The moment both hands touched

Having accepted the research proposal of going into open sea in order to investigate the anomalous amount of thunderstorms near Nova Scotia wasn’t the best idea to be honest. It was cold, rainy and extremely lonely, even though He had an entire crew of fishermen with him. I miss New York city, He thought. Mmmh, He said with all the strength he had in his body. The fishermen looked at him with the coldest pity possible. He thought that this wasn’t a job for a young respectful Scientist and, in the exact moment He remembered his brilliant typical white coat, a lightning bolt stroke right in the middle of the ocean and the loudest sound was heard by everyone on the boat. Waves became bigger, the not-so-big boat started swinging as if it was a card in a magician’s hands and the fishermen started to scream things that He couldn’t understand. He couldn’t hear a thing and, while trying to go back into his senses, he saw a body floating on the water. Body, a body, a body here!, He screamed. In an impulse, He put his hand on the water trying to reach the body. Another big wave came and the boat turned a bit making it easier for him to touch the hand of that old man floating.

 This moment, the moment both hands touched, is the one that He was going to regret forever. When the skins of both men felt each other, He fell back as if he suffered a stroke or some unrecognizable pain instantly. The sound of his body touching the boat bow made the fishermen even more scared. They all tried to help the Scientist, but, when they saw that body floating near the boat, the fishermen started swearing in many different languages. That’s bad, one of them said. No one touches the body, said another one. That’s the curse, that’s the Nova Scotia curse, said the oldest one. The Scientist got up again on his feet feeling as if he was electrocuted but managed to survive. Don’t touch the boy!, screamed the captain. What? Why don’t touch me? He asked looking at all of them. Touching a dead body in New Scotia open sea is a curse! It is the devil himself trying to exchange bodies with you, said the eldest fisherman. It-it- no- there is no sense in this, I am not the devil because I tried to save that man’s life, answered the Scientist in a very rational and unexpected way. No one touches him, warned the captain. No one touched him and He started feeling numb. They returned to the coast immediately and he was expelled from the boat as soon as they arrived.

 He kept thinking that the devil wasn’t in his body and how it all seemed like an old dumb popular belief. Although He was sure that there was no actual curse, everything in his life fell apart pretty quickly. His marriage ended soon, his position at the University was terminated with a very awkward excuse, He had to move to the countryside of New York state in order to save money and the Scientist discovered to have a very rare blood disease. Within years, he wasn’t one of the brightest researchers in the country anymore, He was just the guy who touched a dead body floating in the New Scotia cold and cursed sea.

Years passed, decades passed and He became an old man living in the ugliest farm in the state. He never stopped studying science and sooner than later he discovered that he could plant his own food and live totally by himself there. Every day when he woke up, he immediately felt sadness taking control of his body. Sleeping was fine because he felt nothing and he didn’t have to think about the moment he touched that hand. He wanted to come back to that moment in order to change everything. At some point, in a rainy night, very similar to that one in which Dr. Frankenstein brought the Creature to life, the Scientist thought about a time machine. Yes, a time machine!, He exclaimed alone in his bedroom. For 2 years He read everything He could, He bought the necessary materials, He invented some prototypes and, after this silly work, He screamed internally: it’s alive, the time machine is alive!

Of course it wasn’t alive, since it is a machine, but He was sure it actually would work. Without any preparation, He got inside the machine and inserted the specific date He wanted to go to. Many years back, to that day I got cursed, He said to himself. Although He had no idea how to do that, the plan was pretty simple: make himself able to avoid to touch the body. He inserted the numbers, the date, the place and there He went, travelling through time like the crazy Scientist He was. When the machine opened, He fell like a lightning bolt from a very high point in the sky into the freezing waters of Nova Scotia. He had forgotten that the place was in the middle of the ocean. He couldn’t see anything, He felt his body die little by little, He tried to swim, He just wanted to warn his younger self to never touch the body of the devil, do not try to save the life of that man, He would say. He was being thrown by the waves from a place to another in the middle of the ocean and, at some point, He gave up and started crying tears that were being mixed with the ocean, He had failed himself, his marriage, his work, his life, his happiness, everything failed from the point both hands touched onwards. He started drowning, felt his lungs being filled with salt cold water. He knew he was going to die there, so so so close! When He couldn’t move anymore muscles, right there just floating, He felt something approaching him and suddenly a hand touched his hand, and then He closed his eyes forever.