

A Pirate Story

By Katy Murray • 2 January 2006

The vast blue ocean itself seemed to be slowly tilting back and forth, attempting to capsize the small ship with great sails. She gripped the mast with all her might, fighting to keep her feet planted to the deck. The ship rocked, trying so hard to heave her off into the cold, salty waters. She let out a small cry as her grip began to loosen – The mast was just too thick for her small hands, and she was slipping. With one great push, the ship flung the young girl down the deck, her un-brushed blonde hair flying, her tattered bandana barely holding it down. She hit the dirty wooden deck head first, with a loud crash. As she lay there, a young man casually strolled over to her, his heavy boots pounding on the thin wood.

“Is there a problem, Ms. Ki?” He said, looking down at her with raised eyebrows. The gentle summer breeze blew his long hair from side to side, and the bright sun reflected off his steel-tipped boots, causing her to wince. She rolled over, and put her hands over her mouth, attempting not to vomit on the man's boots. He shook his head, and offered his hand to help the girl up. She very shakily took the offer, getting to her feet and leaning on the ships side. Her face was a sickening shade of cream, and she seemed to be having a great deal of trouble keeping the contents of her lunch within her stomach. She looked towards the deck, afraid to look out toward the water.

“Ms. Ki. You’re never going to learn to sail if you can’t stand up on a calm days waves. Perhaps you should consider eating something, tends to calm the

scurvy.” The man had an elegant voice, sounding omniscient, yet gentle, with a touch of mystery. Ki held her mouth at the thought of food. With great difficulty, the girl tried to reply.

“Maybe... I’ll just... go...” It was too much. In a single moment, with no sort of grace, she heaved her head over the side of the deck, spewing forth a copious amount of red and brown fluid like a geyser, with what appeared to be chunks of some sort of white meat and half-digested broccoli. The sound of gagging, and the splashing of bits hitting the ocean water was almost enough to make the young man himself vomit. Ki held her head up slowly, some drool sliding down the side of her face. She held her finger in the air, as if to declare something, before promptly falling to the deck like a rock. As she did, a piece of some half-digested item flew from her hair, and landed on the man’s freshly shined boot. He grunted, and wiped it off on the side of the boat before shrugging and wandering away.

“Maybe I should have left you home with Mother this time. A pirate, you certainly are not.” The man grumbled as he stepped down a small stairwell to the lower decks.

“Captain, my Captain! I see a ship!” another man yelled loudly while running by Ki’s body. She moaned and rolled over to her back, staring up and the giant black flags waving in the wind. She heard some other mumbled shouting, and footsteps running around her. Maybe she should try and stand, Ki thought. She had been dying for the past eighteen years to be part of this crew, to hold true to her family’s traditions, and she couldn’t let her brother down. She didn’t

want to miss this battle. She wanted to fight. She wanted to be worthy of the term 'Pirate'. With great difficulty, she stood. And then, with much less difficulty, she fell again. She lay there, far too dizzy to stand. These waves simply were not doing it for her. She hadn't the famous sea legs that run in her family. Maybe she just wasn't a pirate, like the other men in her family. Maybe she should have stayed home, like her father told her. Girls don't sail. Girls stay at the docks, keeping things in order. Pah! That isn't the life she wanted. She didn't want to sit at home, sometimes for years straight, without seeing the rest of her family. She wanted to start a new tradition. She wanted to be on this ship, and not be left like her mother, alone at the docks for years, doubting her husband's loyalty and life. No, that wasn't for her. She was a pirate, even if it meant a lifetime of constantly being sick and incapable of walking. She was a member of this crew, and she was going to stand, like a real pirate. She was going to stand up, stand up straight, and not eat for the next three weeks if she had to. With one bold movement, Ki jumped to her feet, tightened her belt, and straitened her bandana. She marched over to her brother, who was barking orders to prepare the guns.

"Sir!" she shouted up at her brother, who was standing upon a wooden crate. "What should I do? Prepare the cannons? Man the guns? Anchor the ship?" She was so eager and determined. She was going to help this ship win. "What should I do?" she repeated. Her brother hesitated for a moment. He knew his sister wanted to prove herself, but he knew that she was untrained, and this was serious. If he let Ki go, she would likely make some mistake resulting in

massive loss of crew and boarded ships and all sorts of havoc. She was only eighteen, and could hardly stand.

“Have you had any training with a musket?” he asked her.

“No sir... I have a bow!” she said enthusiastically. He gave her a questioned look. A bow? Why the hell would she have a bow? They’re useless and primitive. It’s 1850! We use guns! He continued to think. He specifically told her to get training in muskets, and how to man the cannons... He never said anything about a bow. Then again, he knew very well, his sister had a mind of her own. He sighed. Maybe a bow was better. She’s definitely less likely to accidentally shoot someone with one of these. He smiled, and tried to sound professional, and not like he was just pitying her.

