

Coat in hand, Klara began to feel the different motion the schooner made paying off before the wind. The hay bales shifted ever so slightly, searching out new resting positions as their beds changed cant, coming from a sharp port heel toward upright. She disliked being among the resting cargo, in spite of its sweet smell, and made haste returning to Bridget and the aft cabin.

The maneuver continued; the sails gybed across with a sharp lurch to starboard, attended by a tremendous cracking noise, followed by a series of rippling snaps. And then, just as in any disaster, a variety of very bad things all seemed to happen concurrently: looking out of the companionway, the women watched, stunned, as the mainmast toppled overboard, strewn its rigging across the deck in front of them and into the angry lake alongside. A section of the foretopmast broke away and plunged through the cargo hatch, shattering several boards of the cover. Yelling and other chaotic noises ensued, prompting Klara to lean out of the companionway and see as much of the scene as she could. The captain and crew were all working to free the rigging from the hull. Iron shrouds and stays sunk below the schooner, but the sails and spars resisted the lake's pull and floated yet, hammering at the ship's side as waves beat them together. A shrill terrified scream echoed out of the hold, adding to the din of wind and wreckage. With spars and rigging dragging, the little vessel ceased forward motion and slumped sideways into the troughs between waves. Then, as bad as it was, elements of this evil circumstance forged together into something worse—the ship was flung sideways over the tangle of ruined rigging, the ends of which still clung to the deck. As wire rope and spars, now partially underneath the ship, began to drag heavily, they levered the hull over onto her side, allowing the broken mast to batter mercilessly at the vessel's submerged side with every other wave while water poured into the broken hatch cover at the low point in the roll.

A heavier wave hit and the schooner shook, sending Klara and Bridget reeling, landing them against the starboard cabin interior. A low rumble came through the fabric of the hull, and screaming from below began again, this time urgent and filled with agony. Recovering, Klara pulled herself to the companionway with difficulty, desperate to see what had happened. But seeing was perhaps worse than not knowing, for the scene that confronted her appeared inconceivably horrific and hopeless. Her sense of direction was upset, proportion likewise. Familiar shapes were out of place, orientation, and context. The companionway hatch seemed to be a small island of relative safety surrounded by a chaos of dancing wires, broken lines, and the insistent greed of the icy lake. The entire lee rail was underwater, more

rigging appeared to have gone over the side, and there was a figure—the captain it seemed—wrapped in some of it. Only the old cook and one deckhand remained, clinging to the mainmast stump, trying to pull some slack into the tangled mess of rope, canvas, and iron wire that had ensnared the captain, but they were having little success. The poor man flailed in his web, increasingly weighed down as saturating, hempen lines lost their buoyancy. He tried desperately both to free himself and pull his face above water for a good breath as the stricken hull dropped toward him. He was successful twice that she saw, but on his third attempt, his head didn't quite break the surface. Cursing and crying out above the wind's howl, the two men on deck seemed to redouble their efforts, heaving mightily against the wreckage. From her isolated position at the companionway, Klara saw veins bulging from their necks and foreheads as they pulled impotently against the inexorable, sodden drag of a ton of submerged rigging.

Suddenly, the shouting from below gained primacy in her awareness and she found Bridget jerking on her skirt hem from the ladder into the hold.

“Help us, Klara! Monique is caught under the bricks!”

Klara descended the steeply angled ladder and lowered herself into the hold's wet shambles. Water continued to funnel through the hatch with each descent into the trough. Some of the cargo had spilled down against the starboard side, sending the two boys into a panic as they tried to remove soaking bales of hay all tumbled up with bricks in an effort to free their aunt. Monique's upper body protruded from this mess, and the sloshing water washed across her unconscious face, toying with her graying hair in sinister rhythm with the motion of the crippled schooner.

The sight of Monique brought Klara back to the captain's last moments; suddenly, she knew hopelessness; they would all be buried under brick, hay, and the entire depth of the lake if they did not get out of the hold right away. Monique was gone.