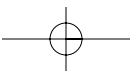
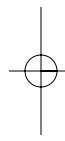
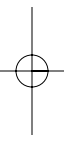
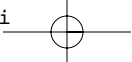
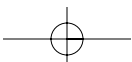
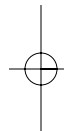
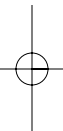


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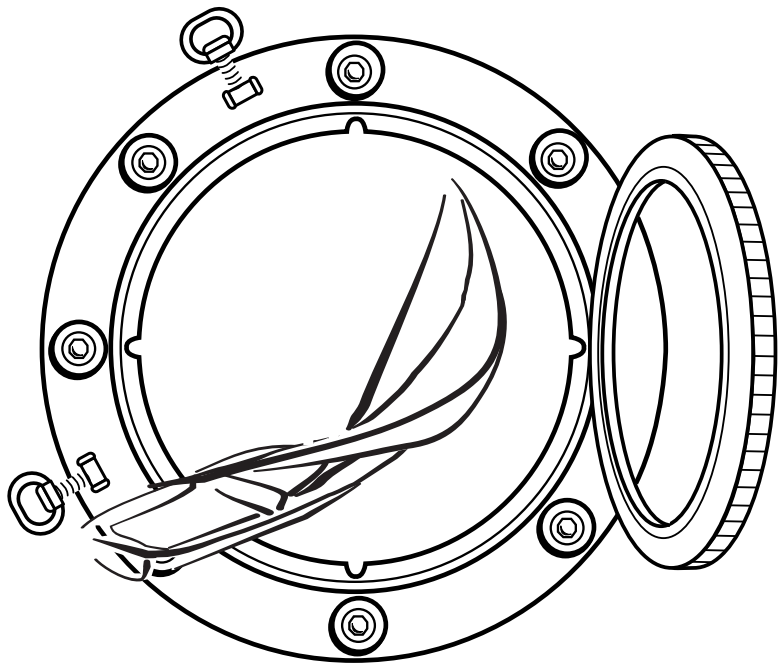
*Any resemblance to characters is
coincidental and not a reflection
of anyone the author knows,
and the occurrences are
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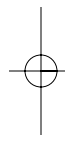
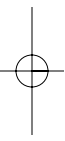


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Written by
Frances R. Kubitz

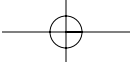
Illustrated by
Frederick T. Kubitz



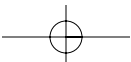
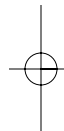
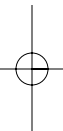


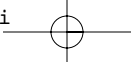
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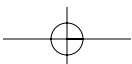
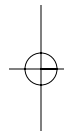
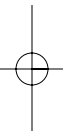


*To all the artists and sailors starting out,
and for all those who have made the
journey to Damariscove Island*





*That which creates
is godly*



Preface

The dramatic, rock-bound coast of Maine, nibbled at by the Atlantic Ocean, consists of small, snug towns and hamlets, dedicated fishing ports, summer-inhabited islands, and majestic sailing harbors. Binding them together are winding, gritty dirt roads to shoreline dead ends, boat ramps, and fishermen's shacks. Narrow blacktopped routes lead to summer cottages and camps liberally sprinkled between the tall pines and spruce.

Anchored carefully on high shore-front ledges perch weathering multi-story vacation homes, which house returning owners and relatives year after year. The population triples in the summer season lasting all of three months, in the villages and harbors. The pace quickens as out-of-towners bring their cars, boats, and motor homes to share with the Mainers in the beautiful unspoiled vistas of sea and shore. It's a cautious merging at best, but it's "Business as usual" for the natives, who keep a wary eye on their visitors.

Yachts coming into the harbors, flying flags and pennants from all ports up and down the coast, bring glamour, wealth, and beauty to the scene. They in return receive the admiration and awe they deserve. The weather doesn't always cooperate here, for it often brings strong winds or smothering gray fogs to add excitement and suspense to the whole scene.

