



lights would be ruined by contact with salt water, so they were packed in water-tight barrels.

As the sun was rising, the third day, one of the crew, the lookout aloft, suddenly fell ill and carefully climbed down. When his ship mates asked him what was the matter, they could see he was completely blanched. The way he attempted to point out to sea, they could tell he was terrified and in shock. The captain took matters into his own hands and climbed up to the top of the mast, to see for himself. He soon realized that he need not be any higher than the deck to see the concern. The monster's head was rising from the surface of the sea, supported by a long neck. Because of the angle of the sunlight, and the clearness of the water, they could see the massive body of this legendary creature. The submerged portion, alone, was almost as big as the ship. His head, which was as big as the ship's cabin, was now prominently above the deck walls, while the captain climbed back down, yelling for the men to take up arms. This proved to be late in coming, since half the men were gone below decks, and the other half had already prepared for battle. In panic, a single shot was fired. That was the beginning of the end. The unharmed beast casually opened his cavernous mouth. A rushing wind could be heard, then the sparks shot forward, from his nostrils, igniting the stream of flammable vapours. Everyone on the deck was now dead. Some of the bodies were in easily accessible reach, so they were harvested as a small meal.

Two of the sailors, though in terror, were watching through the cabin loop holes. They looked at each other in complete ignorance of what to do. Judging from the last attempt to attack the monster, doing nothing seemed like a really good idea, so that is what they continued doing. Apparently, the other crew members thought the same, if you could call such brain activity "thinking." Much of the deck was scorched, and some of the lower, unfurled, sails were still in flames.

The sailors could see the creature's head, as it turned to look around. A thick, protruding ridge shaded his eye. The vertical pupil, splitting the iris, was totally black. Even his eyelids had scales like armour, as did every bit of his skin. His blinking was lazy. Each time he opened his eye, it was like a sunrise, due to the brilliant colours of his large iris. His teeth were too many to count, yet they were quite large, like long daggers that are too thick at the base. The slight inward tilt, of these massive triangles, ensured that any struggles, by captured prey, would only serve to further impale.

This was clearly an air breathing animal, so he was comfortable to stay with the vessel as long as his curiosity endured. After a few minutes, or was it an hour, he apparently got a bit bored, so he set fire to the ship, with another flame throwing exhibition, this time focused on one spot, at the distant wall of the ship's deck. The beast was satisfied, after watching the blaze for a short time, and left.

The structure was too far damaged to hold up to the pressure and began to break up. The survivors held on to the floating barrels until they could get to the shuttle boat, that had stayed afloat when the ship went down. These valuable barrels were their financial means to get home, so the sailors lashed them together, behind the boat, and rowed straight for the shore. Once they got to shore, they hauled the barrels to a secluded spot. Hiking to the nearest town, they traded the valuables for the provisions needed to make the return trip home. They never even looked at another ship for the rest of their lives.