

VARUNA

by Phillip Vincent

Forced to seek refuge on an isolated island
they discover something more terrifying
than the murderous drug lord is hunting them...

Selected Excerpts

1) Malik took off his cap and wiped the sweat forming on his brow. Every encounter with Anand dragged him deeper into the abyss. He shook his head. “I told you before, Anand, I won’t have anything to do with your goddamn illegal fishing. I’ve seen the destruction your bottom trawlers cause, and I want no part of it.”

“So, what you’re saying is, smuggling heroin is okay with you, but you draw the line at netting a few fucking fish?”

The irony in Anand’s words hit home. Malik glanced at the man bound in the chair, then at Anand’s hulking bodyguard. How did I let myself end up here, surrounded by these wretched people? He knew he had no one to blame but himself for the decisions he’d made that put him in where he was. He closed his eyes and for a fleeting second was at sea again. “None of this is okay with me,” he said, staring at the floor.

“And yet, here you are,” Anand said.

2) Slumped in a folding chair in his tiny kitchen, Malik poured a shot into a plastic cup. Closing his eyes, he raised the arak to his lips. The familiar smell flooded his nostrils. One drink won’t matter. He resisted the temptation and set it back on the table. He picked up his cell phone and punched in the number for Raj Farran.

“Selamat pagi, Malik.”

“Selamat pagi, Raj,” Malik replied. “Anand said you’re to accompany me on my charter.”

“Yeah, he told me.”

“We’ll be weighing anchor late tomorrow afternoon.”

“I’ll be there,” Raj said. After a pause, he continued, “It’s been a while, Captain. It’ll be good to see you again.”

“You as well.” Malik hung up and tossed the phone on the table. He liked the young man. Raj was dangerous, but of all the men who worked for Anand, he was the only one with any redeeming qualities, still too young for Anand to have thoroughly corrupted.

3) Ethan kept silent while they shuffled on, a dull pain punctuating his every step.

“You got nuthin to say?” Gage said. “Nuthin at all?”

Ethan looked over his shoulder again at the sergeant. Figuring they’d gone far enough, he lifted his hand to his mouth and spat something into it. Turning toward Gage, he smiled and winked his right eye—the one not swollen shut.