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Mirrored Demise

Danika Ogawa

The wood creaks so loud I can't fall asleep. It sways, the boards held into place by nails and nothing else. The boat beneath me is paper thin compared to the abyss farther below. It tugs my mind far from sleep. I lie awake—eyes closed—and have been for hours now.

A sudden crash, like two worlds colliding, strains my ears. It's all I can do to keep from screaming. I open my eyes after a few seconds and see water. Lots of it. I'm frozen.

The water enters through the boarded floor, through the wall, and steadily drips from above. It quickly engulfs the space near my feet. It rises from beneath me, like my fears made tangible. It's swallowing me up.

I stand without thinking and wade as quickly as one can in a shift to the door. I place my hand on the icy brass knob when I hear shouting.

It's arguing, yelling. It's not English, and I can't understand it.

The world stopped when I heard the unforgettable sound of un-sheathing metal, followed by a scream of agony. Only a few seconds, but cleaved into my being, my mind.

I knew someone had died.

The water is up to my waist now, and I can't stay but I can't leave.

I shut out the fear seeping into my head, creeping up my neck and pooling in my stomach. Shaky hands grab the knob again and turn it.

Before I can react, a wave of water knocks me off my feet; my grip on the knob, the only thing keeping me from slamming into the wooden wall. I pull myself up, and wade across the threshold.

Most of the grease lamps have been extinguished, leaving the narrow passageway dark. I push through the water, swimming now. The

walls on either side of me serve as the only guide through the abyss. I halt at the rushed conversation coming from above. I peer up without thought and see faint dusk light seeping through odd holes in the wood, inches from my head. The light moves—

Feet on the ground.

The conversation is one I can't understand, but it stops.

Silence, save for the whoosh of water through boards and cracks.

I am going to die, too.

Water pushes me forward like a silent angel toward the stairway to my right. I can't grip the walls, can't take the stairs fast enough. The water chases my bare heels, licking the bottoms like an animal tasting its prey. The stairs seem to lengthen, teasing my attempt at an escape.

I finally reach the door, and I can't move as quickly as my brain, my *soul* requires—

It turns before my touch can grasp it.

The door swings wide, and a dark silhouette engulfs my view. It locks my feet in place, finally allowing the animal to devour its prey.

The figure stands tall, not swayed by the rushing water, or the tilt of the boat. They lift a lamp as if from thin air, allowing the light to reveal the features of the face that would seal my fate.

The figure raises a frail arm, lantern in tow. The light draws closer to the figure's face and slowly reveals features so haunting, I feel my throat dry.

Hollowed out cheekbones. Light fabric sticking to skin, revealing the pale skin beneath. A distant, gaunt look in his brown eyes. They focus on me. I see the figure's other arm lift, noticing that gargantuan piece of metal I had heard and would never forge.

Two worlds did collide, then, when I realize the figure standing before me...

Is me.

From Grand Forks, ND, **Danika Ogawa** is a junior at UND with a major in English, and a certificate in Creative Writing. Danika has previously published in *Floodwall Literary Magazine*, and is a part of UND Lit Club, where she helps operate their social media. When not reading or writing, you can find Danika teaching dance at Dance Warehouse of ND and playing with her dog Oscar! After graduation, she hopes to work in publishing or editing, and eventually pursue an MFA.