

**THE FINAL
VOYAGE OF
THE
VENERABLE
SAUCY
NANCY**

**GLYNN OWEN
BARRASS**

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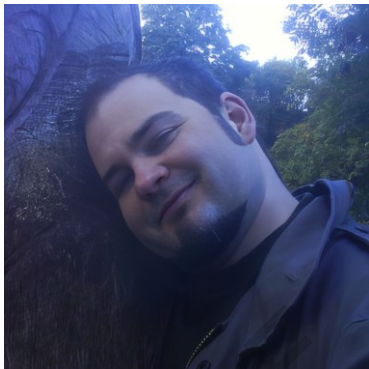
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PROOF

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GLYNN OWEN BARRASS

Glynn Owen Barrass lives in the North East of England and has been writing since late 2006. He has written over two hundred short stories, novellas, and role-playing game supplements, the majority of which have been published in France, Germany, Japan, Poland, Portugal, the UK, and the USA. To date he has edited and co-edited ten anthologies: *Anno Klarkash-Ton*, *Atomic Age*

Glynn Owen Barrass

Cthulhu, The Children of Gla'aki, Eldritch Chrome, In the Court of the Yellow King, Murder Mystery Madness and Mythos, Steampunk Cthulhu, The Summer of Lovecraft, Through a Mythos Darkly, and World War Cthulhu. He has been the co-recipient of two Ennies awards for his gaming work.

Website: strangeraeons.godaddysites.com

PART ONE

Thomasina awoke sluggishly. *When did I even go to sleep?* Confused and disoriented, she found herself clothed in her breeches and boots, her upper body bare.

“Captain Collins. Come see, quickly!” The incessant shouts and the rapping on her door had dragged her from the depths of slumber. Thomasina rubbed her eyes, climbed from her hammock, and headed to the coat rack near the cabin door.

“Out in a minute. Keep your head,” she called.

The voice sounded like First Mate Gideon—a good man, if a bit of a nervous ninny at times. She pulled on her wool coat,

fastened it tightly, considered her belt and sword but left them rocking on the coat rack.

When she pulled the door open, a thick mist rolled in, making her cough.

As she had thought, it was Gideon. “On the main deck, come see!” he said.

“Damn,” Thomasina muttered, clearing her throat as she strode past Gideon’s nebulous form.

The mist was everywhere, smothering the deck. She strode forward, descended from the quarterdeck, and noted a large, dark shape on the main deck’s starboard side. It resolved into her crew—many of them at least—abandoning their duties to stare at... what?

“Curse you all for lolling about. What the—”

A smell reached her nostrils: horrid, ugly,

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sick. It reminded her of a dead devil fish she'd encountered once, rotting on Kingsport beach. Had her men gathered to stare at a fish, rotting in the water?

As she neared the starboard gunwale, Thomasina heard nervous mutterings and saw hazy faces turning to her.

"Captain, Captain," Gideon implored behind her. "Don't be mad—just look."

His words fueled her anger, but curiosity grew despite the reek. *What are they looking at?*

She reached the starboard side and placed her hands on the cold wood of the gunwale. The sea beyond was shrouded in mist, as were the horizon and sky. They could have been floating in the clouds if not for the gentle rocking of *The Saucy Nancy* beneath her boots.

The chill from the gunwale ran up her hands, into her arms. It was obscenely cold. The voices around her were muffled by the fog.

In all her time sailing the seas, Thomasina had never witnessed a fog so thick. It dampened her hair; droplets of moisture formed on her forehead, reaching her brows to drip down her face.

“This is not natural,” she said—then the mist parted.

“Oh my God.”

“You see, Captain—they are all around us!”

Gideon appeared at her side. Usually, Thomasina disliked the proximity of others. This time, it was a comfort.

The ocean was invisible for the most part, concealed by the huge objects floating on the

surface. They sourced the stink. How many were there?

It was impossible to tell. Bigger than whales, the mishappen, oily-black abominations were covered in blinking eyes and twisting, eel-like tentacles. Blowholes pulsed and spat brine. Bulging sphincters released nauseous-looking clouds.

