

Revisiting the Past

The first thing I noticed was how every part of me was numb. *Where am I?*

The second thing I noticed was all the objects I was buried underneath. *Am I still alive?*

Mustering up my energy, I attempted to move the objects away from me, but my attempts proved to be futile as my arms were too weak.

Disgruntled, I decided to rest a bit more before trying to get up again.

Swept up by a net. Turbulent waves. Strong currents. Darkness.

A distant *crunch* sound woke me from my flashbacks. The hammering in my heart increased as the sound moved closer and closer. I could hear it coming from right beside me.

“Help!” I cried measily.

Moments later, I felt the objects around me shifting away. The little specks of light that were visible to me beneath the mound of objects gave way to a vast space. I was momentarily blinded by the brightness. After my eyes had adjusted, my vision was obstructed once again as a man’s face came into view. He peered down at me with curiosity before gingerly holding out his hand to help me up.

And then I noticed it.

My tail was gone, and in its place were two long limbs that supported my weight on the sandy ground. The tail that helped me swim in the Atlantic Ocean all these years just suddenly disappeared. The thought made me weak, and I stumbled on the sand.

The sand I was standing on also seemed peculiar. It was very dry unlike the wet sand

lining the bottom of the Red Valley. The man must have noticed my confusion as he reassured me.

“You’ll get used to moving with your new legs,” he said before turning away.

I surveyed my surroundings, noticing the gentle waves that lapped onto the dry sand. *Was that where I came from?* As I turned back to the mysterious man, I noticed he was also staring in the direction of the water. His broad stature contradicted the serenity of his facial features. He kept his auburn curls wild and untamed, yet sported a neatly trimmed beard. From his looks, he resembled the age of my father.

Keeping my gaze on this mysterious man, I asked, “How do I go back?”

“You can’t,” his reply was simple, unperturbed by my question.

“What do you mean?” I asked, hoping that he was merely joking. Surely, there must be a way for me to go back to the Red Valley.

Still staring at the water, he told me, “Anything washed on this shore has no way of going back. You’re lucky if someone from land can find you and bring you with them.”

“Where do they bring you to?” I inquired further.

“Beats me, but one thing’s for sure, wherever they go, they never come back,” he responded before taking a seat on the dry sandy ground. “You must be tired, come sit here.”

I carefully walked across the sand before sitting down beside him, “Why haven’t you left yet?”

He gazed thoughtfully into the water before responding, “There is someone I’m waiting for.”

The heat of the afternoon slowly dwindled as the sun began setting.

“Were they a merperson too?”

The man slowly nodded. This time, when he spoke, a glimmer of adoration could be seen in his eyes.

“She is a mermaid, the most beautiful mermaid I’ve ever met. We were married, and expecting a lovely baby girl,” he sighs, “a baby girl I never got to meet.”

I didn’t dare take my eyes off the rising sun. In this moment, everything came into realization. I will not be returning to my home. Lucky, Mrs. Normandy, and all my other family and friends will have to go on with their lives without me.

This time, the man asked me a question, “How did you end up here?”

I recall the night I went to help Patricia. How a net had caught me in its tangled plastic web. He listened with earnest, perhaps his experience is not too different from mine. For quite some time, we both stared out into the horizon. I was reminiscing about my home in the Red Valley, and perhaps he was thinking about his life before being stranded here.

I couldn’t imagine myself being stranded here forever. There must be a way back to the Red Valley.

Standing up, I said, “I need to go back, I have people I must see.”

“It’s impossible to go back.”

“Why?” I was getting more desperate with every passing second.

He sighs, “We’re not in the same world as them anymore.”

“Where are we?”

“In a better place.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s time for our souls to find peace.”

“But what about your wife and daughter? Don’t you miss them?”

“I have tried contacting her.” He picks up a glass bottle lying nearby. Turning the bottle in his hands he explains, “Hopefully one day, she can find one of these messages that I sent in these bottles across the ocean. I hope she knows I put a lot of thought into the poems I create.”

With only a small sliver of light visible from the sun, the man shares his heartfelt poem, “To my lovely wife Cordelia, Cordelia Normandy:

The current slithers between your golden hair,

Reflecting the shining light from above.

Your smile is more pure than the water that surrounds us,

I can’t help but to just fall in love.”