

The Quamblass Ch.1

First 10 Pages

written by

ND Warren

EXT. ATLANTIC - DAY

A FOG dances on the surface of the water beneath a 900ft long and 53,000 ton cruise ship, the COLUMBUS.

EXT. DECK - COLUMBUS - DAY

PASSENGERS mindlessly admire the PURPLE SKIES and GREEN LIGHTNING approaching on the horizon.

INT. BRIDGE - COLUMBUS - DAY

The CREW is scrambling. DALE, the FIRST MATE barks.

DALE

All hands! All hands on deck.

The bustle quiets as a well-groomed and tightly wound CAPTAIN JULIUS QUAMBLASS makes his entrance. He chomps on a pipe adorned with SEA MONSTERS.

QUAMBLASS

Report.

DALE

Black squall on the horizon, Cap.  
But we can steer clear if we divert  
course.

QUAMBLASS

No one's diverting course.

The crew exchange looks.

DALE

(hushed)  
But the Triangle...

QUAMBLASS

We're not losing our timeline, Mr.  
Dale, not while I'm captain.  
(to the rest of them)  
All of ye crew calm yer-selves! Ye  
have me word, there be NO cause for  
alarm.

A SONIC BOOM shakes the bridge.

EXT. SKY - DAY

In the sky above the stern of the ship, the BOOM blasts the CLOUDS APART. Semi-translucent and iridescent ELDRITCH TENTACLES reach from its BEYOND.

EXT. - DECK - DAY

The tentacles spread out and invade the ship, seeking out fleeing passengers, ripping out their SOULS and discarding their HUSKS where they stood. The ship drowns in SCREAMS.

INT. BRIDGE - COLUMBUS - DAY

One of the tentacles barges into the bridge and sucks out the soul of a CREWMAN.

QUAMBLASS

OK, sound the alarm. Have everyone confined to quarters. And close that door.

Dale kicks the body out the doorway, then notices a message arriving through a SERIES OF TUBES connecting the ship.

DALE

Cap, we just received an emergency communique from-- the galley?

Quamblass furrows his brow and looks at the MESSAGE written in red "ink," beneath it, a mysterious OUROBORUS-LOOKING symbol. The SOUNDS fade away as fear grips him:

**TURN BACK NOW!**

DALE (CONT'D)

Captain?

Quamblass flips the paper over and sees the other side is a form asking CHICKEN or SEA BASS. Quamblass toughens up.

QUAMBLASS

Sea Bass.

DALE

What, sir?

QUAMBLASS

Full steam ahead, Mr. Dale!

Dale pushes the LEVER forward. Anachronistic MUSIC picks up over the flicker of an OPENING CREDITS MONTAGE in the style of a silent film--

EXT. SHIPYARD - NEW ORLEANS - DAY (B/W MOS)

Passengers line up to get on board, onlookers wave from the shore, crewman and porters perform their duties; all juxtaposed against flashes of SEA MONSTERS, FISHFOLK, and ELDER THINGS.

Among the passengers are two that stand out-- JAIME BOYMANN, the Scientist, a woman with a fake mustache, dressed as a mad scientist concealing their identity. She uses a handcart to lug her 4ftx7ft MYSTERY CRATE with a TWO DUCKS LOGO.

Behind Boymann is ARTHUR SCHLOSS, the Psychiatrist, an unremarkably diminutive and bespectacled man. The music ENDS and the world saturates from black and white to color.

EXT. SHIPYARD - NEW ORLEANS - DAY (COLOR, SOUND)

Schloss waits impatiently as Boymann pushes her box up to the gangplank. SLOWLY. The TICKET OFFICER waits.

TICKET OFFICER

Name?

BOYMANN

Boymann.

The ticket officer is suspicious.

TICKET OFFICER

First name?

BOYMANN

Jaime.

TICKET OFFICER

Your name is... Jaime Boymann?

BOYMANN

That's me.

The ticket officer finds Boymann's name on the list.

TICKET OFFICER

Do you have a passport--?

The ticket officer takes the passport and sure enough-- The name matches the photo. He gives it back to her.

TICKET OFFICER (CONT'D)  
 You know there's no law against a  
 woman travelling alone.

BOYMANN  
 Ha! There ought to be, the filthy  
 vectors.

