61. Wine and Tears

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour to inform you that the Ship of Fools is now ready to sail. Please take your seats and fasten your safety belts."

Dr Hoffmann's voice was amplified by the loudspeakers in the ceiling of the cabin. The Ship of Fools was a large, luxurious, state-of-the-art vessel, with a crew of twenty and a passenger list of two hundred. It was the most expensive cruise ship in the world, and the passengers were all very, very rich.

"Thank you, Dr Hoffmann," said Mr Gates, the captain of the Ship of Fools.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will enjoy your cruise on the Ship of Fools. We have a very interesting programme of events for you. Tomorrow morning we will be passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, and we will be able to see the Rock of Gibraltar and the Pillars of Hercules. Tomorrow afternoon we will be passing the island of Sicily, and we will be able to see Mount Etna. Tomorrow evening we will be passing the island of Crete, and we will be able to see the Mountains of Crete. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Dr Hoffmann, "I am sure you are very, very happy to be on the Ship of Fools. This is a very, very, very,