

Half Moon

“It’s not the same...” Max looked up at the shattered remains drifting across the night sky, “I mean, I never thought I’d miss it the way I do.”

“It’s still there,” Esme followed his gaze to the broken mass, “I mean, it’s still the moon, it’s just...broader now...”

“I miss the moonlight...” Max looked down at her, “I mean, it’s been three months since the colony went up. The only effect that we’ve seen is that there’s far less moonlight than there had been, the tides are still coming and going, somehow...”

“Yeah, but that’s why I’m out here...” Esme glanced back at the base, “I mean, there’s still enough of the moon to make a bit of a pull, but in some places the tides have got even stronger.”

“Where?”

“England, America’s east coast, whole lot of places on the upper atlantic coasts...”

“What do you think, something about the destruction affected the North Atlantic Current?”

“Can’t be,” Esme shook her head, “Those currents are based on the temperature of the water, and that hasn’t changed.”

“So what then...?”

Esme pointed down as the next wave rushed inwards towards the rockface far below.

“If those keep coming,” She said, “There’ll be a real problem in England before long. In places like this, we’ve got several hundred metres between us and the water, but up and down the coast, waves like those will wipe towns off the map.”

“Yeah, what do you think it is?”

“I think there’s something we’re missing,” Esme pointed out towards the deep waters of the Irish Sea, “There...”

Max looked on puzzled as Esme pointed again.

“Don’t look above the water, look at the light above it...” Esme nodded, “There...”

Max looked again, seeing now the raised water level out in the sea.

“That’s a big wave...” He nodded, “What about it...?”

“Around midnight most nights, there’s a real big wave that goes coasting past, doesn’t crest or break, it just rolls over...” Esme kept her finger pointing at the wave, “Keep watching...”

The wave rolled on, disappearing from sight within minutes.

“Fast mover as well,” Max nodded, “Very fast, I’ve not seen waves like that before...”

“No one has...” Esme shook her head, “Except in the deep oceans, where the depth is enough to sustain them. Out here, a wave like that can cause a massive problem for anything it comes across.”

“Same time every night?”

“Same time every night, it fades before it exists the north end of the Irish sea.”

“Do we still have those sonar buoys out in the oceans?”

“Yeah, why?”

“Curious, humour me...”

Max leafed through the sheets of paper on the desk, “Not normal waves...” He passed Esme the sheet. “They’re more than three hundred metres high...”

“Waves that big don’t sustain,” Esme looked at the data, “The mass is too much for them to do anything but break.”

“And yet we just saw it...”

“Does it follow where the moon is, relative to position?”

“It does...” Max picked out another sheet, “and if the readings are right the last week, it’s been growing by ten metres a day for each of those days, in a month, it’ll be large enough to wipe out England without pausing to think.”

“So what can we do?”

“It’s got to be the moon,” Max tapped the nearby screen, “There’s nothing else with that sort of pull to it, we have to find a way to stop the pull.”

“Without the moon, there’s no tides anymore,” Esme looked at Max, “We’d have to find a whole new way to live.”

“That keeps up and we’ll all have to learn how to swim...” Max shook his head, “I think we should at least present the data to the Nations and let them make the decision...”

“And recommend we blow the moon up?” Esme frowned.

“It’s that or we relocate to the Alps...” Max nodded, “And I’m not much for cold places...”

The nations debated the matter in closed council, the moon could certainly be removed, there were sufficient fuel dumps on the surface to turn what was left into little more than dust in the sky.

The decision was made a week later when the wave didn’t dissipate before it hit the Isle of Man...

Esme sat on the edge of the lighthouse at Llandudno and looked out into the ocean, waiting for midnight to come. The wave had been big enough to scrape the second layer of rocks on the cliff last night, much more and they’d have to leave. The wave rolled up into view and Esme turned as Max came up from below. He passed her the sealed documents with the UN seal on them.

“I think they’ve made the decision...” He pointed at the documents

“Did you read it?”

“Didn’t have the heart...”

Esme broke the seal and opened the envelope within, nodding without words and passing the letter to Max. “They have made a decision...”

“And...?” Max didn’t move to take the letter.

“Tonight...” Esme looked down, “Midnight...”

“Midnight?” Max looked up at the moon, “But that’s...”

There was a bright flash and for a second, daylight was returned to the shore, Max covered his eyes and looked back down, waiting for the light to die down. After a minute, he looked up to see that the sky was covered in a hundred thousand gleaming shards, each of them gleaming like miniature stars in the sky, all that remained of the moon...

“Look...” Esme said quietly

“I’m looking,” Max nodded

“No...” Esme pointed out to the ocean as the wave continued onwards, not showing any sign of stopping. “How...?”

“I don’t know, but we’d better find out...”

Downstairs, the instruments read that the wave had continued on to the north, but then ceased. The sonar buoys showed that nothing had made it out of the Irish Sea and Max nodded, going through to the light room of the lighthouse where Esme sat on the couch looking outwards.

“It’s over...” Max nodded and passed her the paper.

She took it without a word and stood to look out over the waters, now glittering from the shards in the air. The sensors in the main room started to beep again as the sonar buoys picked something up. Max went back through and Esme heard a muffled curse.

“What is it?” She called

“Look north,” He called back, bringing in the tablet with the tracking data.

She turned back and looked north where the sea rose up and started towards the shore.

“That’s no wave...” She looked back to Max

“But it stopped a second ago...” Max looked at the tablet

The wave broke over the shore and rolled inland, water cascading from it in all directions as the speed slowed, no longer travelling with the tide, the water sloughed from it like a second skin and the light from above shone down on hundreds of metres of scales and spikes. Esme watched the colossus as a rumble could be felt through the lighthouse, then another, and another...

“It stopped...” Max looked on in horror as the lights could be seen inside the wave, “It stopped...”

“No...” Esme shook her head...

“It just stopped following the moon...”