

Oh my dearest Maria.

By the time you read this I will be at sea again, rounding the Cape, the captain of a cursed ship. I know my crazy words cast a fright in you, and I realize you have trouble believing me. I understand that. I can scarcely believe myself! But again I tell you, I have seen things. I have been to places, places that I durst not say even to you. I know you have always thought me 'luoco,' but I must tell you, what I have seen confirms everything I have ever said. I am not crazy, my love, and you are the only woman—the only soul—on this earth who will believe me. The men would only laugh at me, and say I'm shamming Abram to shunt my proper duty, so I have to be strong, even though my head is splitting within. It's getting harder and harder to think straight, harder to write.

You remember that book I told you about? The pages after this letter are ripped from that book. It was written by a scribe, which means a holy writer, from faraway Egypt, a poor man dead for a thousand years. A poor man, I say, because I feel just like him—he saw things too, and needed to warn people. And just like me, he can't say what he saw, because

Oh! I can't even finish that sentence. My head hurts, love. And it's all my fault! I should have never

When I called the 'oxen of the cold waste'. Oh! I know what he means!

I found something else in the captain's cabin. A trinket carved from scrimshaw, cold to the touch. It's evil. I can feel it, it's giving me terrible nightmares. I think

I think it might be the Great Key the scribe talks about. I think I been to the Colonies of Black Stone. I think

I plan to trick them, love. I'm already carrying a replacement. I hid the real Key in a place no one will look. When I get back to Kingsport, I will talk to the Preacher, the blind man I told you about. He is wise and kind, and sailed around the seas a few times. I can trust him. He'll smoke it.

But there's something else. The scribe also talks about a Sacred Heart. I think this thing—I don't really know what it is—I think it's hidden in Chile or Peru. I have reason to believe the Egyptians are to the Indians of Peru and Mexico what the Spanish and Portuguese are to the people of Chile and Brazil. And before the Egyptians was Atlantis. Do you understand my meaning, love? I think the Atlanteans hid sacred objects here thousands of years ago. I think this Sacred Heart is actually near Vallipo, and I

think there's men in Kingsport who'd do anything to get their hands on it. You cannot trust anyone but me!  
No officer at least.

After I return to Kingsport, I'll ship out again as soon as I am able. I'll jump ship at Vallipo and you'll see me again. I'll look for the Sacred Heart and destroy it. Something terrible is happening and I have to stop it. I must pay for the things I done, now that I see what is really happening. I hope God will forgive me.

Last night you said you wanted to help me.

Please, keep your ears pricked for talk of such things, especially from Kingsport whalemens! But don't tell anyone, my love. Wait for my return. Don't tell anyone about this Key, or about the papers in this letter.

I love you.

-Your Eli