



# DON'T ORDER THE LOBSTER

In this terrible place with no tides, the lobsters wait to die.

Most have no inkling of the horrific fates that await them, content to pace this bizarre mockery of the sea, their claws bound by unbreakable seals.

All except one.

Shuddering in the corner,  
smaller than the others,  
streaks of ancient script  
lining its carapace.

A striped lobster with a  
gift, and a curse, a  
knowledge greater than its  
senses, the ability to see  
Between The Waves.

For it, the tides of past,  
present, and future merge  
into a single current.

What it sees there tears  
at the sanity of its  
simple mind.

Worse than the abominations that leer at them constantly, the bizarre figures of pulpy flesh ripped free of exoskeleton, yet still filled with terrible animate life.

Worse than when their pink appendages plunge into the pocket of false ocean, the five clawed limb of terror plucking yet another unsuspecting lobster from the world.

The worst is what the striped lobster sees as the doomed brush against its bound claws: a pit filled with a seething sea, a plunge and a scream and an agonizing crimson death.

Behind it all, most foreboding, a deep growl of hunger from the abominations as they gaze upon the lobsters.

And yet, there are faint moments of hope.

To see Between The Waves is also to carry knowledge of He Whose Claws Hold The World, Whose Gills Form The Tides, Old As The Sea, primordial God of lobsters. In the midst of this horror the striped lobster clings to faith in Claws Hold World, the old prayers passed down from hardshell to hatchling for longer than memory.

Claws Hold World will come, if only the sacred movements of the primeval tides can be completed.

Only the final moments of free ocean remain clear, and then only because those are tinged with the terror of what happened next.

The angular alien structure, invitingly filled with food. Strange shadows on the seafloor.

A sudden lurch upwards, a feeling of drowning. Blurred and flickering shapes that danced before the striped lobster's eyestalks before resolving into sights it wished had stayed obscured.

A long and claustrophobic journey piled atop a quivering pile of bodies of fellow lobsters. Then this terrible place with no tides.

Time is short, few lobsters remain.

The currents Between The Waves,  
usually so clear, become clouded  
and hidden from the striped  
lobster.

Another abomination steps before  
the lobsters. It holds its  
nightmare appendage out, the  
lethal choice made.

The striped lobster's time has  
come.

Its legs stride first to one side,  
and then the other. Holding up its  
claws, unsure of why it does so,  
the momentum of its movement  
increases, the flow of the water  
shaping the dance, antennae  
flicking to a rhythm long thought  
lost. Escape. There can be only  
one escape from this fate, this  
doom, this devouring.

There can be only the dance of the  
tides.



The customer eyes the tank. Not many choices left, but he promised her a lobster dinner for their anniversary tonight, and a lobster dinner she would have. He whistles at the price per pound.

"Yeah, I guess give me the medium sized one...and that little one over in the corner."

The butcher nods, reaches into the water. The smaller lobster scuttles back and forth, waving its rubber-banded claws above its head.

"Wait, wait a second, check this out," The customer says, chuckling as the lobster twitches its strange face side to side in tune with its scampering legs.

"I'll be damned," The butcher replies, "a dancing lobster. That's a new one."

A thundering crash turns both men towards where the front of the grocery store used to be, now a gaping wound to the outside world.

A shadow falls over them, as does a drizzle of salty water. The customer cranes his neck to take in the massive shape that blots out the sun.

With a sudden sinking feeling, he realizes the shadow has claws.





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by TM Hogeman

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