Worse—far worse than the staring eyes—were the long, deep lacerations on their slick flesh. Each filled with jagged, misshapen teeth, white as bone and as long as a man's arm: mouths formed where wounds should be.

“They’re leagues around us, Captain. As far as the eye can see. We—”

She ignored Gideon's voice. One of the mouths twitched—then opened wider, forming an obscene parody of a smile.

The sound it issued was a monstrous, ungodly moan—yet somehow, words came clearly to her ears.

“Thomasina.”

Oh God. She flinched awake. Thomasina had fallen asleep at the wheel, her head and upper body slumped against its moisture-slicked surface. She straightened and pulled her hands free.

Falling asleep at her post. She'd have flogged a man for less. Thomasina wiped her hands on her wool coat and retook the wheel.

The nightmare though... it wasn't far from the reality surrounding her ship. Mist flanked *The Nancy* on every side, and had for two days now.

It brought shame to a captain, to be this lost

at sea. But, without the horizon or the sky to guide them, they were blind in this cloying, ever-present fog.

Their compasses were dead. The stars, when they peeked through the mist disappeared so quickly, they did nothing but taunt her and her crew.

The sky, she thought, and called up to her man posted in the foremast's crow's nest.

"Black Bob, you spy anything out there?" Her voice echoed across the deck, rebounding off the mist.

"Nothing, Captain," the man called back. "Nothing but the white."

The crew will think we're cursed. She shook her head and turned to examine the dark shadows shifting across the quarterdeck.

"Helmsman Jonas? You there to take the

wheel?” Beyond the pole-mounted telescopes on port and starboard, a shape stirred in the darkness.

Jonas shuffled forward. His face, small and pale, rose above the collar of his thick coat. His Monmouth cap was pulled low over his forehead.

“Sorry, Captain. Nodded off a little.”

Jonas was an old friend—he’d been at her side since the death of the previous Captain Collins, her husband. If the crew ever decided she was unfit to lead, took a vote to oust her, he’d still be her man.

“Just going for a walk, Jonas. Keep your eyes clear.”

Thomasina stepped around the wheel, reached the stairs to the main deck, and descended.

Her destination was the forecastle, where the two prisoners were kept.

Everything had been fine—until they came aboard. As she walked, Thomasina recalled the day they'd raided that ship.

They'd boarded after tossing stinkpots onto the deck, meant to confuse and incapacitate the enemy. Her men had set about killing some of the enemy just to curtail any rebellion. She shuddered.

Those gray-faced, hunched men hadn't uttered a word during the attack—no cries of terror, no begging for mercy. It had felt ill-fated from the start.

And the ship's hold? A cursed place—waterlogged up to the ankles. Barrels of rotting fish lined the space; large, purple worms had squirmed inside their guts.

Huge albino crabs wandered that hold, clacking their claws as they peered at her from the shadows.

She stepped around the ship's longboat. The forecastle door lay just beyond.

Her two guests were there: dragged from their captain's cabin along with a chest of the strangest jewelry Thomasina had ever seen.

They should have sunk that ship—had cannons broadside its rotting bulk into the ocean. The only other loot—a few weapons and rusty tools—hardly seemed worth the effort.

The water stores were foul, the fish rotting. And what ship set sail without a single cask of alcohol?

As she neared the forecastle, she spotted a crewmember stationed at the door. For a

moment, Thomasina forgot who she'd placed there.

The man coughed loudly, a wet, painful sound. William Bell—she remembered now—had been suffering badly from the damp fog.

“William, go below. Get some sleep. Take a flask of wine if you fancy it—and wake Samuel to take over your shift.”

Bell crouched, almost doubled over. He rose unsteadily when she paused before him.

His face was a mass of wrinkles; his smile revealed a ruin of broken teeth.

“Captain?” He leaned close, voice low and conspiratorial.

She smelled alcohol on his breath—something she tolerated while they remained trapped in the fog.

