Nobody crosses the Equator, on ship or plane, without initiation by King Neptune.

Billy Budd-Jones

When I was 19 in the Merchant Marine, somebody, I don't remember who, one starlit night heading south off the coast of Mexico, told us green young sailors about the Rites of Neptune. He warned us about the initiation of anyone crossing the Equator for the first time. I was laid back in my rack stretching my nice round of bologna, which is what my daddy always called our foreskins—him, me, and my three brothers, all uncut because daddy always said there'd be no circumcision in his family.

Anyway, I was all ears listening to the wise-ass bigtalking sailors drooped, half-drunk, around the table under our racks. I didn't much care if they saw me stretching the mouth of my foresnake, or saw me digging my finger deep inside my 3-inch foreskin, my 3-inch cheese-maker, dipping smegma, the way they dipped Copenhagen, tucking it under my lip the same way, because to me nothing tastes better than my mouth tasting like headcheese.

Besides, I have a 7-inch dick flapped with, as I say, a 3-inch flag of ultimate manmeat. Foreskin is a cock's crowning glory. Foreskin is the only thing in the world that makes slick clots of smegma. I never soap the head of my dick inside my foreskin. I always fingerbathe it. When I was a kid and into wrestling and real supple from the sport, I used to be able to bend my back in half like a hairpin and tongue out my foreskin directly. There's no secrets on a merchant vessel. Everybody gets a nickname sooner or later, and mine came real fast. All of them, even the captain, called me "Skin." Every guy in the world has thought about shipping out to see the world and its adventures. All I can say to any man, young or not so, is, I recommend it, but on no less than three ships just to get the real rounded experience.

When we reached the Equator, sure enough, the Rites of Neptune took place as formally as a confirmation or a bar mitzvah. We "Equator

694 Jack Fritscher

Virgins" had no more choice than any Christian or Jewish boys, but the Rites of Neptune were definitely more fun.

The day before we crossed, Neptune's Throne was set up on deck. The Captain grinned down on it all. He was no more than 37 and he had a big enough cock to get behind the festivities. I know. He'd invited me more than once to his cabin. He was Portuguese. An olive-skinned handsome devil with a black moustache, a bristly black crewcut, and like all Portuguese, his bushy black pubic hair nested his fat dick sheathed in an innertube of olive foreskin so thick the wrinkles in it shrouded his cockhead so completely the eye of his meat was totally blind. A classic foreskin.

A sailor nick named Queeg won the draw to be King Neptune. He was a Swede, built like a stone, hung like a drayhorse, and blond as the Viking stock that sired him. When, naked, naked as we all were, he mounted his throne, I saw his big blond cock was leathered with foreskin suitable for a Viking berserker's sword shield. Under the bone-white Equator sun at high noon, Queeg, stamped his staff three times and the games began.

Much of it was foolishness and pot and beer. We were all naked and ordered to grease each other down for a pig wrestle free-for-all. The seasoned sailors stood around the edges of the game. The straight ones tolerated the age-old customs of the sea. The enlightened ones stroked their dicks, sometimes jumping into the pig pile, greasing themselves up. The cook served up a slop special for the occasion and everyone drank from the wooden tubs. The sport wrestling turned to sex wrestling. A bumhole was hardly safe on the greasy deck. Several young sailors were made to sit en brochette on the laps of several burly sailors who held them tight, with their cocks up their asses, while their heads were shaved to the skull. In the horseplay, several more sailors were tied down to the deck, playfully but meaningfully, and their chests and crotches shaved. The noon turned into a raucous afternoon, nothing heavy, but plenty of unabashed sex, as if King Neptune and the Equator itself, made permissible and innocent those things sailors most often do at night.

To my surprise, Queeg, who was King Neptune, called out my name. "Skin!" As I approached him across the slippery deck, the Captain, built like a bulldog, joined him at his side. In his hand he held a black leather thong. Queeg stood up. He took my right arm. The Captain my left. They marched me to the center of the deck. The surrounding crowd of sailors cheered. Deftly, Queeg pulled my foreskin forward and the Captain tied it off with the leather thong. My dick hardened immediately. Queeg pulled his own foreskin straightforward and the Captain noosed his cover the same as mine. We were tied together, foreskin to foreskin, and his cock, a

good 10 inches, rose to salute mine. Queeg grinned and reached for the Captain's already hard rod and pulled the fat Portuguese foreskin taut. The Captain tied off his own tip. The crowd of sailors cheered. The leather thong triangulated the three of us together. They hardly needed to tell me we were in for a threeway foreskin tug-of-war.

"You've got the Captain," Queeg said.

"You've got King Neptune," the Captain said.

"This is the Equator," I said. "You're no more than two big uncut dicks to me."

They smiled at my smart mouth and I took a step back. Our three foreskins stretched tight. Tough 'skins, all three. We tugged and pulled. Their big bodies outweighed mine, but my 'skin was tougher. The crowd was shouting me the winner; but Queeg and the Captain looked at each other, and, in that peculiar slow-motion of sex remembered, they jumped me, one blond, one dark, and wrestled me to the deck. They knelt over my face and taking their big tied-off cocks in their hands, they stroked their long dongs until first the Captain, and then Queeg, with all his blond muscles ripping, shot their loads into their tied off foreskins that bulged and dripped with cum. To much cheering, first Queeg and then the Captain slowly untied their foreskins and drained them into my open mouth, stretching the eyes of the prepuces, ordering my eager tongue to clean out the three days of cheese they'd each saved for me to eat. The crowd of sailors was chanting, "Smegma! Smegma!"

They would not untie my foreskin, not until late that night it turned out, because, before that, a long line of sailors queued up before me, a select line, only the uncut ones, and it was not just their cum they wanted sucked out. No. Before any of them gave me their cum, I had to dig with my tongue inside the tubes of their foreskins digging cheese from around the sheathed heads of their uncut cocks. Finally, at midnight, my whole body slathered with smegma and my belly full of sailors' cum, the last of them picked me up and carried me to I didn't know where. I was foreskin crazy. I wanted to have wild sex. I wanted to cum. I was 19. I didn't know where I was. Not till I heard them say, "Here's the Foreskin Pig, Captain. He's all yours." And the Captain, taking out his skinning blade, said, "Welcome to the Equator."