Labor Day and school openings arrive too soon after a fun-filled summer. The owners reluctantly winterize their boats, pack gear, and board up their houses, not forgetting to close off their fireplace chimneys to keep out the squirrels

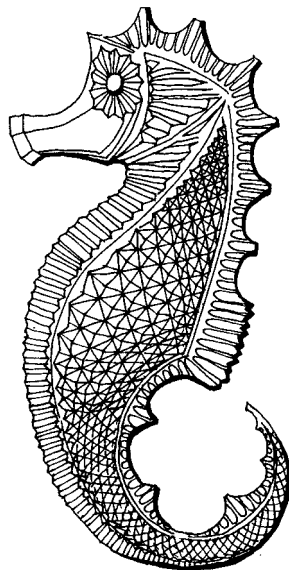
and raccoons. The vacationers steal away for home like gypsies in long motor caravans clogging the highways for miles. They also take with them a fading suntan, memory of the taste of lobster, the sound of calling gulls, and the smell of the sea. The children take back for “show and tell” an assortment of treasures: dark blue mussel shells, Maine-made miniature wooden tug boats, sand dollars, and the skills of rowing or sailing. They will all be back next year, sold on the wild spectacular state of Maine. For once they’ve experienced the down-east lure, it’s no halfway measure; it’s love all the way.

The coast of California, in comparison, is drenched in sunshine and wave-lapped by the glittering Pacific Ocean. Thermal clouds hug the horizon up and down the coast, and rain and fog is occasional. San Diego is known for its low humidity, Spanish heritage, and flowering parks and gardens. Beautiful bridges span waterways into and out of the city, and its zoo is world-famous.

Tourists come to the San Diego area for the museums, the zoo, the mountains, and the shore. San Diego boasts a large port that supports the U.S. Navy, the Marines, scores of yacht clubs, and private marinas. Everything faces west into an endless sea and a melting sun. The varied mix of people who live in and around the area use the abundant outdoor recreation as their norm.

Visiting vacationers drive the gleaming super highways to shop in elegant stores that feature the latest in fashions, or western gear for the more rugged types. They take back with them shells brought in from the South Seas, beautiful Indian silver jewelry, Spanish bowls, and Mexican straw hats. They also return home with the unique descriptions of a lovely city that has it all.

Chapter 1



Place

Off the coast of California in the Pacific Ocean

Time

On or about 12:30 P.M.

Quickly he plunges through echoing sounds he cannot hear, heedless of the cool, watery depths. Far down he sinks, like the projectile he became minutes before. His tattered clothes strain and rise in ribbons against his body, and the precious bubbles of oxygen escape upward to mingle with the dark hair following in their wake. Fluttering uselessly, his slim artist's fingers close on nothing, as he moves into a watery void.

Vaguely aware of pressure, he has the sensation of strong hands touching his waist, and lifting him up toward an unknown surface. But he could be wrong. He isn't thinking clearly.

As the undulating seaweed tangles with his legs, he miraculously breaks through a layer of foam into space of air and sky, and into the floating debris of his once-handsome sloop. Only semiconscious, he instinctively reaches for and clings to a piece of flotsam that drifts up and down in the smooth, easy swells. Abandoned in the ocean eighty miles from San Diego, the man on his buoyant raft, inches farther and farther away from an ominous crime and a tragedy he won't comprehend for a very long time.

When the Coast Guard vessel noses into its designated slip at the San Diego Pier, an ambulance from St. Mary's hospital is waiting on the dock to receive the patient. The news media, police officials, Coast Guard investigating teams, and various onlookers have assembled, for it has been learned there was an accident at sea. They each know the Coast Guard is bringing back a survivor, the celebrated John Elias Knight. The man, the media notes, is a distinguished oil painter and teacher, with paintings in museums the world over, including the White House.

Mr. Knight, his wife, and two friends had left three days ago in perfect weather to go sailing. All those at the dock watched and filmed as the medics lifted the gurney with its single burden into the ambulance. A chilling realization came to the onlookers as the ambulance and several cars