“Yes, William?” Their faces were close

now—so close she could see the glint in his bright blue eyes.

“I’ve been hearing things. From inside the forecastle. Sounded like chanting, or singing—maybe worse. I think I heard congress.”

“Congress?” she repeated, not quite sure what he meant.

“Fucking, Captain,” he said—so close his hot breath touched her cheek. “Sinful things. I swear by God.”

Thomasina scowled. “They’re brother and sister!” The mere thought curdled her stomach. She backed from Bell.

“Go. Do what I said—and tell no one. You hear me? I’ll have you flogged if you breathe a word of this.”

“But...” His voice was a whine.

“Go, William Bell. Get some sleep. Forget what you think you heard.”

“Captain,” he murmured, then loped off into the mist. She briefly watched him, then turned to the door.

Blasphemous. Disgusting. She’d heard of such aristocratic filth before—but never between brother and sister. If the crew discovered this... they’d think God’s wrath had placed them in this limbo of damp fog. They’d want blood. And if she did not let them? Her position as captain might become precarious.

Thomasina hammered on the door. “Captain coming in,” she announced. She reached into her coat and drew out the key.

Apprehensive now, she found the keyhole, slid in the key, and turned it. Her unease grew

as she stepped inside—a cabin illuminated by dull light.

Her eyes squinted as she scanned the room. What was she expecting? Fornication?

The brother, Archibald, lay asleep on a hammock strung between two wooden beams. To his right, Abitha sat at a table; her own hammock hung nearby, stretched between the table and a wooden beam.

She wore a long, flowery gown with a blue jacket over that, a white coif covering her jet-black hair. Her brother had on blue breeches, a green jerkin, and doublet. His shoes and socks were missing, his skinny legs pale in the candlelight.

Thomasina had interrupted Abitha reading from a small, blue velvet-bound book. The girl closed it and looked up, her large green eyes

as innocent as her expression.

Thomasina slammed the door shut and Archibald groaned in his sleep.

There was nothing insidious here. If they had been copulating, then where—against the table like rutting beasts?

Abitha's gaze turned curious. Thomasina strode forward.

“Enjoying your accommodations?” she asked, halting at the center of the cabin.

Archibald and Abitha Waite. Two members of a wealthy Innsmouth family. Their ship had sailed from that damned town and, by rumor, spent some time in the South Seas. Had Thomasina known it was an Innsmouth ship, she might have left it alone. Too late now.

The pair were twins: eyes set a little too far

apart, the matching moles on their left cheeks. Still, the girl was a beauty—at least in Thomasina's eyes.

“I don't believe I have an option concerning my accommodations.” Abitha said in a quiet, childlike voice. She eyed Thomasina up and down condescendingly. “And your question is undoubtedly a rhetorical one.”

This threw Thomasina off a little. Prisoners should show some fear—even the privileged who knew their safety was guaranteed once their ransom was paid.

“What are you reading?” Thomasina asked, resisting the sudden urge to stride forward and slap the girl across the face.

“Oh, I'm reading prayers. Prayers my church taught us. The Esoteric Order of

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Dagon.”

Thomasina knew the name. Based exclusively in Innsmouth, it gave prayers to the ocean in a far from God-fearing manner. The church was wealthy, however. The gold they'd looted from the twins' ship proved that.

“Would you like to pray with me?” Abitha asked, her voice and expression filled with disdain.

Thomasina fought violence again. *Drag the little bitch out and spank her on the deck.*

Archibald groaned and muttered in his sleep.

Thomasina and Abitha both turned to stare at him.

“Seasickness,” Abitha said with a sigh.
“Such a failure for an Innsmouth man.”

“Your people,” Thomasina said, turning

back to the girl. “will pay heavily for your safe return.”

Abitha grinned, revealing a mouth of small, gray, decaying teeth. “My future husband will deal with this personally, I assure you.” A small chortle left Abitha’s lips. “How are your dreams, Captain Collins?”

Thomasina felt her face redden. She went to step forward. Instead, she changed her mind and left the cabin.

