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Some Things are True

by Penny Jones

The trial of Adams Hyde for piracy 1758. Hyde and another ship's master were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging after a reward of £500 (a small fortune) was offered by the Lords of the Admiralty to placate a Spanish Cardinal who was on a ship they boarded and stole goods from. This information was hidden from the jury who found them guilty. The trial is on record as is the broadsheet which reported the hanging (in the style of the News of the World) as a warning to others. These lines could apply to some or all who were involved in the trial and subsequent events – cardinal, ships' captains, crew, family, excisemen, judge and jury.

Some of these things are true and some of them are lies

The hanging of a fisherman, the hanging of a smuggler, the hanging of a pirate

The death of a father, the death of a husband, the death of a soldier, the death of a sailor, the death of a rover, the death of a prisoner, the death of a liar, the death of dreams

The orphaning of five children, the widowing of a wife

The foolishness of a man, the desperation of a man, the opportunism of a man, the cunning of a man, the greed of a man, the violence of a man, the desires of a man

The desire for revenge, the desire for punishment, the desire for nourishment, the desire for wealth, the desire for truth, the desire to inflict loss

The loss of a life, the loss of an eye, the loss of reputation, the loss of reason, the loss of dignity, the loss of betrayal

The betrayal by the crewmen, the honesty of the crewmen, the silence of the crewmen, the opportunism of the crewmen, the poverty of the crewmen, the acquittal of the crewmen, the

wisdom of the crewmen

The wisdom of a judge, the knowledge of a judge, the blindness of a judge, the impartiality of a judge, the obedience of a judge to power

The power of influence, the power of religion, the power of money, the power of evidence, the power of lies, the power of fiction, the power of truth

The truth of a man's eyes, the truth of a story well told, the truth of the press, the truth of poverty, the truth of fear

The fear of discovery, the fear of God, fear of loss, fear of drowning, fear of retribution