

Sea Asylum

By: Beatrix Karambis

Her keen grey eyes scanned the dock-- nothing but a few dinghies and a Rhodes. Not a sign of the blue 4-20 Michael had taken out that morning. She glanced down at her watch as if looking at it again would tell her something different--something that wasn't that her son was an hour late. She hadn't known the names of the boats until last year she when she took her first sailing lesson. A quick learner she could now even sail to Misery much faster than the other domestic housewives of Ocean Street; even on their best day. They had grown up here, this was their stomping ground, she was an alien, an unwelcome one.

Now as she stood alone on an empty pier the wind blew harder than it had that morning. If only she had gone outside, then she would have seen the American flags blowing atop the large mammoth houses were almost pulled off the poles they once hung from, a clear sign that a ten-year-old should not go sailing.

She did not go outside often, afraid of the states of vineyard vines clad occupant of the houses judging her slightly too tan skin from the comfort of their all-white parlors. She would not have cursed the fact that her fake blonde hair was pulled out of its tight bun, laughing it away and retreated into her home. The hair was dyed not for her husband, or even for the wealthy white inhabitants of the north shore but for herself and her dignity. She had proudly put a photo of the day after she dyed it on this years Christmas card and mailed it straight to South Dakota and to the home of her once family.

But no, she hadn't gone out, she had stayed inside and shouted a yes as she always did when Michy asked to take the boat out. Or perhaps if she had been listening last night when the

radio reported record winds for the following day, she wouldn't be standing here scanning the grey unforgiving horizon for just a little reprieve from the hungry, tumultuous waves.

So as she stood she stared, and as she stared she began to feel her body crumple until someone looking from the coffee shop across the street would only witness a heap of baby blue and white plaid-- nothing resembling a woman--that lay like a stray puppy in contrast to the weathered grey of the dock. And, if such a person was observant they would, upon further inspection, see a pair of designer sunglasses just inches away from her open palm so close to becoming victim of the seas unsatisfied thirst for this woman's possessions.

Michael had, however, known of the winds today for he, unlike his mother, was an avid supporter of everything risky and thrilling, being a ten-year-old boy, his sense for danger was not perhaps as fine-tuned as that of his 50 year old mother. He had crossed his fingers all night long, hoping that she wouldn't hear of the storm that would roll in later that day, knowing his father to be away, he was overjoyed but not entirely surprised that his mother had no communication with anyone other than himself. So, as he rose that morning he had downed a cup of orange juice and three spoonfuls of cereal before grabbing his booties, swim trunks and a sweatshirt and biking off to the dock.

Even he was impressed by the scene before him. The waves, like monsters rose, and fell beneath a cloudy, slate-like sky. Walking down to his very own boat was more difficult than he imagined, considering he had been in these conditions before. Hopping in, he quickly put down the centerboard for balance and taking care to not raise the mainsail all the way he began to rig. For a ten-year-old he was impressive, the swiftness of his motion combined with the strength of the winds was precise. These were winds even an experienced sailor would have difficulty with. Taking four deep breaths before untying the cleat, he pushed off and was on his way.

This was not his first time manning a two-person boat on his own. He had also been practicing, since his man-of-the-jib, Oscar, would surely not be let out of the house. This was all taking into account the fact that Oscar's mother was one of the most protective women Michael had met in all of his short life.

He did not stay dry for long. Within seconds of his departure from land he was halfway out of the cove. Working quickly jibing and tacking, he kept his head up since he was surrounded by yachts worth more money than his small mind could even comprehend. As soon as he was out of the cove the boat took a nosedive into the grey, churning sea, filling the bow with water. Michael frowned, he was not prepared for a full-on flip. He began to keel parallel to the wind but the jib slipped from his grasp and began to luff loudly and aggressively in the midst of high pressure air. In the process of getting a grip back on the sheet he was forced to let the tiller go which, in turn, made the whole boat switch directions in an accidental jibe. The boom swung with all the force of the wind propelling it right into his small pale forehead with a sinister crack.

Hours later the boat remained on its side though--it had drifted far from--the cove and out of his mother's view by now. The white underbelly would, if observed remind, one of a dead fish, dead as a boat can be, empty of its previous contents, even the guilty boom had been washed of the streak of blood that had once been smeared there, the only evidence to the murder committed. The coastguard would in later hours be called, the faint mother brought to her home, the body found and zipped in a sanitary, black bag--the only reminder left in the morgue, long after the now significantly smaller family moved away.