

SAILBAD THE SINNER (by Jeff Thomas)

Synopsis

In the big annual sailing race, Jerry loses yet again to DeVink, his arrogant and obnoxious rival, making it ten losses in a row.

Jerry dreads telling his grandfather, who is in the hospital. With his last breath, his grandfather orders Jerry to beat DeVink next year for the sake of family honor.

At the yacht club's awards dinner, DeVink receives the Yachtsman of the Year trophy. Jerry tries to snatch it from him, causes an uproar.

At the graveside service for the grandfather, the odd funeral director (the Devil's first appearance) welcomes Jerry to the dark side. Jerry's weird aunt hands him her library card, advises him to use the occult.

The next day, Jerry browses through library stacks. He meets Tina, a vision in a red mini-skirt. She yanks out books for him to read, vanishes.

At home, Jerry dives into the occult. Little by little, day by day, as he delves into hexes and curses and Santeria and more, his obsession grows. He becomes unhinged, builds a shrine in his living room that he calls the Donkinator, a symbol of his hatred for DeVink.

Oblivious to his fiancée's concerns, he keeps asking her for more grilled cheese sandwiches. When Margie packs her bags and moves out, he barely notices.

A year later, the week before the big race, Hank, Jerry's best friend and crew, manages to gain entrance to Jerry's life. Hank sees how disconnected Jerry is from reality, convinces him to wash up and get a drink, like old times. At the bar, Jerry sees DeVink stride in, holding hands with Margie. Jerry loses it, causes a ruckus, storms out.

Drunk, dejected, Jerry stumbles around on the deserted streets. Tina appears, leads him to an establishment Jerry somehow never noticed before called Six's Place. It's a bistro run by a French maitre' d who looks remarkably like the funeral director.

Six offers Jerry a foolproof plan to beat DeVink. A perfect replica of Jerry's boat will be strategically placed in a cove along the race course. In the middle of the night, Jerry will steer his boat to a hidden location, get in his car, and drive it to the replica location. Once he rejoins the race, he will have an insurmountable lead on DeVink.

The deal is Jerry has to hand over his life savings. Jerry refuses. As Six shoves him out the door, he hands Jerry a box of red croissants. They have an evil effect on him.

Jerry heads to the marina, dons SCUBA gear, slips into the water, and drills a hole in the bottom of DeVink's boat.

The next morning, he learns he sank the wrong boat. Tina shows up, convinces him to take Six's offer, which he does.

Jerry stumbles along an increasingly crazy slope. He encounters Six several more times – as a Brit soccer hooligan, a homeless panhandler, and a hick farmer. Jerry falls for Tina, who seems to have feelings for him.

Jerry doesn't get that Six's deals never work out the way they were billed. The morning of the race, Jerry's boat burns to the waterline. His only choice is to race on a rotten dilapidated schooner with Six as his helmsman. It's a wild night.

In the end, among lessons learned about obsession, Jerry recovers his sanity, foils Six, and meets someone who looks like Tina but is just as real as he is.