**“The Little Merman”**

**1250 Words**

The night sky was a painting of stars, scattered scaressly through the whole night, until sea met sky, stretching on for miles. Beneath the stars, was a girl, a princess no less. standing alone on a beach, a silky nightgown hung off her thin frame. A lantern hung for her hands, illuminating the ocean in front of her. She was waiting for someone, she was waiting for him: her prince, Eric. She instinctively looked around. She felt the rush of adrenaline coursing through her body. She knew what would happen if she was caught with him here. Not because she wasn’t supposed to be out after dark, although that did play a part. He was a merman, and she was a human. He was a prince, and she was a princess. They were never supposed to meet, she was never meant to fall in love with him.

 But he had saved her. How could she not love him? It had been a night sort of like this, the only light had been from the moonlight. It had been the night of her eighteenth birthday. Ships were on the water, battered by waves. The sound of boards breaking, and strong wind met her ears. She was tossed over the thin railing of the ship. She had felt her body being pulled into the cold water, she tried to scream but her lungs filled with saltwater, and nobody heard her. When she thought she might drown, she had felt arms close around her body, and air enter her lungs again. When she awoke the next day, she had been laying on this very beach, with her hair stuck to her face, and sand making her skin feel course and rough. There he had been, standing in the water looking at her. She had crawled to him, and made him a promise to repay him however she could.

As Liliana stood on the beach, a cool breeze brought the smell of saltwater to her nose. She felt an uneasy feeling, as if maybe this time he would not come. But then, she saw him. She smiled.

*“Hi,”* she whispered. She waded into the water to be closer to him.

“I brought you something.” He said, and in his hand was a seashell. It was smooth as glass, and shiny. She smiled.

“I brought you something too.” She replied, and from her packet she pulled an amulet. Which shone in the starlight. She pressed it into the palm of his hand. He turned it over and over, as if he would always find it intriguing. *like me,* she thought. Standing in the cold water, Liliana reached for Eric’s hand. They stayed like that for a long time, not speaking, except the occasional chuckle or exhale of breath there was only silence, and the song of the sea. When the sun began to appear on the horizon. Eric turned to her, and kissed her. She felt the warmth of his body pressed against hers.

“I have to go.” She said, pulling away from the warmth of Eric, and sighing. He nodded, solemnly. As she retrieved her lantern and made her way back from the shore, her feet crunching seashells. She thought of him, and how warm he made her feel.

Her prince, beneath the ocean began wondering, as he often did if there was a way for them ever to be together. There was an idea, but everytime it flickered into his head, he swatted it away, as the prospect was too scary. He could visit the sea witch, and bid that she turn him into a human, he knew what he would be giving up though. he was the only heir to the throne. But in Eric’s mind, a dagger to the heart would be worth it for her, he loved her. When he returned home, he was met by his father, King Triton. His father looked angry, and when his eyes lit upon Eric he scowled.

“Eric, where have you been? Your mother and I were extremely worried, we thought something happened to you, we thought you were captured by humans, son!” He bellowed. Eric bowed his head in shame. His father was mad, and rightfully so, the relationship between humans and merfolk had been tumultuous, and cruel. Wars had once raged before them. Now, they stayed away from each other, in delicate distance. As a child, Eric had always shrunken in his father’s wrath, but today he decided to stand up to him.

“There’s a girl, father. She is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen, she looks just like a painting, unreal to me. I love her, and I will always love her, nothing can change that,” He said, meeting his father’s gaze. His father’s eyes filled with rage.

“A human girl? Do you have any idea what you have done?!” He roared, and Eric stepped back. His father was bursting with rage.

“You have put us all in danger!” He said, and he grabbed his son, dragging him toward the dungeon. Where he threw him behind bars. As he slammed the door, and the bars clanged Eric shrunk into a corner, defeated.

That night, Liliana stood on the beach. There was no moonlight though, only the dim lantern light cast over the water. She waited there, as the minutes ticked by. She sighed sadly. She had always wondered, when the last time she saw him would be. Only to realize, that it would be today. She retreated from the beach, sad and defeated. The next day, Liliana locked herself in her chambers, looking at the shell her prince had given her. Her eyes were filled with tears, as she remembered that he’d promise to see her again. Her chamber door swung open.

“I asked not to be disturbed unless emergency.” She said, not turning to whomever was in the doorway.

“Your parents have summoned you.” a servant said. Reluctantly she stood and walked down the long corridors to her parents.

“Daughter of mine, I have spectacular news for you darling.” Her mother said, taking Liliana’s hand in her own.

“We have forged an alliance with the Kingdom of the Imadiam. To cement this relationship, we have agreed to have you marry the son of the King.” She said.

“In a few short days you will be married.” The Queen told her, and then dismissed her. Back in her chamber Liliana cried to herself. That night, she made her way down to the beach again. She extinguished the lantern, and waited there. He never came. Day after day, she went and waited. The day of her wedding, she woke early. In front of the mirror, she watched flowers being braided into her hair, and she sucked in air as servants tightened her corset. She looked beautiful, anyone she be lucky to have her as a wife she was told. Though she did not just want anyone. Fair beneath the sea, King Triton paid a visit to the sea which.

When Ursula saw the king at her cave door, her lips curled into a cruel smile.

 “Your Greatness, what brings you to my side of the sea?” She asked. The King took a heavy seat in his chair. He grimaced.

 “It’s my son, Eric. He met a human girl, Princess of Atlantica. He loves her.” He told Ursula. The witch nodded.

 “What do you need from me King?” She asked. The King did not meet her eyes.

 “The Princess, I want her gone, so my son can never see her again.” Ursula nodded, smirking. The unknowing bride, would meet the end that night, on her wedding night.

Liliana, and her husband stood together on the ship. She was silent, as she looked over the water. . Suddenly, there was a a crack of lighting across the sky. Liliana grasped at the railing of the boat. Her husband grabbed onto her. In one swift motion, she was thrown overboard. She yelled, absolutely terrified. As cold water enveloped her she felt her body being pulled into the ocean and being held there by the waves. The gasp that escaped her mouth was one not heard over the rush of water. Far below her, was the man she had fallen in love with all those moons ago. Liliana fought against the water, her wedding gown getting tangled in rocks and seaweed. Waves crashed over her head and she felt herself losing the ability to breathe. She choked on water, and tried to stay above the waves. Though she knew it was a losing game. The last thought that flickered into her head before she closed her eyes forever was of him, of Eric, *i love you*.