



The Mystery

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Death is a mystery, and burial is a secret.

The summer my brother turned sixteen and got his boating license, fifty people were pulled dead from the Bermuda Triangle, and many others missing. I had heard it all over the morning news on TV but didn't think much of it. The shore was blocked off with bright neon tape, the flashing red and blue lights, policemen here and there. I remember I had once read a book about this. It was sometimes called the Devil's Triangle or Hurricane Alley, a region found in the western parts of the North Atlantic Ocean. The region is loosely defined, and it is known as the place where several ships and planes disappeared under inexplicable circumstances. My sister and I were always explorers, but as I read about this news again and again, it sparked an idea in my head. The Bermuda Triangle was my next destination.

As the clock hit six, our whole family gathered on the long refectory table, my grandma at one end, my grampa at the other, and the rest of us sitting along the table. I sat next to my brother, like always. The seats groaning as I pulled them open, cutlery rattling. I poked my brother on the arm, and I told him all about my idea. He seemed cooperative at first, but as I hinted that I was thinking about going there, that's where he drew the line. He didn't reply. Making an agreement with him was like getting blood out of a stone. I poked him again.

"No way! Okay?" He exclaimed.

Everyone looked up and stopped eating.

"What is going on..." Mum asked

"Kaci wants to go ---"

"To the town fair this Saturday" I should've told him this was a secret plan.

He looked at me. I looked at him. I read his eyes. He read my eyes. We were both silent.

"Town fair? We never go there. Our family is wealthy enough to afford to host our own party. We've got a huge clover-shaped mansion, a huge clover-shaped pool, and a magnificent garden. Oh, and I asked the maid to go out and buy some clover to plant in the garden."

Don't ask me what obsession my mum has with clover. I mean the whole reason she bought this house was not for the view, not for the space, not for kitchen, but for the shape of the house. I always knew my mum had a huge fantasy with these beliefs and 'lucky symbols', but to this extent?

After dinner, Matthew and I went upstairs to the attic to discuss this idea of mine.

I tried my best to persuade him. "Look. I thought you've always wanted to explore the unknown. And plus, many people have been around it, there's seriously no risk whatsoever. We're only going a couple kilometres out to sea."

"Okay. We're only going to sail a couple of kilometres out. No more. When do you want to go?"

"At night."

And so, I headed out at night at half past nine on the dot. The whole mansion was tacit and eerie; it was the silence of lambs. The floorboards creaking, the chandelier swaying, the cursed African statue chuckling. I pulled open the curtains, pulled open the sliding glass door. A cool breeze blew by, yet the trees stayed still as rock. I waited outside. It must've been twenty minutes but felt like 20 years when finally, Matthew turned up. He was wearing a hydrophobic top and pants, cotton socks with a navy-blue wetsuit underneath, carrying frog-like sailing gloves and black boots, drowning in colour.

"Where have you been?" I whispered

"I thought you said to meet at half past nine"

I looked at my Swiss made gold pocket watch. It was half past nine.

I stood there. Frozen.

"So..... what's the plan? Kaci? Kaci?"

"Oh right, the plan.." I felt delusional.

Matthew looked at me. "You okay? Do you still want to go?"

"Yeah, I'm fine, let's go."

We walked to the dock. It was a freezer. I just stood there, still delusional while Matthew got the boat ready. He placed the fenders at an optimal height on the boat, untied the bow and stern lines to the boat cleats.

He called out to me to hop in.

"We better aim to get back here by latest eleven o'clock."

"Sure." I checked my pocket watch. It was half past nine.

Matthew started the motor, and we were off.

We were around a few hundred metres out, when I felt a drop of water. Slowly, it turned into a storm. The storm had felt like a rumour, the sky was delivering. For a second, the lightning stuck. It was like a knife catching a glint of light and refracting it in multitude. The lightning split the whole sky in half, and in that moment, it was brighter than daylight. The rain was punishing us. A

few screams emerged from the distance, thunder crashes overhead. I could feel nothing but blind terror.

It was pitch black, and as I blinked my eyes, I found myself in this futuristic room with clean blue, purple and white wall paint. This place felt unreal, the swirling lights, the minimalistic pillows, the soft rugs on the crystal-clear marble floor. The swirling staircase, and this box-shaped machine with doors opening and closing, going up and down. Nothing was like this back home. Was this the future? Where is this?

This was mesmerising and terrifying. My mind was stuck in a loop of anxious thoughts.

I looked at my pocket watch. It was half past nine.

Matthew took a few steps forward, looked around. I looked at Matthew. He looked at me. "Where is this? Is this where everybody goes when they disappear in the Bermuda Triangle?" He said.

"I don't know, but we weren't even close to the Bermuda Triangle whatsoever. All I remember was the storm and in the blink of an eye, we were here."

"It's a mystery."

"But what about back home? What are they going to think? And how are we going to get out of here?"

"I-I don't know."

I looked at my pocket watch. It was still half past nine. No time had passed, or has it? I stepped forward to join Matthew.

Who would notice that we were gone?