

SUSPICION

By C.G. Harris

Let me ask you this – was there a time when you couldn't believe your eyes? I mean, you *literally* could not believe what you were seeing? If there was, did your jaw drop or did you just rub your eyes and swear to yourself? I'm telling you now I did all three when I saw a certain guy push his wife overboard.

It happened so quickly, and he was so *natural* about it – murder being such a quaint, inconsequential thing, of course – that I felt I just had to be mistaken, right? One casual glance round, one quick motion to grasp both ankles, and a swift heave, and she was gone. Then, a turn and stroll along the windswept deck and – get this – an audacious nod and smile to the steward as he passed him, and he was away. The trouble with something like that is it's so outrageous it just can't be true - can it?

I know that it *can* be true, and although I was drunk, I was feeling just sober enough not to want to get myself killed – so I stayed right where I was, hidden in the shadow of a hanging lifeboat, the large, motorised kind with plenty of room that they always use on cruise ships these days (lessons learned from the *Titanic* right?). I didn't detach myself from the wall holding me up till I had reached the stern and peered over the rail.

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I could see nothing in the water but waves, churned to a white hue by the thrust of the engines. The waves settled and quickly merged into the blackness of the Pacific - it was difficult to see anything beyond them. Even the dim light from a crescent moon didn't help, given that it was partially hidden by long threads of cloud being shunted along in the sky by the south easterly wind. If there really had been a woman she was gone, left swiftly behind in a cold, vast and indifferent sea. It was a desolate way to go and I began to quickly sober up and ask myself what I could do, and what I should do.

Ok, firstly – had I actually seen what I thought I had? I shook my head to clear it and ran my fingers back through the hair I had left, then massaged my temples with both hands. I came to the conclusion that I had seen it indeed. I closed my eyes and tried hard to recollect something that had happened only a few seconds ago, but that already seemed like a distant dream.

The night was warm. Of course, it is cold in Alaska, but in August, with the ship two days out from Ketchikan on the return down to Seattle on the US mainland, the air temperature was