The encounter with Abitha had unnerved Thomasina more than she cared to admit.

Having returned to her cabin with a cloud hovering over her—thicker and darker than the ever-present fog—she had left Helmsman Jonas at the wheel. *Capable hands. Capable man*, she thought as she strode around her

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cabin, the floorboards creaking at her every step.

She cursed Innsmouth with every step—cursed her luck at encountering one of its ships.

Her ship, *The Saucy Nancy*, prowled the length and breadth of the New England coast hunting for plunder—where they'd encountered the ship with no flag and no name, bound for Innsmouth.

“Damn them to hell.”

Thomasina felt happier after the outburst.

Not only that, she'd caught sight of the small chest beneath her dresser. She knelt beside the dresser and pulled the chest out.

It had a musty, decaying odor to it. Tiny splinters came off in her hand at the touch. The iron ribs bracing the chest were spotted with

orange, flaking rust. It creaked loudly as she opened it, releasing more rotten musk.

Thomasina smiled at the contents—lustrous gold ingots, coins with fish stamped on their faces... The chest's jewelry, the ruby and emerald studded bracelets and tiaras, bore delicate yet hideous sea monster motifs. These reminded her of her nightmare, but she did not let it ruin her mood. There was a fortune of gold and jewels here, one she would sell as soon as they escaped the fog and reached the comfort of dry land.

She pressed her hands into the hoard, felt the gold and jewels tingle against her skin. She pulled free a tiara, lifting it so the gold sparkled in the lamplight—three ruby eyes glinting like blood. The tiara's front section was shaped like a mass of twisted devilfish

tentacles. Such a queer size though, this crown, far too small for her head at least. Yet she wanted to place it atop her head. She fought the urge and dropped it back into the chest. She stood then and kicked the chest back under the dresser.

It was worth it, she told herself, yet didn't feel convinced.

If only the fog would lift. If only they had stars to steer by.

Thomasina walked to her coat rack, unbuckled her belt, removed her coat and hat, and hung them up. Then, she pulled her boots off and climbed into her hammock.

Perhaps rest would ease her mood.

PART TWO

Thomasina's sleep was thankfully dreamless, though her awakening was a rude one. An insistent rapping against her cabin door startled her awake.

The memory of the other day's dream returned. It had started just like this.

"I'm coming," she replied to the repeated knocks. Climbing from her hammock, she quickly pulled her boots on.

As Thomasina headed for the door, a sudden trepidation made her change direction. She went to her coat rack, retrieved her coat, and shrugged into it. Then she removed her sword belt and tightened it around her waist. She noted the brace of pistols on the rack, nodded, and dropped them over her shoulder.

The weight was a comfort. The rapping came again —more insistent, more urgent. She rushed forward and pulled the door open, wary of what awaited her outside.

William Bell stood there, an expression of fear on his wrinkled features.

It was not the fear of disturbing her; the blanched pallor of his usually drink-ruddied cheeks told her that. And he appeared surprisingly sober—not a good sign.

“Bill—”

“Come swiftly, Captain,” he said, then headed away from her across the quarterdeck.

“What in all hell?” Thomasina was quick behind him.

She grimaced as she passed the abandoned wheel. Where was Jonas? How long had she slept, anyway? As she headed down the steps,

she saw a crowd on the main deck, gathered before the ship's longboat.

Bell paused before the crowd. As she neared him, she saw First Mate Ashby Jenkins at their forefront.

Mutiny? No!

Bell shuffled uncertainly in her presence. From the corner of her eye, she saw Helmsman Jonas rushing over from portside, a rifle in his hands.

“Got your back, Captain,” he said upon reaching her.

Jenkins held a sword in one hand and a flintlock in the other. He was also staggering—very drunk or getting there. His glare was steady, however, his beady eyes glinting. Thomasina had three pistols in her brace, two of which she retrieved. She pointed

the one in her right hand squarely at Jenkins.

“The bitch is here!” he said with a cackle.

