

A Dark and Stormy Night



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Chapter One



It was a dark and stormy night, the waves beat themselves across the beach and the wind lashed my hair across my face. I could taste bitter salt droplets from the ocean with a thousand microscopic sea creatures in my mouth.

Before me was a boat, not much more than a dingy, bouncing about in the rough water. To my

right was a path leading into the dunes, beset on one side by a wall of thorny brambles.

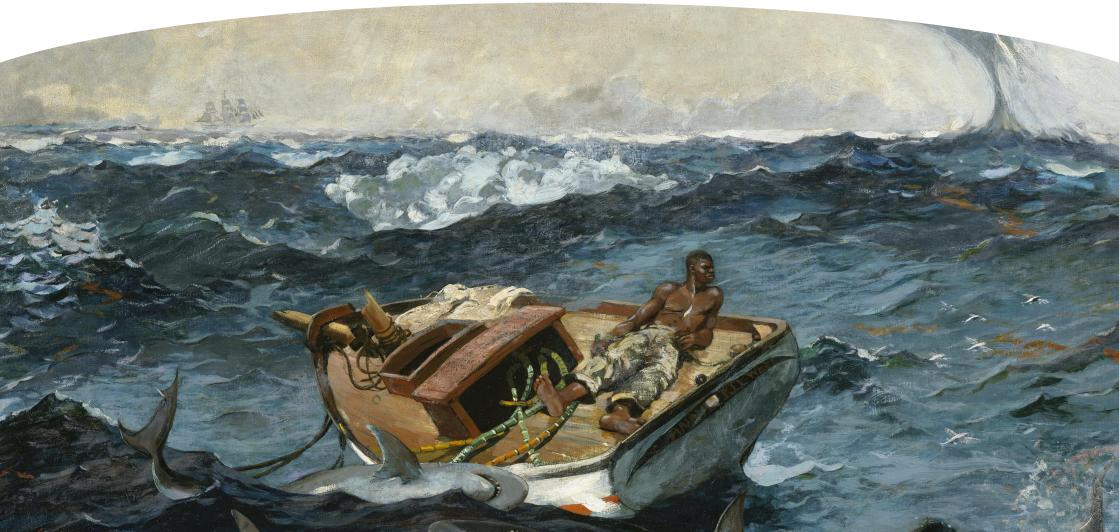
Climb into the boat and row into the waves

Walk along the path, keeping a good distance from those thorns

The sand of the beach crunches under my feet
and I feel the soft give of the surface decorming
under my shoes as I walk down towards the
water, drawn by the sound of the waves towards
the crashing surf.

Taking the oars in hand, I push off from shore
and head out into the dark water

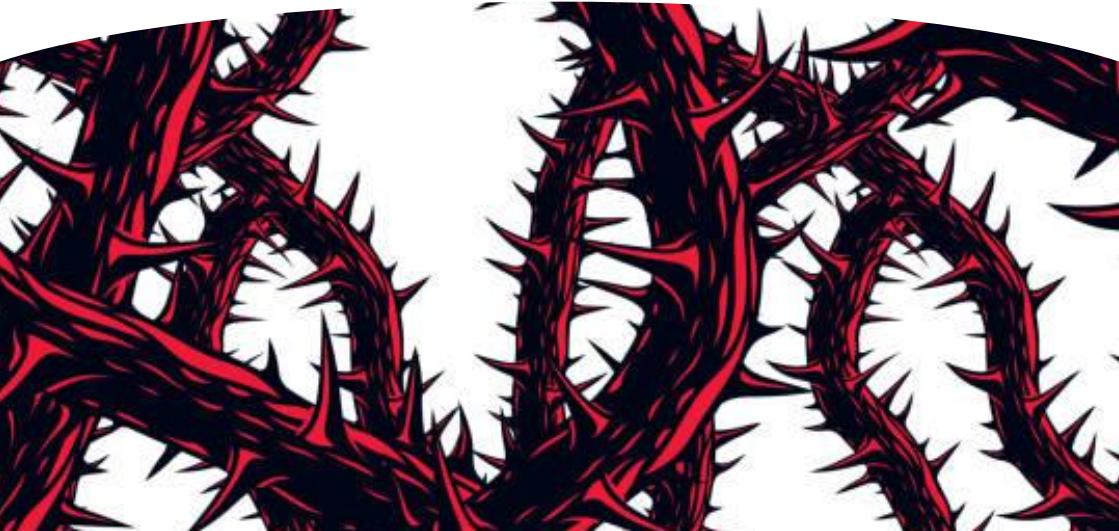
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Turning away from the water, start along the bramble path. Sharp thorns seem to line every one of the endless writhing vines, forming an impenetrable wall along one side of the path.

Soon the brambles tower over head, interweaving above me and blocking the thin light of the moon, plunging me into darkness

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