

## THE VERY GREAT AND THE VERY SMALL

On the final leg of her journey, Thorn encounters a group of people on holiday. One of them, a nobleman named Thunderfist, has dreams of making his fortune through illicit trade along the seacoast. He likens the raging sea as a 'lusty whore' to be conquered and subdued. But when he is tested, he comes to understand the mariners' view of a marriage of sea and storm together – a vastness without edge, or center. And where the ocean floor rises to meet the ragged shoreline the daughters of that union are manifest in the perils of the raging surf.

Later, in a fevered dream, Thorn sees herself back at the Promontory as she observes the Traveller and the Ancient together, holding a Sailor's Stone between them while they carry on an animated discussion about its properties. What is the essence of the needle's movement? What causes the Northern Lights? the tides? In an attempt to clear his mind the Traveller tries to imagine himself in the middle of a featureless sea far from shore, if that could possibly offer a clue. But to his disappointment all he can see are – waves.

Thorn is but a speck in history. Always drawn to the Moon, she sees herself, her place, in the change of time, of the rise and fall of kingdoms and memory. On the final day of her freedom, a day before the New Moon, she rises in the early morning darkness to view the slender form of the Lady ascend the eastern horizon. As dawn approaches, her form grows ever more ephemeral. The advent of daylight quickly overpowers her image, and Thorn's story reaches its end.