“Is this to be a mutiny, then, Ashby Jenkins?” Thomasina kept her voice level, hiding her fear.

She felt Jonas lay his rifle on her shoulder. Like her, he was aiming at Jenkins.

A commotion distracted her. It was Second Mate Barnaby Collins, dragging the twins across the deck toward the crowd.

Archibald looked confused. He had welts on his face, his clothes in disarray. His sister was unmolested, but her cheeks were streaked in tears.

“You see? You see the cause of this terror?” Jenkins said in a gloating tone. “They have been making ungodly congress with each other. Ha ha! Should have known—from these

Innsmouth devils.”

The rebellious crew gasped. Some cackled.

“You all with him then, you traitorous bastards?” A few of the crew looked away. Good. They were undecided.

Thomasina aimed her other flintlock at Collins. “Damn you, William Bell. Couldn’t keep your mouth shut,” she said from the side of her mouth.

“I’m sorry, Captain,” he mumbled.

“Captain knew. Captain did nothing,” Jenkins continued. He was certainly enjoying himself. “Doomed us all to nightmares and this white limbo.” He waved his free hand to starboard, indicating the mist still licking at the ship.

“Sorry,” Bell whispered in her left ear.

Thomasina took a deep breath. “Are you

challenging me as captain, Jenkins?”

Laughs and jeers issued from the crowd.

“Jonas, on my mark,” she whispered.

Jenkins pulled a face—mock sadness. “Oh, do I hurt your feelings, lassie?”

“On my mark, Jonas. Take the swine’s head off.”

Then, she had another thought and switched her attention to the twins.

“True, I did not believe Bell’s drunken ramblings. So I shall deal with this cursed pair before you all. Back away, Barnaby Collins, or the lead will find your body along with these demons.”

Collins grinned widely. He gave her a nod and released the pair. The twins slumped to the deck. Archibald fell face down onto the wood.

She returned her attention to Jenkins. He

looked less confident with himself, and his gun arm wavered.

“Kill him, Captain!” someone shouted.

This was followed by laughter, and “Kill him, Captain!” from others.

Oh, how their loyalties waver, she thought. But first—

She scrutinized the prisoners. There was a puddle of blood around Archibald’s face, seeping into the deck. Abitha was on her knees, staring down.

And... was she laughing?

The laughter became a scream—so piercing it stung Thomasina’s ears. The men nearest Abitha covered their ears, looks of distress filling their faces.

The girl’s screech was like nothing Thomasina had heard before. While moaning,

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cursing men stumbled away from the twins, Thomasina aimed her flintlock at the girl's head. Lead shot would put an end to her ungodly hollers.

A moment later, the ship lurched heavily, sending Thomasina staggering forward—her men too.

Run aground? Attacked by another ship?

As Thomasina gained her footing, she realized *The Nancy* was still moving—and slightly suspended from the water, as if something had rammed the stern.

First Mate Gideon appeared at her side, steadying her.

Thomasina said, “Thank you,” then shouted, “We are under attack! Head to stern—repel the boarders!”

She saw men scuttling around in confusion,

more with swords and pistols in their hands, following her orders.

Then she looked down, found the now silent Abitha gazing up, her expression filled with maleficent glee.

“See! My husband comes for me.” That mocking, bold expression disgusted Thomasina. “Perhaps he will be your husband too!”

Abitha started laughing. Thomasina, enraged, kicked her in the face. Then she turned to face the stern.

Nebulous shapes moved there—her men, most surely, but also something else. Something larger. Thomasina shoved her pistols into her belt, drew her sword, and charged forward.

Shouts and screams reached her ears as she

mounted the quarterdeck steps. Thomasina hoped the latter came from the attackers, not her own crew, for those screams were bloodcurdling.

Jonas, ever loyal, joined her. The movements and sounds were much closer now.

“What is happening up there?” Jonas asked.

Thomasina had no answer.

A hurried dash across the quarterdeck followed, up the steps to the poop deck. As she mounted the deck, the fog cleared—unmercifully.