“Ms. Ki, man your bow. Stand on the starboard deck and remain stationary. Watch your position. If someone should come in to clear view, so that there is no chance of you accidentally hitting one of your own shipmates, fire. I suggest you remain crouched. We’ll be approaching the enemy ship, expect interception in one hour.”

Ki stood on the deck, alone, as the rest of her crew rushed around setting up cannons and preparing for a raid. At first, she was thrilled. She stood straight, waiting vigilantly for the battle that would ensue. After twenty minutes or so, she started to get bored, and as the boredom set in, so did the sickness. The uneasy feeling, the wobbly legs, that thought that the ship was against her and trying to throw her off. It was only a few moments before Ki fell to the deck, unconscious.

Her eyes opened, and her head throbbed. She rolled to her back, staring up at those familiar flags... Something was wrong. Those weren't her flags. There were no flags! Never in the history of their ship had the flags been removed. She lay there, trying to figure out the mystery in her head, which wasn't working very well at the time. Slowly, she began to hear voices. They were far away, but not a great distance. Maybe forty feet away, she estimated. It sounded like a few muffled cries of pain, and some demanding voice shouting. It took her a few minutes before she suddenly realizes – This was a problem. Suddenly, alarm struck her. Her boat was quiet, and she can hear shouting in the distance. Oh no, she knows what happened. She didn't wake up for the battle. She wasn't there to fight, and because she wasn't there, her side was the losing side. With a fresh burst of energy from the fear for her comrades, she jumped to her feet. She ducked down and made her way to the other side of the ship, where she could hear the commotion. She held her bow tight as she peeked over the edge of her ship. A mere ten feet away, still roped to her ship, was another ship. It was near the same size as the ship she currently resided on, the *Horatian Star*, and a few men wearing blue naval uniforms wandered on its decks. The yelling appeared to be coming from below deck. Not sure exactly what to do, she continued to watch. A man was coming up from below deck... Not one of these lawful men, no. It was one of her own she could tell right away from the scruffy un-brushed hair. It was the captain of her own ship, a man she'd yet to speak to once in her one day on the ship. He was tall, and a young man. Thirty, maybe a bit younger she guessed. He had messy, dusty brown hair, and dark circles under his eyes.

Behind him came an officer of some sort, who was leading Ki's captain, Captain Horatio, through ropes tying back the Captains hands. This was trouble, Ki knew. She lowered herself, and readied her bow. They brought the captain to one of their masts, and tied him to it, facing out toward the man who had brought him up. Then, another man, this one with a much fancier uniform and a plumed hat walked up. This was certainly the captain of their vessel. He stepped in front of the hostage captain, and looked down upon him. Horatio was putting up quite the struggle, and had begun screaming and thrashing. Some would expect the captain, even if it was a pirate, to have some sort of restraint. Not Horatio. He was fighting tooth and nail anyone who came within range, kicking out with his feet from which his boots had been removed, and digging at the mast with his fingernails.

"This is an abomination! I demand I be returned to my ship immediately, with crew in hand! I'll have your heads for this, you bastards!" screamed Horatio, along with many other obscenities and phrases that couldn't be understood without a fine knowledge of whatever claptrap language Horatio was speaking. The captain of the vessel held a long pointed sword towards Horatio's neck, and attempted to yell over him, since the threatening blade was doing nothing to silence him.

"Sir! You tried to board our fine ship, the *Drake*, you fired upon us, and took the lives of three of my men, one of which was my own brother! You've broken every moral, every law, and every code there is! Your acts are worthy of assassination, and if your life or the life of your crew was spared, it would be

completely unjust! You're a pirate, you have no place in this world!" the Captain screamed toward Horatio. He had stopped thrashing, but was still showing no fear. He had a look of pure anger and determination on his face, and was plenty ready to begin his fight given the chance.

"SIR! You think you'll speak to LORD ADMIRAL HORATIO in such a degrading, slimy manner?! I'll kill you! I'll have you fed to the sharks! Hell, I'll have you fed to my CREW! They're merciless!"

"Your crew dropped their guns and started begging the second they realized we were better armed than you!" shouted the Captain back.

"What?! Those ungrateful, traitorous bastards!" Horatio shouted. A few other members of the crew snickered a little, as their captain gripped his blade tightly.

"I'm tired of this worthless squabble! There is no use saving you for a trial, there isn't even a use saving you for another minute! I'll have your head for your actions!" He raised his blade high, readying it for a swing straight down at the top of Horatio's head. His blade began to fall, and Horatio started kicking his feet up as if he were going to kick the blade out of mid air. He thrashed and in an instant, his hand was free, but it was too late. As his hand went out in front of him, the blade passed down, he could see the blade fall through the middle of his eyes. And then he saw the captain standing in front of him also fall. His eyes were wide, his mouth gaping. He had been shot, straight through his ear. Horatio gasped and fell back on to the mast. A large lock of his hair fell, brushing his nose... But he remained conscious. He watched the hair hit the ground, and heard the crew

start screaming, but he felt no pain. He fell to the ground. Where was the pain? Why was he alive? Then he realized, when the captain was shot... He must have moved back, or his arm must of moved back, because that blade didn't pass through him. No, it passed right in front of him. A drip of blood ran over his lips, and he tasted it. It had just barely slit his nose and his thumb, and that was all. He stared at the arrow sticking out of the Captains head. Horatio stood, suddenly feeling more full of life than he had ever felt in his life. There was an unattended sword right in front of him, but he did not touch it. Hands extended, screaming, he ran straight at the first person he saw. He wrapped one hand around his neck, and used the other to punch him repeatedly, until he fell. Without hesitation, he jumped strait at another member of the crew. Ki heard someone scream.