Boymann proceeds to lug the crate toward the plank.

EXT. GANGPLANK - NEW ORLEANS - LATER

Boymann pushes the crate forward painfully slow ahead of  
 Schloss. When it wobbles and nearly falls off, Schloss pipes  
 up in his Austrian accent--

SCHLOSS  
 Perhaps I could assist?

Boymann scoffs at Schloss' weak physique.

BOYMANN  
 No thanks, Muscles.

SCHLOSS  
 I'm sorry?

BOYMANN  
 I said, eat me, *Sauerkraut*. The  
 only bodies that touch my  
 instruments are dead ones.

SCHLOSS  
 You know they have separate lines  
 for large storage.

BOYMANN  
 What is your affliction, Fritz?  
 Besides chronic morning cum-breath?

SCHLOSS  
 I'm just trying to get to London.  
 Here I'll lift this side.

Schloss puts his hands on Boymann's crate. Wrong move.

BOYMANN  
 Hands off the crate, von Shitsmark!

Boymann's mustache flaps loose.

SCHLOSS  
 Your um...

Schloss gestures. Boymann flattens her mustache in a hurry.

SCHLOSS (CONT'D)

It's nothing to be ashamed of. I'm actually an *abnormal* behavior psychiatrist. Are you at all familiar with the Greek myth of Hermaphroditus--

Enraged, Boymann grabs Schloss by the collar and VIOLENTLY headbutts him in the nose. Then she pushes him off the plank into the water. The crowd looks at Boymann, quizzically. She shrugs.

BOYMANN

Germans.

The crowd cheers.

CROWD

USA! USA!

EXT. WATER - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Schloss wades to shore. A friendly dark skinned hand reaches down to help. Schloss looks up and sees JOHN RUTGER, the Explorer, scruffy around the edges yet inexcusably handsome and confident.

RUTGER

Doctor Schloss, I presume. You look like we could use a drink.

Schloss reaches up and takes Rutger's hand.

EXT. SHIPYARD - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Rutger and Schloss cross the gangplanks toward the ship.

RUTGER

First scrap with a pygmy?

SCHLOSS

Little devil gave me a sucker butt.

RUTGER

First pygmy sucker butt?

SCHLOSS

When you phrase it like that.

They enter. The focus shifts to show the entire ship.

SCHLOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
How did you know who I am?

RUTGER (O.S.)  
You're infamous, don't you know.

The SHIP bustles in lines of passengers and crew. From this distance it looks like an anthill.

EXT. THE COLUMBUS - DAY

The Ship pulls out of the shipyard toward the wide open sea.

INT. THE COUNTESS' QUARTERS - COLUMBUS - DAY

Schloss holds a glass as Rutger pours him WHISKEY. Schloss wears a bandage over his broken bleeding nose. He's still dripping wet and shivering.

RUTGER  
I'm a big fan of your articles. I think more people should take your advice.

SCHLOSS  
Those weren't really meant for broad consumpt--When. When. When!

RUTGER  
Sorry I'm deaf in that ear. A walrus thought I was edging in on his harem.

Rutger shows off a gnarly SCAR that runs up the side of his scalp, then throws his glass back and inhales the liquid. Schloss notices Rutger's PISTOL in a shoulder-holster, then sips his shot gingerly as Rutger pours himself another.

SCHLOSS  
You're John Rutger aren't you? The explorer?

RUTGER  
Last time I shaved. What's the matter? You don't like whiskey?

SCHLOSS  
I'm more of a beer drinker.

RUTGER  
How about tea?

SCHLOSS  
Please! *Bitte*.

Rutger pours a steaming cup of TEA. Schloss drinks it.

SCHLOSS (CONT'D)  
Very bitter. Didn't you lead an expedition to the South Pole?

RUTGER  
The *first* expedition as a matter of fact, but no one told me I had to bring a flag and a goddamn Royal Geographic film crew.

Schloss laughs politely at Rutger's joke. But it wasn't a joke. Rutger continues.

RUTGER (CONT'D)  
Eleven people died on that trip.

Schloss loses his smile.

