

Suddenly Sinking

“So, how come you are mad at your teacher?” I asked while lounged on my couch.

“Today I had to present my writing to the class and the teacher said it was very descriptive,” Lucky says beside me, “but you should’ve seen her face when I told her my writing was inspired by my mom.”

“She dislikes my mom,” Lucky goes on, “they used to teach at the same school and mom stated their personalities clash. After I told her about what inspired my writing, she claimed that I can’t have everything revolving around my mom, and that I should write things about my dad too, you know, to be fair and whatnot.”

“But you’ve never met your father,” I remarked.

“Exactly, and she knows, which is why I wanna get my English teacher fired.” Lucky finishes off.

I wouldn’t blame Lucky for getting riled up. Mrs. Normandy is one of the kindest souls in the Atlantic Ocean. She constantly supported me through high school, and wrote the reference letter that got me accepted into my dream university.

Mrs. Normandy frequently volunteers at the Ocean Cleaning Committee (OCC), an organization dedicated to removing harmful above-world objects from our neighborhood, the Red Valley. Recently, she joined the OCC as a full-time member due to the increase of above-world objects that were swept in our neighborhood. We all know the real reason she joined is because her husband was one of the first to get caught in the above-world objects and swept away. Now, this deadly phenomenon is known as the Ordure Current.

Stewart, one of my closest friends, was the first to be swept away by the Current. He was a sturgeon known for his bubbly personality. Sixteen years ago, he suddenly disappeared. In the morning, an announcement was posted alerting all citizens of the Red Valley to keep their eye out for a gray-scaled sturgeon; a sturgeon that looked nearly identical to all the other sturgeons in our neighborhood. After months of no luck from the merpeople or creatures, Mr. Normandy was the one who discovered a web of plastic with Stewart's fin stuck to one of them. Mrs. Normandy confirmed it was an above-world object.

Since then, the Ordure Current has taken countless lives including Mr. Normandy. No one has ever survived being swept up by this deadly current. It doesn't stop there. Each year, the number of fatalities increase as the amount of garbage in the Red Valley also increases.

Going back to Lucky, I ask, "Did you figure out who wrote the poem yet?"

Lucky shakes her head. Last week, Lucky came to me with a poem she found enclosed in a corked glass bottle.

To my lovely wife:

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.

We have been trying to find the sender of this message ever since it washed up near the dumpsters behind my apartment. Our only guess is that it came from the above-world.

The Atlantic Ocean holds many tales and myths, many of them revolving around the unknown place of the above-world. Many say the above-world is filled with merpeople hunters. Others believe it is where merpeople go after the end of their lives.

“I better get going now,” Lucky jumps up from her spot and starts gathering her belongings, “as always, thank you for tutoring me.”

“No worries, tell Mrs. Normandy I said hi,” I responded, “I should get ready to leave too, I promised Patricia that I would go over to trim her kelp plants.”

“Is her fin healing well?” Lucky casts a worried glance.

“Yep,” I replied as Lucky was zipping up her bag, “she said the fin will be fully healed in a few weeks.”

“That’s good, see you around!” Lucky exclaimed before closing my apartment door behind her.

Soon after, I pack my bag before heading out into the cool waters of the Red Valley.

Patricia’s house is located in Seacrown Village, the largest community of pollock in the Atlantic Ocean. I immediately recognized her house due to the large display of above-world objects she has in front of her house. Over the years, Patricia has gained recognition due to her interest in the above-world. I recognize the clay pot I gifted to Patricia after I found it beside my apartment’s dumpster.

No one answered the door the first time I rang the doorbell. No worries, I thought, Patricia lives alone, she might need a few seconds. After ten minutes of waiting, I sensed that something was wrong. Movement caught my eye as Patricia’s neighbor, Freddie, came onto his porch.

“Patricia wanted me to tell you that she has a doctor’s appointment,” Freddie said.

“When did she say she’ll be back?” I questioned.

Freddie shrugged his shoulders, “She didn’t say.”

I nodded a thank you to Freddie before I began trimming Patricia’s kelp plants.

By the time I finished, only a sliver of light remained in the eerily empty street. I hurriedly returned Patricia’s gardening tools to the shed before gathering my own things. With no sign of Patricia, I started making my way back to my home.

In the distance, the water looked cloudy. It’s those pollock blowing bubbles again, I thought. Except, the bubbles seemed to be moving towards me faster than usual. They moved closer and closer, until I realized they weren’t bubbles, but a giant sheet of something. I tried escaping, but the current carried the object too fast. The sheet that entrapped me flapped around in the water, binding my limbs and obstructing my vision. Even as I was attached to the sheet, the current never slowed down. I was helpless as I was pulled deep into the darkness.

(To be continued)