

—SPORTING THE WATERS OF THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

by Greggard Penance

Speculative Zone 28.499 N / 67.583 W

There is no sense of time or locale, just the sway of the boat to the ocean's violent fit. The water swells, pushes the craft up and bursts over the port side, then recedes, pulling it back. The shipmates keep their feet apart for balance, grab hold of rails, poles or equipment until it passes. Between these bursts, they move around, pause, anticipating the next jolt.

The midday sun washes the deck, but clouds tower in the distance to the front and port side. They stretch up from the horizon in deep streaks of charcoal and grey that split the day like the shadowed ridges of a canyon.

Blue light flickers across that blackness and charges the water, leaving a dome-shaped glow. Momentarily it is washed out by an outline of brilliant orange, which is followed by lime green. This bizarre electric storm has been brewing and becoming more pronounced as our boat approaches.

I have a full view of the port side and most of the bow. The captain's helm stands tall atop the bow, obscured from my sight by the edges of the rectangular slit that I've been given to see through. Across the deck stands another crate, I think the same size as mine.

A surge explodes over the rails. Mist roils the breeze and brushes across my viewing hole. My eyes should sting, but there is nothing. In fact, no sensation at all in my entire body, not even a tingle in my arms or legs. Perhaps the blood has constricted and my limbs have gone to sleep. Or worse, they might be dead. I'm confined so tight, it is as though I've been set in concrete to my nose. I'm also deaf. I can pick up their vibrations as the men shout at one another, but cannot hear them. Nor can I hear the storm.

The boat crew, burly men in rubber boots and raincoats, pace, industriously preparing. These are experienced seamen, who move with the boat as it responds to the swells that pound its port side.

During a calm moment, I study the other crate. Many rectangular holes in the side of it, and they are organized in precisely spaced columns and rows. These slits look to be the same as the one I view through, though I can't see what's behind them.

GREGGARD PENANCE

The way the sun is positioned, shadows cover whatever might be looking out.

Flashes of blue, green and orange light trade off overhead, spider webs etching the ridges of the storm and the fierce sea. A skirt of shade overtakes the boat, and stars abruptly pepper the sky. We have passed through a gateway from day to night in an instant. Clouds do not exist inside, yet the electrical storm tears through the heavy air, making for the only light to see by, and the swells grow heavier, rocking the boat still harder.

The ship hands scramble, hurried by the deteriorating conditions. It is unclear what they are setting up, or what for. A powerful wave breaks over the side and one man is knocked over. The crewman gets up quickly and grabs onto a rail to brace for the next surge.

The boat changes direction, heads on into the swells. The men open cases, pull out equipment. It is somewhat recognizable, but I just can't place it. Memory of my own life is not only gone, but any education that would otherwise spur recognition of objects and activities seems to be damaged as well.

A violent flash of orange casts blinding light on the ship and illuminates the other crate. As the boat veers toward the center of the storm, the holes in the crate are angled to catch the light.

A massive swell appears ahead. The nose of the boat rises upward, and the hull rocks from side to side from the force. The men keep their legs apart, each bracing their stance as the surge of sea moves under. My box slides on the deck with the roll of the boat, changing my viewpoint. I can no longer see the bow, but instead the stern, though the other crate remains in my sightline.

The ship glows as orange lightning strikes nearby, and brightness washes over me. Consciousness flutters and something smothers my vision—I swoon.

Open eyes, vision gone. Brief blackness, then outlines appear. The hazy image like a Polaroid photo developing...

...through a window—no—a rearview mirror, a windshield. Night. Streetlights illuminate parked cars. Coming up on the lot, a building behind it, fluorescent with artificial light beaming up from below; a church with a tall steeple. Recognize the bell tower, the windows, the entrance. Come to an intersection, cannot read the cross-street sign but can recall what will be next. Cross the intersection, no more street lights. Narrowing road lined only by trees. The curves wind around in the blackness; can only see two lanes, the broken yellow dashes, and the thick line of trees along the shoulder. A charm dangles from the rearview mirror. It swings along as the car leans one way, then the next. Just enough light from the dash. Can see what's on the charm.

A woman and a young boy. Her name, Mindy, his, Stephen.

A pickup truck turns out in front, leaves no time to brake. The driver swerves to avoid being rear-ended, but too late. Brakes squeal. Smash into the right fender, bounce off toward the trees. Will hit the trees. A thought burbles up—"too fast". See Mindy and Stephen alone, devastated. Feel the loss, the wrenching...

...back. I leave wife and son with no warning; they are alone.

Bright blue light flickers from all around. I wonder if Mindy has any idea what has happened to me. Where I am.

The electrical storm has engulfed the boat. The water lights up and unnatural splashes ensue. Giant fish surging along the surface; sea foam burbling in brilliant colors, reflecting the lightning that etches the sky. Soon I see that it is not just in the