

Nina Simone, Pirate Jenny

(1928) Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill

You people can watch while I'm scrubbing these floors
And I'm scrubbin' the floors while you're gawking
Maybe once ya tip me and it makes ya feel swell
In this crummy Southern town
In this crummy old hotel
But you'll never guess to who you're talkin'.
No. You couldn't ever guess to who you're talkin'.
Then one night there's a scream in the night
And you'll wonder who could that have been
And you see me kinda grinnin' while I'm scrubbin'
And you say, "What's she got to grin?"
I'll tell you.
There's a ship
The Black Freighter
with a skull on its masthead
will be coming in
You gentlemen can say, "Hey gal, finish them floors!
Get upstairs! What's wrong with you! Earn your keep here!
You toss me your tips
and look out to the ships
But I'm counting your heads
as I'm making the beds
Cuz there's nobody gonna sleep here, honey
Nobody
Nobody!
Then one night there's a scream in the night
And you say, "Who's that kicking up a row?"
And ya see me kinda starin' out the winda
And you say, "What's she got to stare at now?"
I'll tell ya.
There's a ship
The Black Freighter
turns around in the harbor
shootin' guns from her bow
Now
You gentlemen can wipe off that smile off your face
Cause every building in town is a flat one
This whole frickin' place will be down to the ground
Only this cheap hotel standing up safe and sound
And you yell, "Why do they spare that one?"
Yes.
That's what you say.
"Why do they spare that one?"
All the night through, through the noise and to-do
You wonder who is that person that lives up there?
And you see me stepping out in the morning
Looking nice with a ribbon in my hair
And the ship
The Black Freighter
runs a flag up its masthead
and a cheer rings the air
By noontime the dock
is a-swarmin' with men
comin' out from the ghostly freighter
They move in the shadows
where no one can see
And they're chainin' up people
and they're bringin' em to me
askin' me,
"Kill them NOW, or LATER?"
Askin' ME!
"Kill them now, or later?"

Noon by the clock
and so still by the dock
You can hear a foghorn miles away
And in that quiet of death
I'll say, "Right now.
Right now!"
Then they'll pile up the bodies
And I'll say,
"That'll learn ya!"
And the ship
The Black Freighter
disappears out to sea
And
on
it
is
me