

**Easter Island**  
By: Brian Kumpf

“Oh that sounds... divine to be honest with you, man.” A handsome young man placed a cool beer to his full, moist lips as they slowly curtailed into a boyish grin. His other hand squeezed on the young woman’s hand next to him. From the light hanging over the dock, her matching coy grin became apparent.

“Oh yea, it’s a popular spot for the workers and locals who know about it, few tourists do too. Bit of a...romantic spot if you play your cards right,” The old dockhand let out a light chuckle and proceeded to chug his beer, then crushed the can in nonchalant fashion.

“That’s a nice boat you’ve got there,” He ran his hands through the scruff on his face as he gave the boat a closer look.

“Big enough for the two of you to explore and have a little fun, huh? Probably enjoy some nice weekends out on her.” The young man’s eyes lit up with glee at the deckhand's passing compliment.

“Oh! Thanks a lot, man. Yea, she’s great, we really love her. We only got her about...four months ago now?” The young woman at his side politely nodded as she pressed her paper cup of wine to her mouth, gulping one more big swig before the same-old story.

“Yea, ended up selling most of the crap we didn’t want or need after we finished grad-school. It just didn’t seem to really matter, you know?” His voice swelled with pride and even though it was just the three of them on the dock, he announced himself as if he were addressing a crowd. “So we just sold all of the stupid shit in our lives. Video games, old furniture, the beat-up car, anything worth a dollar, ya know? Bought this boat and just wanna travel around until we get tired of it. Go from there, ya know?” The dockhand fidgeted with his empty can, looking longingly at it.

“Sounds like what you should do at that age. I know me and the missus used to have some fun before the kids and whatnot.” A faux chuckle spread between the two men and the young woman gulped down the remainder of her wine.

“Well, like I said, it’s quite a few miles southwest of here. I already marked it on the map, but I’d recommend getting out there early if you can. Might be others out there thinking like you, especially you Robert.” Robert chuckled as he brought the young woman closer to him. The dock worker put the beer can in the recycle bin and began to make his way out, when he suddenly turned around.

“Ah, shit, tomorrow is Friday right? Maybe you wanna hold off on going out too far. Past few Fridays have been murky and rough. We’ve had a few of our fishing boats get banged up by the rough waters, even had one go down.” Robert chuckled as he too finished his beer.

“Well, by all accounts the weather is supposed to be gorgeous and we’ve been dying to get out and do some swimming.” The wispy summer’s night breeze carried the chirping of crickets hiding under leaves as the dockhand ran his hand through scruff once more.

“Fair enough, everyone on the boat thinks I’m a bit too old-fashioned anyways. Safe travels Stacey and Robert, eh?” The dock worker departed, leaving them under the flickering lights of the dock, hand-in-hand.

Stacey wrapped her hands around Robert’s arm and they made their way onto the small boat to sit out under the ocean of stars; each grabbing another drink. He made his way over to the cabinet to get a deck of cards when she suddenly began to tug at his shirt.

“Hey...” He turned and was greeted by a genuine smile that seemed to part the seas of the soul. His heart swelled like the coming tide as she gazed deep into his eyes.

“Ah crap Stacey.” Her nose crinkled with a bit of disdain—she quickly quipped, “Ah crap? Ah crap what, Robert?” It was then she noticed his calm expression, one of complete content. The ounce of attitude that had boiled, cooled instantly when she saw the way he looked at her.

“I wanted to to play some cards...but seeing you out here, in that cute bikini top and short-shorts... I’m certainly not thinking about the best way to teach you Rummy.” She stood up and effortlessly pulled him toward for a close embrace. A chilled sea breeze brushed against their bare legs, he pulled back and smiled at her.

“I’ve never felt richer in my life, I’ve got everything I need right here.” Through the silver moonlight peering onto the boat, he caught a tint of red splashed along her plump cheeks.

“I love you Rob—” She whispered playfully into his ear, “But you don’t have to tell everyone our life story though, I doubt they’re terribly interested about us.” She giggled and began to nibble on his ear. He gently moved closer to her as his voice rang with lustful tone.

