

The Black Freighter

Steeleye Span

You gentlemen can gawk while I'm scrubbing the floors
And I'm scrubbing the floors while you're gawking
And maybe once you tipped me and it made you fell swell
In this ratty waterfront in this ratty hotel
But you never know to whom you're talking
You never guess to whom you're talking
Suddenly one night there's a scream in the night
And a yell: What the hell is that din
And you see me kind of grinning while I'm scrubbing
And you'll say: What's she got to grin?

And the ship the Black Freighter
With the skull at the masthead
Sails into the bay

Then you gentlemen can say: Hey girl, scrub the floors
Make the beds, get up the stairs, earn you keep here
And you pass out the tips as you look out at the ships
But I'm counting up heads as I'm making up beds
'Cause tonight none of you will sleep here
Tonight none of you will sleep here
Then on that night there's a banging in the night
And you yell: What the hell is that row
And you see me kind of staring out the window
And you'll say: What she got to stare at now?

And the ship the Black Freighter
With fifty long cannons
Opens fire on the town

Then you gentlemen can wipe all the grins off your face
Every building in the town is a flat one
The whole stinking place will be down to the ground
Only this cheap hotel will be standing safe and sound
And you say: Why do they spare that one?
You say: Why do they spare that one?
Then all night through with a noise and to-do
You'll wonder who's the person lives up there
And you see me stepping out into the morning
Looking nice with a ribbon in my hair

And the ship the Black Freighter
Runs a flag up her masthead
And cheer rings the air

Then just before noon there'll be hundreds of men
Coming up off that ghostly freighter
And they're moving in the shadows where no-one can see
And they're chaining up the people and they're bringing
them to me
Asking me: Kill them now or later?
Asking me: Kill them now or later?
Noon on the clock and so still on the dock
You could hear a foghorn miles away
In the quiet of death I'll say: Kill 'em now
And they'll pile up the bodies and I'll say: Hoopla!

And the ship the Black Freighter
Sails away out to sea
And on it is me