

The Man

On a hot summer's day without a cloud in the sky, the man went about his work. To him this was another day of baggy eyes and rotten bait fish, but to The Man Upstairs it was the spinning of fate. And fate began to work its way out from the shadows as the man started up his boat. The engine came on like a roaring tide, and it was the man vs. The Man in a battle of wits. Yet, the lesser man knew nothing of this type of hit list. He simply steered his boat of fiberglass-wood through the harbor, and into the great wide open.

'The Atlantic is a monster', his wife had said. 'Someday, when you're not careful, it will come for you, like a black cloud of death. And then what will happen to us? Our daughter turns six on Sunday.' He simply looked at her and smiled. He enjoyed that tantalizing look in her eyes when she was angry with him. 'Go to sleep, and dream of the money we'll have. When the boat comes out of the water in November, there won't be a lobster that hasn't been caught up by the best fisherman in town.' She looked at him, her eyes gentle now, and said softly, 'I'd rather have you than that lousy money.' 'I'll take the money, and the honey,' was his reply, and then they made love.

He didn't even see the rope. It had entangled his leg like a snare as he took a long draught from his 2 liter coke bottle and set his trap back into the frothing waters. He always loved the fizz when he was out here, as his boat slogged about. He supposed he liked the caffeine, too. It energized him. Prepared him for most things. But the caffeine

couldn't have prepared him for this. Oh, hell no. Not this feeling. He put the boat into gear and the rope began to spool outward...

WHAM!! He hit the deck like a sack of potatoes when the rope came taut. The coke bottle shot forth from his hands and splashed into the Atlantic. He didn't even have time to put a message in there. 'Just my luck,' he muttered as he was pulled across the deck. Juices and oils from the bait and from the sea tickled his cheeks as he slid. He tried desperately to grab hold of something, but the deck was as flat as a card table. If only he could have slowed the boat down, then maybe he wouldn't have been pulled into that 'black cloud of death'. 'Looks green, to me,' he thought as he was sucked downward, and away from life. The rope never loosened from around his ankle, nor did the thoughts of his wife and daughter sway from his mind. But as he took his final breath, he knew that this was his time.

The Man Upstairs steals another one.