“I think everyone should be as interested in you as I am.” He could feel her face grow warm and nuzzled closer. “Well...maybe not as much as me. That could get messy, eh?”

“You grab the wine, I’ll grab the stereo... let’s get an early night so we check out that island tomorrow.” A playful giggle escaped Stacey as he grabbed the half-full bottle of wine she’d been nursing and descended to the cozy cabin below.

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♪ *Do you want to go where it never snows*♪  
♪ *and the mid-sixties are the extra lows?*♪  
♪ *Well, I know a place hidden by the sea*♪  
♪ *We could drift all day in the gentle reef*♪

Stacey watched Robert’s wavy hair sway along the wind, almost in tune with the music that came from their portable boombox. There were times during their trip where she just admired how handsome Robert was. Tall, muscular and lean, with that mop of curly blonde hair to top it off. It always surprised her how natural Robert looked in the sun, he tanned so easily, almost with a Mediterranean-skintone. Her watch had just ticked past nine in the morning and she put her sunglasses back on as she sat back in the chair. The water was placid and serene as Robert ushered her to the controls and took her spot on the small chair she had been warming.

The vast and open sea, it was awe-inspiring, yet hollow to Stacey at times. Fields of blue lay before them, no other boat in sight as far as her naked eye could see and only the sound of wave gently lapping against the boat’s sides. Life had been so different for her, it seemed like so long ago. Who could guess that she, of all people, would be out exploring the west coast on a boat— with a new love to boot? This was one of those moments where it all felt bigger than her, that the experiences and loves she cherished could be....moot to so much of the world. Merely a raindrop being engulfed by the ocean— her train of thought was interrupted by the sound of a beer can cracking open.

“This is the best weather we’ve had all week, this is absolutely perfect.” She sucked on her bottom lip slightly and let out an exasperated sigh.

“We’re making pretty damn good time, we should be there before noon, might even get time for a little nap.” She felt Rob’s hand slide across her hip which prompted

her give it a curt push away from her body. A moment later, a familiar warm hand began its quick climb to her hip and this time a more forceful push away.

“Hey now,” A hint of disdain carried as he stood up, can-in-hand.

“Did you not want to take the wheel? You’ve been getting so much better at it, right? I don’t mind—”

“I don’t mind driving Rob.” He slowly reached out his hand to caress and suddenly, felt her tense at his touch.

“It’s... kind of early isn’t it?”

“I don’t think it’s too early for a nap with you, we can just pretend we’re getting up late for a boozy brunch.” Stacey brought the boat to an idle and turned around, Rob’s glassy gaze reflecting back at her.

“I think I’m going downstairs, think the waves are knocking me around a little too much.” He scoffed and put his hand on her shoulder, attempting to look straight into her eyes.

“Sounds like bullshit to me,” A nibble on her lip and a click from her tongue was all he needed to see for his hand to retreat its hasty advance. She gracefully sauntered around him and began to make her way down to the cabin below when the urge to say something began to fester.

“You know,” his voice began to build from a monotone delivery. “I just think we should have fun, I don’t get what the big freakin’ deal is.” Her face grew hot, certainly not from the morning sun.

“Maybe we can wait until after noon before we drink our way to fun times?” His grip on the wheel tightened and tone shifted.

“Maybe you shouldn’t be the dictator of our little excursion huh? I’m not Tommy, I’m not gonna act like a drunken frat boy, I’m just trying to have a good time with you.” He immediately released his grip from the wheel. He felt the breeze cease its careless sway.

“I didn’t say anything about you being like him... at all.”

“You’re right, I didn’t mean—”

“Stop... just, please, I’m going downstairs. Let me know when we get to the island.” The door closed and the can of beer found its way to his gullet. The boat started up again and he pulled the stereo closer after tossing the can into the sea.

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♪ *Baby, oh baby.*♪

♪ *Won’t you take me away?*♪

♪ *Take me away*♪

The island was scenic and tiny; almost as though it had pulled from a postcard and plopped into the middle of the ocean. There was a small single boat pier that Robert parked the boat at. He turned the radio off, walked past the cabin door and shot a glance at the sign, which hung solemnly.