She released a choked gasp and lowered her sword as all strength departed her limbs.

Jonas screamed and fled back down the steps.

Part of Thomasina wanted to join him. *This* was no ship—but damned it, she wished it were.

The abomination—a giant, ungodly thing—was taller than the top mast. A mass of black, liquid horror, it was covered in eyes and mouths, and other organs less recognizable. Writhing tentacles held around half a dozen screaming men. More crewmembers lay beneath it on the poop deck—some dead and broken, others on their knees. Were they praying to God, or this thing from hell? Three of her crew had better luck and were slashing at it with their swords.

Thomasina went to go forward but found her legs immovable.

Fear. Fear overwhelmed her. The fine hairs stood up on the back of her neck. A low whine

escaped her mouth—something involuntary. It was no way to act for a supposed leader of men.

Are you predator or prey, Captain Collins? she asked herself.

Thomasina gulped, shook her head, and stepped forward.

“Anyone who can hear me, man the cannons,” she yelled. “Just fire—fire! Every able-bodied man join me... NOW! Hack it down, blow it to pieces!”

A new sound left her mouth—not a whine, but a roar. She sheathed her sword as she ran towards horror unbound.

Thomasina slid the flintlocks from her belt. She did not waver, not even when the abomination’s shifting surface produced a gigantic eye—green, bigger than her, bigger

than a dining table. The pupil was huge, black, and horizontal. It scrutinized her as she charged, widened as she raised her flintlocks.

The boom of the guns filled Thomasina's ears, surrounded her with powder smoke. The eye popped with a loud *crack*, sending foul black liquid hissing across the deck. She skidded to a halt on the befouled boards, dropped the empty guns, and withdrew her sword and last flintlock.

The abomination shook, roared from a hundred mouths—a foghorn bellow that wracked her ears with pain. Its sudden movements made the ship lurch.

Pistol and rifle fire sang around her. The rest of the crew had obviously rallied.

The abomination's eye was gone. In its place, a charnel-red chasm led to darkness.

Thomasina ran toward it, sword raised with grim intent.

She saw something roll toward her from the chasm. The next moment, she was flying through the air, tumbling backward toward the main deck.

A massive red tongue had struck her—a slimy, flickering thing thick with purple veins.

She hit the deck hard, banging her head. Lights flashed before her eyes as stabbing pain tore through her body.

“Uh.” She tried getting to her feet, but failed. Slumping back, she reached for her head. It felt wet. The dark shapes of the sails swayed in and out of focus above her.

By some miracle, she still gripped her sword, but her flintlock was gone.

A pair of hands pulled her up. Dazed and

dizzy, Thomasina took account of her situation.

Of all her men, it was Jenkins helping her to her feet. He smiled, nodded.

She had no time to thank him, for two men were dragging Abitha past her.

“Feed her to the Devil!” Jenkins heckled.

This time, Thomasina didn’t disagree.

“Follow me,” she ordered.

Composing herself, she rushed after the trio on unsteady legs.

The ship lurched again—this time, the impact came from the bow, followed by the loud crunch of distressed wood.

My ship. No!

Everyone on the main deck staggered. She used their disorientation to catch up.

“Step aside, Simon. Gawen. I’ll take the

girl from here.”

There was no resistance. Abitha appeared dazed, her face bloody from the nose down. Whether this was from her earlier assault or something else, Thomasina did not care. She seized the girl by the collar and dragged her forward.

Another impact rocked the deck. Unperturbed, Thomasina pulled the girl up the steps like a sleepwalker.

She dragged her prisoner's stumbling form onto the quarterdeck, then toward the poop deck. The crew had stopped shouting and firing, making this section of ship eerily silent. The clearing mist revealed the abomination in full monstrous glory—closer now, its horrible leprous bulk having mounted the poop deck.

Its hideous lack of solidity took Thomasina

aback. Of the men recently battling it, there was no sign.

Oh, sweet Jesus. All gone.

The eye had returned—or perhaps it was a new one. It stared with inhuman malice. The mouths surrounding it gibbered silently. Tentacles thrashed the deck.

