

## EYE OF THE STORM

Charles Way

*Midnight. A few miles from the island on the mainland of Italy. TRINCULO, a young sailor pulls a boat to the water's edge. It's a small boat but large enough for a small sail. It's called, 'The Happy Youth'. TRINCULO sings to himself as he prepares the vessel for sea.*

TRINCULO: Ten gold pieces, ten gold pieces  
what would I do for ten gold pieces?  
I'd sell my ma, I'd sell my pa  
and as for my uncles, aunts an' nieces,  
I'd sell them all, cos I'm in thrall  
of ten gold pieces to call my own.  
But I'd never sell my love,  
for my love is as true  
as the salty sea, is blue blue blue-  
Oh I'd never part with her  
cos that's what love is... *fer (end of song)* Ah love? What's that indeed but a  
poor rhyme?  
Come on, Stephano. Midnight he said...  
Why can't people keep appointments?

*STEPHANIE enters, dressed as a boy called STEPHANO. On seeing TRINCULO, she hides in the shadows.*

TRINCULO: Who's there? Is that you Stephano? *(He looks, but finds no one)* This lad you see, Stephano, comes to me out of a dark night, says he has to run away from home. Run where I says? He's got no idea, so I says, 'Do as I done son, join the navy, see the world, learn a trade, meet some girls.' The Cap'n needs a cabin boy, a fresh faced beardless boy, and I need ten gold pieces. Well, that's a fair price for leavin home. Could say it was the 'going rate'. Ha. So here I is. Midnight by the water's edge. The King's fleet lies five mile out to sea an' I'm waiting on a lad who has most likely changed his mind and dreams warm in his bed.

STEPHANIE: Now perhaps, I shall change my mind. Go back, go home, go now.

TRINCULO: My nose is turning blue.

STEPHANIE: No, no I must stay, be strong.

TRINCULO: My gran, the old prune, always said we Italians feel the cold more than our northern neighbours.

STEPHANIE: I'll stay and tell you what's important here.

TRINCULO: I'm as cold as cod now.

STEPHANIE: This sailor called Trinculo...

TRINCULO: I'll give the boy one minute for every gold piece. After that, I'm home.

STEPHANIE: He's waiting on a boy who's not a boy at all. Not 'Stephano' as he thinks but STEPHANIE, a girl. I had no time to think of a wiser way. This is a desperate measure to escape my mother, and as for this Trinculo, he wouldn't row me one stroke from home, if he knew who I was, for he and I were once more intimate than now. But all that was between us once, as girl and boy, has gone. Be assured. How I shall maintain this thin disguise on board his captain's ship I have no plan. My only plan was to leave home, but now I'm nervous of it. Perhaps I should go back for this is reckless, and if I'm discovered - a woman amongst so many men, what then?

TRINCULO: Who's there? Stephano! Come forward, don't stand in the shadows lad.

STEPHANIE: (*aside*) Forward then.

TRINCULO: Did anyone follow you?

STEPHANIE: No.

TRINCULO: Good. A life at sea awaits you, but first you pays the ferryman.

STEPHANIE: (*looks at boat*) What's that?

TRINCULO: What's what?

STEPHANIE: That.

TRINCULO: Don't kick it.

STEPHANIE: It's got water in it.

TRINCULO: What's water to a boat?

STEPHANIE: Pardon me for saying sailor, but isn't the water meant to be on the outside?

TRINCULO: It's ballast. You'll learn all about ballast soon enough. Ten gold pieces.

STEPHANIE: What's this?

TRINCULO: That's a bucket.

STEPHANIE: A bucket?

TRINCULO: You're so quick.

STEPHANIE: Which bucket are we setting sail in exactly?

TRINCULO: This bucket is important. You have to bail out the-

STEPHANIE: Me?

TRINCULO: Yes. You, have to bail out the ballast over the gunnel by the rollocks. Technical isn't it? Now I want my money.

STEPHANIE: When. I mean, if, we reach the King's fleet.

TRINCULO: If? If? How dare you insult this, 'Happy Youth' with an 'if'.

STEPHANIE: Well?

TRINCULO: I'm thinking.

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STEPHANIE: I'm sorry, I couldn't tell.

TRINCULO: Hey! *(aside)* He's getting on my knuckles now.

STEPHANIE: *(aside)* I overplay the part. Hold back or be discovered.

TRINCULO: Half now, half on arrival.

STEPHANIE: Done. May we leave?

TRINCULO: We may. If we haven't missed the tide with talk. *(aside)* I'll have him, and his money.

STEPHANIE: *(aside)* He's the same as ever, all pride and promises.

TRINCULO: Are you coming or what? *(She gets in the boat)* By the full moon, you look familiar. Have we met before?

STEPHANIE: No, for if we had it would have come to blows.

TRINCULO: *(laughs)* Aye, ain't that the truth. Still I likes you well enough. Don't forget the bucket bosun. *(He rows)* What's the matter now?

STEPHANIE: Nothing.

TRINCULO: You're free in't ya?

STEPHANIE: Yes. *(aside)* Too late to turn back now. The shore line fades by the stroke. What have I done? What have I done?

TRINCULO: *(sings)* Sail away, sail away  
What can I do but sail away?  
So far from home, a man may roam  
and may not return for many a day.  
So I'll sing you a song  
as we sail along  
'bout the girl I left behind me.