“Couple “Talking it Out” DO NOT DISTURB”

He scoffed and stepped off the boat and was about to start tying it down when he suddenly heard the door open. His head spun around fast enough that he felt his mop-of-hair slap against his cheek. Stacey was behind him with her arms crossed, bottle of wine dangling from one hand, and a paper bag in the other. Her long auburn hair in a ponytail complimented her beautiful yellow bikini top and shorts, she looked as though she came with purchase of the boat. Stacey averted her gaze from looking directly into Robert’s at first.

“Look... I think I was just a little grouchy.” She attempted to look up.

“Why don’t I tie us down, you bring out the food and wine—I might have already sampled it.... Just to make sure it was good enough for lunch.” He felt his smile spread effortlessly and gave her a kiss as he took the supplies.

“I knew you’d feel better after a nap,” He couldn’t resist kissing her beautifully plump cheek—they called for his affection.

“Just make sure you use the cleat hitch-knot the dockhand taught us, okay?” As he scurried off the boat, she gave him a firm slap on his cute yet compact derriere—it called for a little bit of her attention.

“Don’t drop any of the food or wine, being hangry is just the worst.” He shot her that familiar boyish charm as he scampered off.

After lunch they were still the only inhabitants on the tiny isle, so they took to the water—lukewarm like the faucet had just been turned off. Rob loved to have a reason to be near Stacey, especially in close-quarters. He loved feeling her soft and supple body in hands, he loved to see the smile he was able to bring her just by having the kind of fun kids had. And Stacey loved the way Rob play-wrestled with her in the water. He would toss her around the open sea like she was a child again, feeling the wind whip through her hair before the abrupt splash into tepid waters. Robert picked her back up and kissed her from the faded scar on her neck, and nibbled his way up to her ear. Eventually they made their way back to the shore and laid on Stacey’s favorite blanket she brought from home.

They were about a football field away from their boat and Stacey found herself lackadaisically watching their vessel bob effortlessly in the water. Sounds of Rob’s gentle breathes danced along the corner of her ears, tickling yet comforting her as her mind began to wander.

“Why can’t life always be like this? Should I even bother going back home? Why I do care? What’s even there for me anyway?” Stacey put her damp hand on Robert’s side and used her other hand to caress the scar along her neck. The sound of tide coming in, the boy next to her, maybe it was the beautiful weather itself—but her eyes began to well-up. They soon closed and Stacey drifted off to the sound of Rob’s slow breathing.

Stacey’s eyes stayed closed, but her consciousness came-to. Her hand attempted to scratch her throbbing neck, but she soon realized her hand wouldn’t move—no part of her would. Her eyes wouldn’t open, the sound of lapping waves seemed to grow closer and closer to their blanket. Ocean waves crashing became heavier and their symphonic crescendo jarred her. She began to feel her breath escape her, as though it was being sucked from her body, pain radiated from her. A pair of strong, frigid hands seized her— goosebumps popped up all along her body. She felt her body being rocked back and forth, she couldn’t scream, couldn’t run. It was the same feeling she’d had before; years ago.

“Tommy!” Stacey managed to shout at the top of her lungs before her eyes shot open. She looked up and saw the scrunched up face of Robert; his expression quickly shifted to one of chagrin. There was a thick fog that was behind him, where did the sun go?

“You wouldn’t get up... you looked you were having a bad dream...well?” Sweat covered her face and she felt a wisping breeze send a cool, moist shiver up her spine.

“I couldn’t move, I... I,” Robert helped her up and began to survey their surroundings.

They could barely see more than a few yards in front of them the fog was so thick. Stacey went to grab Robert's hand, he quickly pulled it up to his head and began to scratch nervously.

"Where the hell did all this fog come from? How long were we out for?" He began to walk away from Stacey, she quickly tugged his shirt and soon followed close behind him. A deep sigh escaped him as they began to move.

