

In 1985, 24-year-old Grey Tigrett happens upon the island of Elba where he recedes into an emotional exile. Fourteen years later, three pivotal events shatter his asylum, revealing to him whether Elba was his downfall or will be his savior.

**Able Was I**

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*Before I saw Elba, there was nothing but sea and sky. Then it appeared, small on the horizon, an insignificant fleck just below the vanishing point. On the water, perspectives are not forged from hard angles. No perfect square is centered on the edge of the sea. The imminence is the same, yet the path, variable. Nascent and amorphous, the island bobs up, down, right and left as the boat stays its course.*

Let it go, he told himself. Hot sea air streamed past as he made his way to the bow. There was a crowd but that didn't matter; he was alone. He spread his feet wide across the deck's planks and rode the water's pitch. Arm's length from the rail, he leaned into the wind, balanced gravity against resistance and released his grip. For an instant he was weightless, a buoyant extension of the ship. His shoulder-length hair floated behind, fanning out upon a plane of air. It felt epic and empowering, and his mind began to calm.

Ahead, the division between sea and sky stretched as far as he could see; the little dot of land a flaw in its harmony. "Elba." The rush of sea and wind were so loud he couldn't hear his own whisper; he wasn't even sure if he had said it out loud. It was funny to think of it as their destination, this island about which he knew nothing. Whether it was his release, the solitude or simply the sea, he didn't care; something had dispelled his anxiety. He would deconstruct the moment later but now he was grateful to give in to it and allow his racing thoughts to slow. Discomfort settled like fine silt, a delicate mask. As Elba grew larger, its form began to take shape, the edges not rigid but soft and muted. The Mediterranean faded upward like a variegated rose.

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