

The Lunette Christina

(First Draft)

By Caitlin Trafton

Mr. Smith laid back on a twisted lobster trap; he felt no pain, only adrenaline. He looked around, from the floor, this was no place for a Captain. He tried to rise and all but his legs were fierce to stand.

Audrey, his Stern-Girl ran from the controls and knelt to Jerry's level.

"Jerry!"

Audrey was on her third year of working with Jerry, and she was three years out of high school.

"Are you...okay?"

He was alive, but clearly not okay.

"Im okay Drey, I think I broke both of my legs."

It was that moment, that sparkling blue day in August, where Jerry lost his steam.

Growing up on Maine Islands, Jerry was a born Lobsterman; swift of dialect, skilled in nature, a calculated businessman. He reached his 60s when he took Audrey aboard the Lunette Christina. By that time, he had a routine, and for three years Jerry and Audrey worked together as one well-oiled machine. Hauling, Baiting, Shifting 150 lobstertraps, everyday (but Sunday) from May until November, then they would haul all of the sea-grassed up traps out to dry for the winter.

A sickening moment flashed through Jerrys mind, and entered Audreys...

Jerry saw the helm of the boat, wide-open; 17 KNOTS, they were cruising. He stood atop an enormous pile of ropes that lead to traps stacked at the stern of the boat. There were two traps on the rail, the last two traps they hauled, they were shifting a load to where there were more lobsters. Audrey was leaning on the baitbox, facing wake and face pointing toward the sun.

Audrey heard a splash, she yelled:

Jerry turned his head, felt his feet lift off of the platform and with a hard jerk: the two traps...that were on the rail... whipped Jerry to the stern of the Lunette Christina. Audrey ran to the controls at the helm, grabbed them and pulled them back so hard, she fell to the ground, the boat came to a halt, and the engine stalled.

It was quiet, the velvet blue Atlantic lapped the lengths of the vessel. They were three miles from land, with 25 traps on the stern, rope everywhere and the Captain of the boat could not stand, besides that, the lobster line that took his sock and boot.

Drey, could you haul those two traps back? Turn the key over and pull the switch out to turn the hydraulic hoist on. Once you put the line in the snatch-block, run it through the hauler and pull the knob toward you.

Audrey was shocked; it never occurred to her that all this time, she never knew how to use the equipment. Though she knew she could drive the boat if needed, she never practiced it.

She was excited to run the hauler, the high-pitch winding of the rope and the lure of the unknown that exists at the end of the line-And there it was, line like a fist clenching the shit out of Jerrys boot.

Audrey looks at the boot, bug-eyed, looks at Jerry and said,

That was YOU!

Jerry laughed with little enthusiasm.

Radio Jas, we need two men to lift me off the ground.

Audrey immediately, grabbed the CB, she knew exactly what to do; she had been dying to use the radio.

Mary Joseph, come in: Mary Joseph, its Drey. Can you hear me?

Ya Drey I hear you, go ahead.

Jerry and I are in a bit of a bind. We are offshore-

She stopped, she looked at Jerry-

Where are we?

Tell him we are three miles off, in the Garden.

Three Miles off, in the Garden. Audrey parroted.

Jason and his Stern-Person, George, came, they helped Jerry and Aubrey set the traps back in the water and they went home, sold their lobster. Jerry dropped his pants in front of Cindy the Lobster Dealer, his legs purple from brief to toe; he never lost his humor.