Robert led the way through the cool sand in short, calculated steps. Stacey peered over his shoulder attempting to get a better look out into the distance, were they near the pier, were they even near the spot where they had been swimming? Eventually Robert stopped suddenly in his tracks, Stacey bumped into his stiff back and found a gasp escape her. Through the haze of fog sifting over the water, they were presented tranquil and empty waters; no boat in sight. Robert slumped down by the pier and put his head in his hands, Stacey could only put her hand to her mouth as she sank to his level and attempted to embrace him. His scowl was all that greeted her touch.

"What the hell happened Stacey!?" Robert's roar carried along the sea breeze, echoing in the distance.

"Didn't you tie the very simple, fucking knot? I know I told you to do it! What the hell?" Stacey attempted to talk, to say something—anything really.

"I, I, I know I did it right Rob, I really did." He stood up so quickly that he brushed her hand from his shoulder. Emphatic pointing to an empty pier and shouting was the retort she got.

"Obviously you didn't. And now I have no idea where the hell our boat is! Along with all of our belongings and money! I don't have shit to reach anyone out here! What the hell were you thinking, huh Stacey?" A recognizable rage emanated from Robert that wasn't quite him per say, it rekindled a pain she hoped to leave stomped out. Her eyes followed him as he began to pace around the sand. Frantic, short strides began to leave their indent in the sand, then he proceeded to grab a handful of rocks and toss them into the water. He began to howl out into the distance.

"Everything we had was on that boat! We lost everything! I gave up everything for that thing and you—" Stacey saw bloodshot eyes and bulging veins as he pointed his shaky finger toward her.

"You fucking threw it all out because you were daydreaming about some old squeeze who left you at the fucking altar!" The air had been taken out of both of them, and the breeze itself seemed to halt.

Stacey couldn't even bear to look at him then, how could she—more importantly, how could he? Her damp cheeks felt the last gasp of a dilapidated breeze and she turned away to look behind them. How could it come to this? Ghosts of lost-loves rearing their head on tropical escapes? Isn't that what you throw away the minute you step onto that boat and look out among those fields of blue?

In the distance, an orange flicker appeared. It seemed to grow slightly larger from the distance, and Stacey noticed an almost ethereal glow around it. She could still hear Robert's labored sighs and meek growls closeby, she almost thought twice about saying anything.

"Robert... over there, look." She pointed, "There's a light on over there, maybe there are other people on the island that came while we were napping. We've got to do something Robert, sitting here isn't going to make this any better." He stepped over to her and scoffed,

"Glad to see you've got a suggestion that actually helps us." Stacey sucked her teeth and Robert moved in front to lead the way—how could he?

The walk was solemn and silent, she could hear every time Robert gulped in anticipation of what the fog would reveal. They had been walking for what felt like hours when Stacey heard a melody carried in the air. It was a sweet and soft tune that gently rang through her ears; growing louder with each step they took. As they grew closer to the eidolic flicker the music sounded as though it was playing right in Stacey's ears. Robert seemed unaware of anything playing or at least feigned otherwise.

There was a small hill that the fog had tapered off from showing a shoddy wooden path leading into a cove, the flame they had been following burned strongly on a torch next to the entrance. Robert halted suddenly causing Stacey to bump into him and yelp. The music ringing in her ears seemed as though she was sitting by their speaker, was Robert just not saying anything?

"Robert..." He grunted back,

"What, Stacey, what?" She turned around and looked out into the fog and noticed a bright orange streak that bled through the grey haze.

"It looks like... there's something out there. Maybe there's a ship out back by where we came? The dockhand could have sent someone out to look for us, I think we—"

"Look, we're not going back, nobody sets up a torch in the middle of nowhere. There's gotta be another couple, a sailor, shit—anyone with a boat has to be here. Maybe we can find ours floating out in the middle of fucking nowhere with their help." Her tongue taste the dried skin from her lip as she gently nibbled it—Robert pace around the cave.

"Wouldn't they have heard us? It seems like no one is here."

"Maybe they're a couple, like us, and they're busy enjoying their time on this gorgeous island instead of looking for people to pester." Stacey felt the lump in her throat as she stopped in her tracks.

