

## Mid Life Cruise Ship – 1 minute story

### *The Gym*

'Ah!! These bloody machines'

Sally shakes the handle bars of the static exercise bike and slides off the saddle to get a plastic cup of complimentary chilled water from the dispenser. Dave looks on from his vantage point directly behind her, where he is steadily clocking up the miles on his, fully functioning, exercise bike. He's been in the lower deck gym since first light – about 6.30am in this part of the Atlantic at this time of year. Dave has been the only one in the gym every morning at this time of the day since the cruise liner left Southampton some three days before. Today, Sally had decided she would skip the early breakfast slot, a favourite with the older passengers, and try and shed some of the calories she had forced into her body at the compulsory and seemingly endless round of meal sittings.

'Do you want a hand – with the bike?'

Dave was still peddling – he had a routine – 30 minute jog at setting 8 on the running machine, 30 minute cycle at a steady 14mph and back on the running machine for a further 30 minutes at setting 5 to cool down. He had 9 minutes remaining on the bike but didn't mind breaking his routine to help the cute '30 something' in the designer vest and track bottoms.

'OK, yes – yes please, it's not the same you see'

She had only glanced at Dave on the way in but knew he was about her age, good looking and in good shape and she knew he had been studying her.

'The same?'

'As the one in my gym at home'

'Oh, where do you live?'

'Hampstead'

'Me too, you must mean Toby's Health Club'

'No' she laughs 'I meant I have a gym at my home'

Dave laughs

## *The Dining Room*

'Do you mind if I sit here?'

Simon, never enjoyed eating alone and breakfast had always been his favourite meal of the day – his 40 years in the British Army had taught him the value of a fried breakfast even if it was now taking its toll on his health. She looked sophisticated, well travelled, well healed, foreign he thought

'Oh, no, of course, please have a seat'

An American!

The dining room was far from full but most of the tables with a window were occupied so Katherine didn't mind – this guy was a similar age to her she guessed, a Brit, he'd let himself go but carried himself with an air of dignity – he would be OK company.

'Many thanks, I do like to be by the window even if the view is somewhat monotonous'

Katherine glanced out of the window, grey water as far as the horizon, not another craft in-sight. She glanced round the dining room – a sea of grey hair.

'Are you on your own?'

'Are you travelling alone?' said together

Both laugh

'No Sally's in the gym'

'My partners exercising' said together

The End