

WHAT LIES DROWNED MAY RISE

The spring tide was high that evening, and Finity's electric dinghy cut silently through the waves as she skimmed past the ruins of the railway station. The reflections of its broken upper windows shattered into glittering shards in her wake, no trains had stopped there for a very long time. When the floods came in 2032, the council sacrificed the low-lying estates first: there were protests when Tinker's Bridge was left to disappear beneath the waves, but the waters just kept rising. They finally abandoned the city when the boulevards flooded.

Finity navigated the route along New Midsummer Canal, checking the incident report on her helmet's heads-up display: *01-05-2053 19:47 Anomaly detected, temperature/light outside normal parameters. Investigate possible conflagration at beacon elevation point.*

"Conflagration, no chance!" she muttered.

Her family was one of the last to evacuate to the floating encampment moored off Bow Brickhill. She had been born on the water, and her parents had tried to keep the old city alive with their stories, but she couldn't imagine a world where anything was dry enough to burn. As the dinghy cruised above the submerged Rose memorial, she peered down at the pale fish weaving too quickly between the broken pillars: they seemed to be especially agitated today. Once again, she cursed her boss for sending her to patrol this remote Eastern sector, she hated working alone up here. She reached the spot where the waters lapped at the cracked path towards the beacon, moored the dinghy and trudged heavily up the hill.

She froze when she saw the ring of unkempt figures surrounding the old pyramid. She had heard rumours there were still some unfortunates eking out an existence in the flooded ruins, but this was unprecedented. Acrid smoke forced the purifiers in her suit to whirr to life. The dwellers must have been hoarding this driftwood for years, they had piled ancient trunks and branches around the base of the pyramid and set them ablaze. She remembered her parents' tales of the old ways, how every Mayday, the pyramid used to light up to mimic fires here from long ago, when the veil between worlds grew thin and wise ones could summon creatures from darker realms.

She edged closer. Tinny chanting crackled through her helmet speakers.

"From the water, from the deep! Arise, arise, crawl from your sleep!"

The air darkened and tensed around her, charged with something ancient and wrong. The flames surged higher, licking hungrily at the pyramid's rusted frame. A deep, resonant thrum vibrated through the ground beneath her boots.

Then—a grinding crunch.

She turned just in time to see the water roiling, her dinghy shattered like a toy, fragments flung into the air. A vast, glistening tentacle uncoiled from the depths, black as the void, dripping with slime. It slithered onto the path towards her.

The chanting swelled.

Finity stepped back, her heart hammering. The beacon was burning. The old stories were true.

The thing beneath the flood was answering their call.

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