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He finds solace in the soft warmth of his mother's embrace. She is a candle in the darkness of a cold, spartan childhood riven with discipline and punishment.



Though possessed of a near photographic memory, superior numerical skills and the burgeoning physique of an all-in wrestler, his early promise is stymied by debilitating shyness and a brooding melancholic bent.

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And yet...the rumbling bass thrum of the mighty engine turbines is a nightly backbeat to restless dreams in his solitary bunk as the years roll by. As the stately warship cuts a dark channel through unknowable fathom depths, his loneliness is a thickening fog.



Dragging moodily on a midnight roll-up in the damp fog of the quarterdeck after months at sea without shore leave, he flips through a much thumbed Navy News. Amongst the Personals, a hopeful young Yorkshirewoman seeks a sailor penpal...

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And the years pass...Our intrepid seaman sails the seven seas, returning only now and again to enjoy the comforts of home and family life. The growing boy basks in the sunshine of his mother's radiant love, but a looming darkness is gathering above Palace Beautiful...



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A second pregnancy tilts the world on its axis, throwing the delicate equilibrium of their love forever off kilter! As her belly ripens, the grip tightens, and he is slowly consumed by the frustrated misery of a man doomed to live an ordinary life.

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Driven to the edge of reason by the never-ending demands of a querulous newborn and a naughty boy bent down to dusk on mischief, his lonely, desperate wife begs our bold adventurer to resign his commission and return to her.



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Still grieving and seething with impotent rage, the reluctant soon-to-be landlubber must wave a sorrowful goodbye to his shipmates. The deadening tedium of a policeman's lot is his, as he dons a constable's helmet and shiny boots to join the beat!

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Is this the end? The indelible thumbprint of lifelong mental ill heath already marks the foreheads of the young Brimfields.

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His spurned wife will go on to find a love who will treasure her kindness, and when her self-absorbed, immature children cannot, will nurse her to a gentle premature death of liver cancer in her early fifties.



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Depressed, anxious, and prone to crippling self-doubt, his daughter is nevertheless loved, though not by the Giant Despair. Compelled by unknowable motives, she calls him now and again.