

Lyssa's Leviathan

I am told that *women* and *madness* go hand in hand. That our sex comes from that which refuses to hearken to the words of Gods. Now I've never been one to take opinions as fact, or facts as opinion for that matter. I can't remember which one came first. The coin or my desire. My desire or the coin. I suppose in the end it doesn't matter as the finale will always be the same for women like me. I had fallen in a deep drunken asleep after a night of, let's call it, de-stressing.

I had expected to stay that way for some time but instead I was awoken to a strange sound. It wasn't the normal tapping of the rain on the portholes of my cabin but rather a large and wet slapping sound followed by a *schloop* and then a *pop*. It happened multiple times before I realized I wasn't dreaming and Andres from Storkun wasn't actually in my quarters blowing raspberries on my abdomen. I opened my eyes and peered about the cabin. I had almost turned to my side to fall back asleep but was interrupted by my door slamming open and Svana, my first mate, standing there sopping wet. Her face looked a soft shade of green.

"Cap'n," she said in a raspy voice as if she'd been yelling, "Cap'n yer gonna wanna see this!"

I groaned internally and rose from my bed, "Is that so?"

Kelenbryda, the ship's navigator, sped past Svana in the hallway and then doubled back, sliding, and crashing into the door frame. You could almost see the wooden panes bend under her impressive size. "Captain, thank the Gods, you're awake! Come quickly!"

Perhaps if only Svana had looked alarmed I would have stayed nonchalant but when Kelenbryda gets concerned that's when you gotta pay attention. Despite currently looking like she might piss her pants, Kelenbryda normally stood tall and formidable. I remember how when we first met, she pounded her chest twice and said to me, "I can take a hit and I'm built like a brickhouse." "Welcome aboard," I immediately replied.

I got up and followed the two of them down the hall and towards the stairs leading to the quarterdeck. Various crewmates, all women of disreputable backgrounds, stood about their cots looking alarmed and confused. Some voiced questions about what was happening. I waved my hand to ignore them, I need to access the situation first, and started climbing the stairs.

I am not sure what I expected when the door opened. I'm not even sure if my brain fully wrapped around what I was seeing. Perhaps a part of me felt like I was still asleep. The sky above was an ominous grey and the wind was so strong it hurt my eardrums.

From out of the waves rose several large tentacles, like ones on a squid, except these ones looked like they could crush the entire ship. They stood stationary as if each one of them were evaluating us. I carefully, with Kelenbryda holding onto my arm to keep from falling overboard, leaned over the railing to peer into the water. From the blackness I could barely make out a shape that made me briefly wish I had taken up a different profession. Any one would do.

"It's the curse of Lyssa! We are doomed!" Svana started sputtering which prompted Kelenbryda to give her a small whack to calm her down. I may need to rethink my first mate.

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Kelenbryda said. Just then the ship jostled to the left sending the three of us stumbling over and into each other.

“Well, we *obviously* pissed her off somehow!” Svana spat back.

““We didn’t touch anything on that cursed island!” Kelenbryda fired back.

“Then how do you explain this?!” Svana motioned widely towards the Kraken, who was still staying eerily still.

“Captain, please tell her we didn’t take anything from Lyssa’s cove. I checked everyone’s belongings myself. Unless you’re calling me a liar?” Kelenbryda crossed her gigantic arms.

Svana looked like a vein as about to burst in her forehead, “But that’s why it’s here! It wants whatever we took back!”

While this was going on I stood silent. Fuck, I thought I’d have more time. I reached my hand into my pocket and started tracing the edges of the coin. The coin that spoke to me. The coin that Lyssa herself put in my path in the sand. I was convinced she wanted me to have it. Why else would she cause a storm that forced us to drop anchor. Why else would the winds guide us to her domain?

“So, here’s the thing Ladies,” I started slowly and produced the coin from my pocket.

Kelenbryda let out a single guffaw and Svana looked like she was about to lose it.

“Well then give it back!” Svana shrieked and made a motion to grab the coin. I held it up high and took a step back.

“I have a better idea,” I smirked.

Kelenbryda clapped her hands, “Hell yeah, now we’re talking,” she turned and disappeared down the stairs. From underneath the howl of the winds, you could barely make out the sound of her barking orders and the clamoring of the crew.

Svana stayed where she was, mouth agape. “This is insane! You’re insane!”

I cocked my head to the side to look her in the eyes, “What’s madness to women like us anyways?”

Svana looked at me for a few more seconds before turning on her heel and down the stairs.

I shook my head slightly and turned back towards our friend in the deeps.

“Hear that Lyssa?” I taunted, “Turns out I took a liking to this here coin and decided it’s mine.”

This was met with a booming, echoing growl. The tentacles began to sway menacingly. First slowly and then they began to pick up speed. The first crash came from the front of the ship on the foremast. Not enough to take it down but clearly a message of warning. From beneath the waves, two large yellow circles began to glow.

“Canons ready Captain!” Shouted Kelenbryda from by the steering wheel.

“Tell ‘em to fire!” I called back and braced for impact.