SCHLOSS  
Sometimes it's not healthy to dwell on the past--

RUTGER  
Don't get me wrong. I didn't care for most of them. Better off dead, I say. But Betsy was different. Betsy was made of stronger stuff. She pulled her weight, didn't whine. Made you laugh. Made you fall in love. She was too good for the rest of us, didn't deserve what we did to her. But it was survival. At least that's what we told ourselves. I can still hear her whimpering. I swear to God we didn't know she was pregnant.

SCHLOSS  
Well, I think it's wonderful you can afford a cabin like this. You're like a modern-day Pizarro.

RUTGER  
Yeah muy bizarro.

SCHLOSS  
No, Pizarro, as in the Spanish conquistador--?



Rutger lets out a puff of smoke from a bongpipe made from a hominid skull, then passes it to Rutger.

SCHLOSS (CONT'D)  
Oh, I don't smoke tobacco.

RUTGER  
It's not tobacco--

SCHLOSS  
Oh, well then...

Schloss takes the bong and starts puffing, coughing. Rutger sits down and takes a sip of the tea.

RUTGER  
...It's salvia.

Schloss falls back into his chair he looks at his cup.

SCHLOSS  
What's in the tea?

RUTGER  
Just poppies. Psilocybin mushrooms.  
And some venom from an amphibian  
that'll make you see God.

SCHLOSS  
Oh. Ok...

Schloss drifts off, still dripping WET. Following a DROPLET.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

The droplet falls off Schloss' arm. He looks up to find he's in an extravagant room. His nose lacks any bandage. MOVING PORTRAITS on the wall are missing faces, as are most of the GUESTS sitting at the table.

The only one whose face becomes clear is Rutger-- He's stuffing his mouth, eating from the CENTERPIECE ENTRE, a MERMAID. At the head of the table sits the Captain, Dale the first mate, and the COUNTESS-- all with blank features.

RUTGER  
Dig in, Schloss, there's plenty.

Closing in on the mermaid, Schloss finds its top is Boymann with her mustache.

BOYMANN

What are you looking at, Herr  
Doctor? Eat me.

The mermaid takes Schloss' head and buries it into her pelvic scales. His head is lost in the open fish cavity. She begins speaking in Schloss' accent.

BOYMANN (CONT'D)

Eat me, you pathetic piece of shit!

INT. QUARTERS- COLUMBUS - TWILIGHT (END DREAM SEQUENCE)

Schloss wakes up with his face inside his shirt. He pulls it out like a turtle emerging from his shell. His shirt is DRY.

SCHLOSS

How long have we been sitting here?

Rutger looks at his POCKETWATCH--

RUTGER

30 seconds.

SCHLOSS

How am I so dry?

Rutger snorts a line of cocaine and passes Schloss a fancy tray with lines of cocaine.

RUTGER

I found the cocaine.

SCHLOSS

Oh thank God. I need to sober up.

Schloss leans in.

EXT. ATLANTIC - NIGHT

Closing in on the cruise ship, a MOTOR-BOAT bounces in its wake. At the boat's helm is a hooded FIGURE.

EXT. COLUMBUS - NIGHT

The motor boat comes alongside the ship. A rope ladder is lowered and the hooded figure ascends.

EXT. DECK - COLUMBUS - NIGHT

At the top of the railing, a well-dressed ATTORNEY waits. The attorney gives the hooded one a suitcase and heads over the side of the ship to the motorboat.

As the hooded figure makes her way to the Countess' cabin. The sky SHIFTS from night to a twilight purple. She doesn't notice the GREEN LIGHTNING on the horizon when she enters the cabin.

INT. THE COUNTESS' QUARTERS - COLUMBUS - TWILIGHT

Schloss finishes a line when the hooded figure reveals herself-- the COUNTESS KATERINA DE LA CRUZ.

CRUZ

Aye coño! What are you doing here?

RUTGER

Hello, Kate. This is---

CRUZ

Aye, don't "Hello Kate" me, cabron!  
What are you doing in my cabin?

SCHLOSS

Your cabin? I'm so sorry.

RUTGER

I'm trying to explain--

CRUZ

And are those my *drugs*?!

SCHLOSS

We must have the wrong room!

Schloss moves for the door.

RUTGER

No, stop.

CRUZ

(in Spanish)

*Do you know what would happen if my  
husband found you in my cabin?*

Rutger calmly FIRES a shot into a pillow. Everyone stops. Schloss turns and sees Rutger pointing the pistol.