

Mary Celeste: The Voyage Without Its People

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A merchant ship was found adrift with nobody aboard and its boat missing. The genuine puzzle survives beneath later embellishments: why did ten people abandon a vessel that could still reach port?

STATUS	Documented abandonment; cause and fate of people unknown
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	Atlantic Ocean near the Azores
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Secrets & conspiracies
STORY HISTORY	December 1872

THE ACCOUNT

On December 4, 1872, the crew of Dei Gratia found Mary Celeste moving erratically in the Atlantic. Boarding revealed no people. Captain Benjamin Briggs, his wife, their young daughter and seven crewmen were gone. The ship had sailed from New York carrying alcohol for Genoa. Its boat was missing, suggesting a departure from the vessel rather than an inexplicable disappearance from its rooms.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Royal Museums Greenwich describes damaged sails and rigging, water in the ship, a partly dismantled pump and missing navigational instruments and papers. Investigators found no clear evidence of violence, and the vessel was brought to Gibraltar. The reason for abandonment remains unresolved. Arthur Conan Doyle's later fictional survivor account introduced inaccuracies into popular memory; it must not be treated as testimony from the missing company.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

The strongest question is not what monster came aboard, but what danger made a small boat seem safer than a large ship. The decision can be imagined without pretending to know it. Mary Celeste's enduring dread sits in that unrecoverable judgment: the vessel survived, while the people who chose to leave it never returned to explain why.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

The mystery of the Mary Celeste

Royal Museums Greenwich

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/maritime-history/mystery-mary-celeste>

RETURN TO THE STORY

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<https://u225x.com/record/STR-SECRET-021>