

# **SHANGHAIED AGAIN**

## **YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH OF WHAT YOU DON'T WANT**

**@2015 Charlie Smith**

He is sitting in a bar having a beer, eating cashews and at peace with the world. A pretty woman sits next to him. He buys her a drink and after a bit she promises him that he can have what he wants which is usually what he is not getting at the moment in relationship or what he is getting that he wishes he didn't have. He gets interested and then someone hits him on the back of the head and he passes out. He wakes up in the dank hold of a sailing ship bound for God knows where, maybe China or someplace really foreign. The woman is on the boat and he is given the job of scraping paint and cleaning toilets and staying out in the cold and wet for long periods of time. At first he puts up with it and later he hates it and it promises to go on forever. Some of the mates seem to have joined up freely and others were similarly shanghaied but he can't really tell which is which. Every once in a while there are feasts and parties and this is nice. There is lots of rum. Every Saturday, the woman gives a group lecture on how good all of this is and they all sit and listen.

Then, he wakes up in a bar sipping a beer, eating cashews and at peace with the world. A woman comes and sits next to him. He buys her a drink and she promises him he can have whatever he really wants which is some version of everything that was not on the last ship. Then someone knocks him on the head and he wakes up in the hold of a different ship which is somewhat better appointed. The new woman is there and his job is still to scrape paint and do what he did on the last ship but this one is crowded and there is food to cook for others and very long hours. He hates to cook. This goes on for years again with more sophisticated lectures on why all of this is a good idea or his Karma calls for it or he would be fine if he did not have the painful childhood recollections he had or maybe he should see the ship's therapist. He feels himself aging even as he chips the paint.

Then, he wakes up in a bar, eating cashews and at peace with the world. A soft sensual woman sits next to him and he buys her a drink. She tells him that she does understand, has lots of history avoiding boats and sensitive examples of her experience dealing with people like him. She rubs his back as if she knew he liked that. This time, she says, he can have what he wants and for sure it's for keeps. He floods with

tears and gratitude. The someone hits him on the head and he is again on a bigger, better ship with no scheduled port of call.