"I don't think we should go in here. The fog has got to break soon, we had a full lunch, right? We can wait for someone by the pier, there's no need to "bother" anyone." Robert spun and looked into her eyes, it was the same look; unsettling yet familiar.

"Look, if you don't want to follow me, then don't. Last I checked you're here with me—" There was an abrupt stop in his trail and Stacey felt her fist clench, ready for however he decided to finish that sentence.

"And if you're not happy with the way I'm doing this," He dropped his eyes to the ground.

"Then go back and sit on the beach. Go back and wait for someone else to save you." Robert turned around and began hovering around the entrance. Stacey felt her hands ball up and her chest tighten.

The light from the beach bled in through the cave and painted obsidian lines along Robert's legs. As they continued walking, it was almost as though his legs were being swallowed by the darkness itself. She took a deep breath as they edged further and further away from the light, her chest bumped when the last bit of light left Robert's back.

Each footstep reverberated in booming fashion throughout the small cove. In the near-distance, a light at the end of the tunnel which flickered and seemed to beckon to them. Robert took cautious strides, never letting go of Stacey's hand as they ventured toward the light.

Suddenly, a crash from behind, as though someone had dropped plates behind them. Stacey put her hands to her face, spun around, and felt a strong gust breeze through her—knocking her from her balance. She felt fingertips grace the tips of her damp hair, but the sensation vanished as soon as it graced her presence. It felt as

though all the air had been taken out of all the little cove, she snapped around and came to the sudden realization that she was enveloped in the darkness—alone.

“Robert?” Her meek voice echoed and seemed to bounce around the small cavern. The flickering light she had used as her guide had vanished. There seemed to be nothing in the cave, other than herself.

“Robert? This isn’t funny, at all” Her own echo began to irk her, and she felt her fist tense up as she extended her hand to where Robert had stood Suddenly, something grabbed her hand and yanked her forward. She attempted to plant her feet, but the moist, cold touch had jarred her. Her body was no longer on solid ground, only her feet dangled along the craggy path as wind gusts streamed through her hair. Stacey screamed, it was all she could do. Her body whipped around each corner, crashing into rock, sediment, and slopping mud. The shrilling stopped, the cavern went silent with the exception of a gentle sea breeze carrying the familiar sound of waves.

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*♪ And now I hear your voice♪  
♪Like a soft ringing♪  
♪ And all at once it seems♪  
♪Like you’ve been singing to me♪*

Stacey felt her head sway back and forth to the catchy tune emanating gently from a speaker—but from where? She opened up her eyes and found herself surrounded by the familiar sights and scents of a place she once called home. The fragrance of fruit and hops whisked by her accompanied by the sound of a sizzling pan. Sweat furrowed upon her brow, eyes darted back and forth as she began to take in the familiar surroundings. She felt her heart pound and her hand latched onto the chair’s arm—she finally caught a glance of a figure in front of the quaint little stove.

The figure’s back was strong, broad—almost lumbering. Stacey noticed sunlight peering in through the kitchen window, dancing along his short, chestnut-colored hair. Sweat slid down her cheeks and nails dug into the wooden arm of the chair. The figure turned around and she lost her breath before the words came out,

“Tom? Tommy?” His handsome, tan features came into view— light stubble and that lovely boyish smirk. He took a sip of the sweet-smelling beer and crouched down in front of her.

“Hey good-lookin’, just started cookin’ up some grub while you dozed off there.” She locked onto the small scar above his upper lip which she remembered, he got it as a child in kindergarten. She could smell the beer on his breath.

“This... this isn’t right, I’m... why am I back here?” Tommy scoffed and placed his warm hand upon Stacey’s—a jolt shot up her body, sweat poured furiously. A lump manifested in her throat as he continued to speak.

“Um... I’m cooking dinner tonight, and we were talking about the marathon training. Did you hurt yourself training? Concussion or something? Stacey began to squirm in her seat, gaze shifting back-and-forth, back-and-forth.

“Get the hell of me—” His smirk quickly shifted to a confused expression and he carefully pulled his hand back.