“That man is insane! Someone Grab him!” A few men circled him, but none touched him. He beat the second man in to a coma, and jumped at another man. As he did this, one of the surrounding members of the crew withdrew his sword. He went to swing at Horatio, but found it difficult as a shot passed through his head as well. There were three other members on deck; the one Horatio was mauling, and two men without weapons. They fought to rip Horatio off their fellow crew member, and pinned him to the deck. The three of them had to fight with all their might to keep him down, as he was still screaming and thrashing. For several minutes they kept him pinned, as they could not move a muscle without him leaping up and attacking. There was no rope in reach to bind him, and none of them had a weapon they could get to without taking a hand off him. Horatio kept biting at them and screaming.

One of them men raised his head and craned around him to see if there was some rope. The second his head was turned, his eyes were met by another's. A young girl with dark eyes, and a sharp arrow just inches from his nose. And a second later, his grip on Horatio loosened, and he fell to the side. In an instant, Horatio simply pushed himself up, since two was not enough to keep him in check, and he leaped on the one holding his shoulders. Ki attempted to reload her bow as quickly as possible, and wondered why more men had not come up from below deck. Was this the whole crew? As she fiddled with her bow, one of the men suddenly leaped on her. She fell to the ground under his weight. The man pinned her down by the neck, and quickly revealed a small knife from his pocket. Too small to quickly kill a person with, surely. He held it to Ki's throat, and she whimpered. The blade began to press into her skin, and with a loud sound of blunt force metal on bone, it stopped. The man fell on to Ki, revealing a pan-wielding Horatio behind him. He was panting heavily. Ki struggled to push the man off her, then stood by her Captain. A little bit of blood trickled from her throat where a minor incision had been made, but she ignored it.

"Ms. Ki!" Horatio shouted, as if there was not a thing wrong or unusual about the situation. He held his frying pan tight in his hand. "Let us return to the ship!"

"Uh..." Ki panted heavily as she spoke to him. "Don't you think we should, just maybe, go save the rest of our seven crew?"

"If you really think we should... I guess we can." Sighed the Captain. But as she turned to head to the stairs, sure enough, her crew began to pile through

the stairway. They were smiling and yelling in victory. She smiled as her brother jumped through the stairwell, and she ran to him.

“Brother!” she shouted. “I mean... Sir! Are you alright?” Her brother laughed.

“Alright? I’ve never been better! Those fools left us with only three guards, tied and bound. They wandered, and we easily escaped... And then we picked them off like sheep! Are you ok, is everything alright? You’re bleeding! Are you hurt?”

“Yes... Yes sir, I’m fine. It’s just a scrape.” Ki said, putting her hand over her throat and coughing a little. She went to hug her brother, but before she could, a very enthusiastic Lord Admiral Horatio shoved his way between the two.

“Ms. Ki! You’ve done an excellent job! I must say, you acted accordingly in a time of need, and you helped to save your captain and crew!” Ki blushed a little as Horatio patted her shoulder. He continued to speak. “You deliberately defied orders to remain stationary, because you felt that you were needed, and in doing so, you have saved the lives of your crew. And that is exactly why...” Ki held her breath. This was so exciting! She was getting praised, and she could hardly wait to hear what her Captain was going to say next, as he paused and looked down at her with admiration. “That is exactly why... You’re being demoted.”

“Why, thank..... What? What the hell? Seriously!”

“You defied orders to remain stationary! We can't have young girls running around all willy-nilly reeking havoc and... Eating ice cream or... Flirting... or...

Whatever it is women do. It's unacceptable! Especially when you are ordered to stay stationary!" Horatio yelled.

"But... But... I'm already in lowest rank! You can't demote me!"

"Well... We'll just make a new rank! It's called the "Ki can't listen to simplistic orders and risks her own life to go heroically save her fellow comrades when we might have possibly been just fine without her" rank! That's you!" Ki growled, and turned to her brother. He bent down and whispered to her.

"This is why I told you to never talk to the captain. He's completely whacky." Ki smiled a little through her frustration, and her brother patted her back.

After a good hour of looting the *Drake*, the crew of the *Horation Star* boarded, and sailed out in to the sea, in search of other adventures. Ki never directly spoke to the captain again, and remained the archer of the *Horation Star*, slowly learning not to vomit at the slightest shift of the tides, and continuing to disobey simple orders for the good of the crew. She was never promoted, but had already gained the respect of all her allies.