

ship, and so escaping to some foreign land. The whaler left her boats, and brought news of the state of the island to Valparaiso.

29th - Only one very sensible shock to-day. Perhaps the last undulations of the earthquake have worn themselves out. The deep partitions in the alluvial soil no longer churn out water and sand, becoming staunch and still, and I may only hope that the earth begins to heal itself and rumble no more.

I write at a quarter till midnight - Having woken from a troubling dream, I find myself unable to slumber. A certain restlessness ambles around my mind, pulling together the hazy fragments of my latest fantasy, and I believe it will not rest until I set them down into words- a naive idea, perhaps, but as my other companions still sleep and my thoughts intermingle, it is the nearest route of comfort for me to take.

In my dream, I wandered without aim upon a vast plain of sand. I could recognize it easily as the stretch of shore ripped from the sea's grasp, forced upwards by the earthquake to leave it bereft of the ocean. The moon shone bright above, its light casting a pallor across the darkened grains. At first, I beheld nothing but an unbroken desert, but quite suddenly, a glint of white flickered in the distance. Beneath the moonlight, I made out a huddled form, covered in a large shroud or veil, something bright and pale being carried in her hands. Why I knew she was a woman, I could not say, but nevertheless, she slowly and steadily strode over the dunes, leaving a trail of tracks not unlike those of the seabirds.

From that strange intuition sprung a fervent need to follow her. On legs unsettled by the tremors, I trailed after her, following the imprints in the silvered sand. As I did, the grains began to shift beneath my feet, not as an avalanche or quicksand does, but as though the whole of the plain floated upon the sea. The strange traveler continued unimpeded, as though this were a common occasion- but I suppose anything may seem mundane in the realm of dream.

Unwilling to let this dampen my spirits, I continued to follow, and in the course of my pursuit, felt a rumbling beneath me. Nearly forty feet away, a wooden pillar emerged from the sand, pushing upward like a sprout through the soft spring snow. Two others of its kind soon followed, perfectly aligned to each other, and I realized they were the masts of a truly substantial vessel. In the span of seconds, the rest of the ship rose up, riding the crests of the dunes back towards the bay. The sight transfixed me and I turned to watch its dry journey to port.

But it was never to be. Above, the moon trembled before turning dark, leaving only the stars to illuminate the land. In the next moment, dark thorny tendrils shot out to wrap around its hull, pulling it back to the site of its eruption. Though the ship made a valiant effort to escape, the barbs dug deep, ripping holes through until I could make out its innards, water-rotted and ridden with algae-caked bones. Only then did a truly substantial tentacle, as long and spiked as an elder pine, come up to make the final blow, coming down to split the ship in half. Its remains scattered across the dunes. Just as quickly as they appeared, the tendrils pulled the flotsam back beneath the sand, until the sands were clear, looking entirely undisturbed.

Stunned, I could only stare at the grey patch where these horrors occurred. I do not remember how long I remained frozen, but my trance was broken by a presence behind me. Turning, I came to face the woman who led me, but she was no woman I

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know of- her head was the skull of a boar, wrapped in a veil dark with what I could make out as blood. Her jaw clacked as piercing red eyes watched me through the empty sockets, and I understood at once that she drew me into this dream.

Terror indeed swept through me at the sight, yet as she held my gaze, I could not help but feel a sharp sorrow consume me. It was hers, yet it was also mine. It was that of all those left to survive the quakes which took their homes, their loved ones, their livelihoods. It dragged my heart downwards into those empty cold depths, past despair, ballasted by grief. In her outstretched hand purely made of white bone, she held-

I lack the words to describe it, save for the knowledge that if I had taken hold of it, I would no longer be. And as shameful it is to admit, the temptation to do so was frighteningly strong.

Yet I realized those feelings were ones I had borne before, past Cape Horn upon the Doris, by my husband's body. Even then, that same desire welled up from my soul, but I did not surrender to its pull. My resolve to come to this land and live amongst its people cannot be so easily broken, nor would I abandon them to bear the same crushing emotion alone.

So I refused her. And to my surprise, she made no further attempts to coerce me, instead turning back and continuing her journey across the shifting dunes, nor did I attempt to follow her. The sliver of a crescent moon slipped out from the darkened sky once more, settling the sands. For a moment, I pondered on the entity which lived deep beneath grains- of whether it desired to take hold of me as it did the ship, on the connection it held with the skull-woman, if it held a kind of responsibility for the earth-rending disturbance which devastated poor Valparaíso.

And it was in those thoughts that I awoke and set to recording what I experienced. Perhaps it was merely a fantasy conjured by my mind. As the painter said, the sleep of reason produces monsters. Yet, I cannot believe that no other such dangers exist beyond our ken, not while even the furthest depths of our natural home remain an enigma. A lesson of my own making, I suppose. But when the new moon comes again, I will know to turn away from the sea.

The insurrection of Brandt determined the government of Chile to abandon the settlement. The garrison was consequently withdrawn, the fort dismantled, and the place rendered as far as possible unfit for future inhabitants. Nevertheless, early this year the government of Chile published a manifesto, setting forth its claim to the place, and forbidding any persons whatsoever to settle there, or to kill the cattle, or take the wood of the island. After walking about a long time among the ruined cottages and gardens, I returned to the place where I left my companions, and found that the young men had pitched on a most charming spot for a dining room. Under the shade of two enormous fig-trees there is a little circular space bounded by a clear rivulet, which in its rapid descent bounds from stone to stone, and mixes its murmurs with those of the breeze and the distant ocean. Here I found Lord Cochrane and the rest seated round a table-cloth of broad fig-leaves covered with such provision as the ship afforded, eked out with fruit of the island hardly yet ripe. Our claret was cooled in a little linny in the stream, and the decorations of our bower were the rich foliage and fruit of the overhanging trees, and the flowers of the opposite bank, on which stands the castle, reflected in

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*Permissible to omit.*