“Okay... look Stacey, are you feeling alright? Give me a kiss babe—” As he drew closer, Stacey felt her hand jump up and shove him away. She leapt to her feet with a yelp and frantic panting.

"I left you! I left this place! Why are you here? What's going on?" The music played softly as a warm breeze brushed against her from the windowsill—pan still sizzling.

"Stacey... you've got to be killing yourself with this training. You're acting out of sorts, I've never seen you like this." His tepid touch caressed her cheek as his fingers danced through her hair. Her rapid gasps lessened as his intimate gaze connected and it seemed the warmth from the sun bled into her balmy skin.

"I... I know what you did to me, I can still feel it..." She tightened her fist but noticed his usual lackadaisical gaze.

"I know all the things I want to do to you."

"No, no, no, this isn't you. This isn't you, this isn't—" His lips made their way to hers and all of the woe dissipated. She closed her eyes and felt that familiar glow burst inside her.

Her eyes opened once more and she looked into the eyes of what was kissing her. It was the sunken face, almost skeletal, of a young woman with stringy blonde hair. The touch on her skin was no longer warm to the touch, but cool and moist. Stacey felt weak, as though she had run miles and miles; all at once. She managed to push off the horrid figure and fell to her knees. Coughs escaped as she attempted to spit out the strange bile that filled her mouth. Stacey looked up at the figure to see that ghastly image in a soaked, white nightgown which was shoddy and tattered.

Stacey quickly examined her surroundings and noted that she was back in the small cove, this time in front of the small flickering light that Robert had pointed out. Next to the small torch hanging from the wall, she saw the body of Robert—mangled and bloody, swaying back and forth. His face was emaciated and sunken in, his chest torn open as though someone had opened a cardboard box of intestines. The ghostly figure looked down at Stacey, and licked her surprisingly full lips.

"Delicious," the voice echoed throughout the cavern, it carried a gravely shrill that Stacey had never known to be possible.

"What... what are—" Stacey watched as the being put its boney finger to its plump and red lips.

"Years ago, vulgar pillaging and raping pirates would call me the Siren of Easter Island. But—" She inhaled deeply, and Stacey saw a sideshow-clown smile spread across her face.

"How can I be expected to keep up with all the names people give?" a soulful cackle escaped her gaunt face. "I'm just hungry, hungry for every part of the human body." It was a delirious, emaciated smile that was plastered across the Siren's face.

"And you! You are filled with so much more love than... that one. Kissing you was simply... intoxicating. Won't you come back and let me make you feel better?" Stacey felt her body attempt to leap up, but she fell on her back. The pounding from her heart seemed to shake the room and she soon found the ethereal being hovering over top of her.

"I thought that I would be able to feast for days with the two of you, but he was so—" Its stare darted to the wall where Robert hung. "Hollow." Its attention was now back on Stacey, she noticed its long, slimy-tongue run across those supple red lips.

"I've feasted on so, so, many—" pride laced in the shrill of her voice.

"But you, my goodness, I haven't had a meal like this in... years." A sadistic laugh began to reverberate and Stacey tasted sweat on her lips.

"You threw it allllll away for a boy," The Siren slumped down to her knees and began to kiss Stacey's legs—each slow kiss left a chilly trail as she moved further up Stacey's body.



“A boy you didn’t even love, and I know just how much you have to give. Was it the touch, lust? Did you just love burning epitaphs on the high sea? Did it make you feel...**free** with its strange magic?” Stacey’s heart was the only thing actually moving on her body, her shaky gaze couldn’t be averted from the horror hovering over her.

“The seas aren’t clear forever, there’s always a **little** storm on the horizon. And there’s one rule every seafarer seems to forget...” Stacey felt something sharp sink into her stomach and waves of warm goo seemed to flow from her. They were finally face-to-face again, cold breath mingling with rapid warm gasps.

“Just because you throw it all away at sea...doesn’t mean the tide won’t bring it back.” Stacey felt those beautiful lips press against hers, and smelt sizzling of a faraway kitchen as the pain and goo seemed to leak from her.

“Let me take you away”

*Fin*