

Ecstasy and Calamity

During summer 2017, while we were sailing around the Adriatic with my daughter in our little Seascope 18 sailing boat, two highly extraordinary events happened in a single day.

Morning ecstasy

We were anchored in a calm bay, and I woke up around 08:00 after a peaceful night's sleep, my daughter still sleeping in the cabin. The morning sun was already up. I checked the boat and then eventually crawled back into the cabin and lay down for some more rest.

The next thing I remember was that I found myself in a vision space, in an unknown flat somewhere in a city. I tried to orient myself in the flat and then noticed that a tiny fairy-like little girl had just appeared in the next room. She had long curly golden hair and was dressed in a loose white dress. I figured out that she must have arrived through the window because I didn't notice anyone entering the flat through the door. I moved to meet her more closely. I had to move around some furniture, and then I came around the closet and met this being directly. At that moment, I just remember the explosion into an ecstasy beyond anything known or encountered before. During this cosmic explosion, I remember even some thoughts that this is too much for a human; we are not designed to endure such extreme forces. And the bliss, total bliss all around, although too much and too extreme.

The next thing was landing back in the cabin of our boat, my daughter laughing and shaking me to wake up, she said that I was twisting and screaming like a pig, and it was obviously very entertaining for her watching the show.

I don't know who this magical being was, but obviously, the meeting was "too much", and I wasn't completely ready yet to receive the transmission.

Evening calamity

The evening surprised us with another strange event. There was a weather front passing this evening, and the prognosis was to expect strong winds. However, our boat was securely anchored in a well-protected bay near Punat (Krk island), and we were completely sheltered from the strong southern winds. Consequently, the evening

inside the bay was very calm, and around 22:00 we took photographs of the stormy sky and then slipped into the cabin preparing for sleep.

Around 22:30, without any warning of the increasing wind, suddenly our boat was hit by a violent force and then lifted and turned upside-down in seconds, the cabin flooded with seawater, and everything in the ship (including us) was thrown upside-down. I remember my daughter asking, “daddy, are we dreaming?” and I wasn’t sure. Finally, the boat turned around 135 degrees, mast pointing into the water until it hit the ground, and stopped there.

We had to swim outside of the cabin. Luckily there was a tiny gap between the water and the companionway so that we didn’t have to dive underwater, which would be pretty challenging in the night, with too many ropes scattered around that could trap us. So we were out, swimming and alive. I was bleeding from a cracked arcade (I hit the wall during the capsizing), and my daughter was well but entirely in shock.

Luckily, I found our inflatable SUP board still attached to the boat, so I grabbed a knife, released the entangled SUP from the ship, and secured my daughter on SUP while doing my best to reduce the shock and comfort her that everything would be OK. The boat now stabilized on a side position (around 100 degrees) due to the carbon mast filled with air. First, we tried to hang on the keel, but it didn't help lift the boat. So the next try was, supported by our inflatable SUP, to move along the mast toward the top of the mast, and then we lifted the mast from the water and succeeded in setting up the boat upright. Then we climbed back on the ship and got a life jacket for my daughter.

The boat was a complete mess, many items fell out and were lost, but I found my handheld VHF and started transmitting a mayday call. No response. Next, I got a torch and started emitting SOS signals. Again no response. Later, sailors from other boats in the bay noticed our distress and called the marina, but no help arrived.

As next thing, left to our own support, I checked the outboard Yamaha motor and succeeded in starting the engine. Then, we lifted the anchor and moved towards the nearest bigger boat in the bay. The crew of Nirvana sailing boat offered us warm shelter, as our bodies were already hypothermic and shivering. Thus, we spent the night on Nirvana—and in nirvana after the successful rescue—and I learned later that one literal interpretation translates nirvana as “blow out”.

Our boat was cleaned and restored in the following days; Seascape 18 incredibly well survived the knock-down. A few lost items were later replaced, and the ship was soon ready for the next sailing.

The weather record from the marina later showed recorded wind peaks of 88 knots (before the anemometer broke down). We were presumably hit by a tornado-type vortex that shook violently also some other boats in the bay (including Nirvana) but with far less dramatic consequences.

The epilogue of the story – I could not resist but connect the two events, both radical in expression, the ecstasy, and calamity, packed into a single day, the radical message of the wild forces too big for us to comprehend. And I am more than happy that the day ended in nirvana.