A commotion of footsteps told her the men from the main deck had followed.

“Stay back!” Thomasina ordered. She pulled the girl to her chest, raised her sword to her throat.

“Do you understand me, beast? Sea devil?” she shouted. “Call off your attack or you’ll get a bride without a head!”

Thomasina meant it. She pressed her sword hard against the girl’s prone throat, finally eliciting a yelp.

“Save me, Father Dagon,” Abitha whimpered.

Did it understand? The behemoth’s tentacles seemed to waver. The thrashing subsided to something less violent.

“You *do* understand me, don’t you?”

The monster started to back off. Its massive form shifted slowly from the deck, leaving behind a trail of noxious-looking green slime.

“Captain!” said a panting voice. Gideon. She didn’t turn. Her eyes stayed locked on the retreating horror, sword still pressed against the limp girl’s neck.

“Bowsprit and forecastle. Completely crushed. She’s going down for sure.”

So the damned devil had pinned them against some rocks or reef, killing her ship. An overwhelming sadness replaced her fear.

My ship. My heart. What shall I do?

All thoughts and feelings were quashed suddenly as *The Nancy*'s stern began to drop. The abomination's weight—or removal of it—was sending her down, hard.

“Everybody back away!” Thomasina yelled. “Abandon ship. Launch the longboat and get yourselves upon it!”

She only hoped enough men were left even to do so.

The abomination retreated into the fog's remnants. Subdued, it left her with a sinking ship—and a crew in their watery graves or, worse, rotting away in its foul belly.

They launched the longboat at around the same time the abomination departed the ship. Twelve men out of forty-two had survived—

not including her and their female prisoner.

Of Abitha's brother, Thomasina did not know. Did not care.

The fog had completely lifted as they abandoned ship.

Now, some minutes later, Thomasina watched her venerable ship sinking hard to stern. Half of her was underwater now, the rest protruding from the sea from the main deck forwards=.

The abomination had rammed them into Innsmouth's Devil's Reef.

Ironic really. Losing the ship there. Probably not by accident.

Thomasina shed a tear, watching the hungry black waves swallow her ship and her livelihood.

At least she—and what remained of her

crew: Gideon, Jenkins, and a handful of others—had their lives.

“Destination, Captain?”

The words shook her from her trance. Helmsman Jonas had addressed her. *Good man. A survivor.* He stood opposite her at the stern, a sentinel against the clear night sky.

“Steer her to port—toward Falcon Point.”

That way, they’d give Innsmouth a wide berth. Then she’d have them row inland, toward Ipswich.

Innsmouth. *Cursed place!*

This thought turned her gaze to their prisoner.

Sat to starboard, crouched, arms and legs tightly trussed. All their lives depended on Abitha’s continued presence.

“Abitha,” she said. “Your Order of

Dagon—it must have deep pockets, yes?”

The girl had been staring downward, her expression sullen. She looked up, eyes fiery, her expression one of disgust.

“You already have our gold,” she said, and glared at the space between Thomasina’s feet.

Thomasina leaned forward.

Oh, my lord. The gold! The jewels!

The old, crumbling chest had been shoved under her seat. Perhaps some mutinous bastard had stashed it there during the chaos. She hadn’t seen anyone carrying it during their panicked exodus from the ship.

“Bless you, you mutinous dog—whoever you are.”

Footsteps distracted her from the chest. It was Jonas, walking across the deck toward her spot at the bow.

He sat himself to port, facing the Innsmouth girl.

She was a fine ship,” he said, smiling sadly.

Thomasina nodded. “That she was, Jonas. That she was.”

Farther away now, *The Saucy Nancy* had sunk down to the forecastle. Soon, it would be the forepeak—and then?

Then she would be home to the fishes.

The fishes...and the other ungodly things that roamed the black waters beneath Devil's Reef.

Despite her sorrow, Thomasina smiled. She had treasure enough to sail again.

But never again these waters.

Not for all the gold in Innsmouth.