes rusted in that the ship must surely be sinking. You gaze down at the water line and sure enough; the ship *is* going down, and fast. You worry about the people on board. Gazing up from the water line you scan the breadth of the deck where you see thousands eating, drinking, chatting, and milling about.

Your excitement evaporates and your heart skips a best. You wonder, “what are they doing to avert disaster.” Focus on their faces, your eyes widen and your jaw slowly drops.

“Look at them,” you cry in horror, “All of them are smiling and laughing.”

“This can’t be true!” you exclaim.

“Can they not see that their ship is sinking?”

“Do they not care they will drown in the sea?”

Squinting at the deck, you look for some explanation. That’s when you see there are children on board, and lots of them—hundreds of them—playing about.

“Oh my God!” you exclaim, as you choke back tears. But just then, at the precipice of overwhelming despair, you notice another ship not far behind.

Anxiously, you gaze at this ship. From a distance it looks much like the old ship. You worry that it will also be decrepit, but as it approaches you see it is not. This one looks perfectly fine. Your gaze travels to the decks of the new ship where you half expect to see people having a party, but save for a few crew, the decks are completely empty. You peer into the portholes, scan down the hallways, but you find that no one is there. You wonder who is steering the ship. Your eyes scan forward to the bridge where you find, sure enough, a captain and a quite large bridge crew.

How wonderful you think as you sigh a spectacular sigh.

This ship is big enough to accommodate all the passengers of the old ship in splendour and luxury. What is even better, the captain seems fully apprised. As you peer into the bridge, you can see he is gesticulating wildly. Pointing at the sinking ship, he is giving orders to those that surround.

When finished, the captain and crew bolt from from the bridge and down to the decks below. Carrying a megaphone in one hand and a flair gun in the other, they run to the bow and begin yelling and firing the gun.

As you watch, a feeling of relief floods your body. The passengers *will* see the ship and the captain. Everything is going to be OK.

Unfortunately, your relief does not last long because, shockingly, the passengers are ignoring the flares.

“Don’t they see what is happening,” you think to yourself. “Do they not care for all the children on deck?”

Looking over at the captain and crew of the new ship, you see they are surprised as well. Nevertheless, despite the oblivious passengers, the captain and crew don’t give up. They keep shouting through the megaphone and firing off their flares. Finally, after what seems like forever, a few individuals *finally* look up. Surprised to see the new ship and the gesticulating captain, they look around. Not understanding their dire situation, they wave in greeting as well. Weirdly, most turn back to the festivities; however a few see the captain’s agitation. Breaking away away from the group, they walk towards the railing where the captain is pointing. Looking down, their eyes widen in horror.

Finally, you think to yourself, somebody sees the danger. But their gonna have to act fast, you think, because time is fast running out.

You watch as they look at each other.

You see them fight hard to control panic.

They look back to the new ship.

They see the captain and crew readying stations.

They exchange a few words and break of running in multiple direction.

You draw a deep, hopeful sigh.

“Everything is going to be OK,” you whisper quietly with tears in your eyes.

“Everything is going to be OK,”

But once again in this dream turned into unending nightmare you see, something is horribly wrong. Some from the broke-free group run to find the captain, but when they do he and his crew are too drunk to help. Others from the group run about, scream and shout, but the people just aren’t waking up. In fact, they are getting annoyed at the disturbance and swatting angrily at all heralds.

Of course, you can see... not everybody resists.

A certain percentage do heed the call. They get themselves, their children, and their loved ones to lifeboats; but many, too many, do not. Despite all the panicky bustle, they continue to party. Before too long, however, the top deck sinks beneath the waves. Wet toes finally grab *everybody’s* attention, but you know, it is far too late for their salvation. A few will be saved by available boats, but many will now quickly drown.

And that makes you sad because of all the unnecessary suffering and loss; but it also makes you quite thankful.

At least you are safe.

At least you are dry.

At least you are standing on shore.

As the nightmare slowly fades from your dreamy inner world, a sudden chill breeze fills your room. Throwing some blankets around your cold toes, you pray for a more pleasant dream.

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