Françoise's Dream

Sitting by the fire, you watch as your friends make drunken toasts to the land, to the natives, and to their faithful leader. They raise their jugs and tin mugs to you. You wave them off, but can't help to feel a sense of pride in this family you've made here. How could you have stumbled across this perfect undiscovered nook in this world.. no, paradise. A native woman empties a bowl into the fire, stoking it even brighter. Others dance nearby, to the music this land naturally creates.

You track a firefly floating down to your hand. Lifting it up, it's not like any fireflies you've seen in your life. It glows a faint purple and dims. You lose it in the darkness, realizing at some point you must have turned away from the fire to admire the little creature. The natives here really knew how to make some strong liquor. Another glow catches your eye, just a little further off from the fireside towards the jungle. It's.. another campsite? You turn back to the fire and.. there is none. Just more jungle. You shake your head, trying to get your wits about you and make your way back.

You expect to hear the guffaws of your crew, but it's silent. A night birds call out. The cicadas chirp one last hymn. Then it's just silence. Slowly, you reach for your rapier.

A bonfire is dimming just a few feet away and you peer over the foliage. You see your crew. They are completely unmoving, like statues in a museum. Glancing around the perimeter, there is nothing but trees. Taking a gentle step forward, you notice the fire once more. It flickers as a few drops of rain fall from a leaf hanging above and it erupts into an inferno. You cringe away, and then pandemonium breaks out. You prepare to leap at whatever caused it, and you focus your eyes on the fire. It's just a normal fire. Your friends clash their tin mugs together and they look up to you.

Fabien catches your eye and makes room for you on a log, "Mon Capitaine! Where have you been off to?"

You stare past him. To the spectral shadow reaching for a blade. You make a leap into the small clearing to pounce.

You track a firefly floating down to your hand. Lifting it up, it's not like any fireflies you've seen in your life. It glows a faint purple and dims. Fabien looks up to you and pats the log next to him. "How about one of your songs, Capitaine?" Others cheer and a few natives look about excitedly, seeming to understand.

You smile humbly and reach for your viol behind the makeshift bench. Leaning down, you squeeze your eyes as a pain shocks your head. The darkness surrounding the camp weighs on you. You look out to the vines that wave in the gentle wind. You grasp the viol, still locking eyes with the void beyond you. Your viol makes a squeal. Is it already out of tune? You lift up the instrument and lurch back. A small snake has somehow made its way in between the strings. In an instant you have it by the neck and nearly send it sailing into the bushes. When it stares back at you. It blinks.

Snakes don't…

Fabien grabs your arm. You're ready to tell him not to panic, that you have it handled. But his hand is wet? You look down. Your arm is dripping with his blood. As he chokes out, "Guillaume, he's-"

You whirl around and see what remains of your family. Another one of your men, Raphaël, stumbles to you, you can see bone sticking out of his shin, "You need to find her. Or our home, this place… It will be destroyed."

One of Guillaume's men douses the fire.

And the world goes dark. This land… something has happened to it. The flora and fauna, they scream. A soft voice whispers on the wind, "Find me."

You open your eyes and see a starlit sky. You jump up and realize it was just a nightmare when you see Fabien sleeping soundly across the way. It had to be. Why would Guillaume ever do such a thing. Picking up your journal, you take note of the dream nonetheless and count back the days, 10 September 1642. You're about to put down your quill and notice a bug stuck in the ink. It glows faintly.

The day of the attack arrives. Much like the dream prophesied, Guillaume did indeed attack. Sometime during the fight, you take out your dagger and momentarily are distracted. The hilt has shifted. And continues to shift beneath your grasp. You don't have time. You make an attack at one of Guillaume's brawny men and in miraculous luck, you knock the beast down. With a dagger? To a bicep? Okay, you're not about to question it. But as you turn away from the form on the ground. You hear him mutter, "Mother? Is that you?" He gasps in agony, "Mother don't hurt me!" He seizes on the ground and puts his hands close to his face, screaming, "I can't see!"

Did you just do that? You loosen your grip on the dagger and see a small snake design curling up around the hilt. It's as though it always was there. How did a dream..

4 years later, you find yourself sailing the Caribbean. You are observing the horizon as you pass a small island. You spot something flying around the boat. It's an owl? It swoops down further behind you and lands on one of the passengers. He pets it.

He furrows his brow and approaches the edge of the boat. "Do you see that?"

You turn towards the island. You see just a form just along the shoreline. You take out a small telescope and see an old man face forward in the tide. The body convulses a bit.

"Looks like he's in distress.. How did he-" Before you can finish your thought, the man dives in and begins swimming to shore.

You sigh heavily, "Man overboard!"

Rowing to the shore, you see the passenger pressing on the old man's chest, trying to get the water out. You and a few crewmates stow the dingy as you prepare to give this passenger a piece of your mind. But the old sun-beaten man wearing extremely tattered clothes bolts upright.

"I need to.. I need to go back- Mad Dog.." He slurs.

You look at the tide, his clothes are barely wet from the waist down, "How did he drown in 5 centimeters of water?" You wonder aloud.

The old man ignores you. He looks out to the sea and up to the sky and begins cackling.

"Do you have room for one more on your ship? It seems he was marooned here." The young man kneeling next to him looks up to you with bright blue eyes.

You look at the insane old man and back to the ship, for a moment, he locks eyes with you. Seemingly in sound mind and body for but a split second and looks down to your dagger. You blink and he is still just cackling.

Today would be the 4th anniversary of Guillaume's attack. And in turn, the same day that snake brought life to your dagger. You breathe raggedly, "He will die here otherwise."