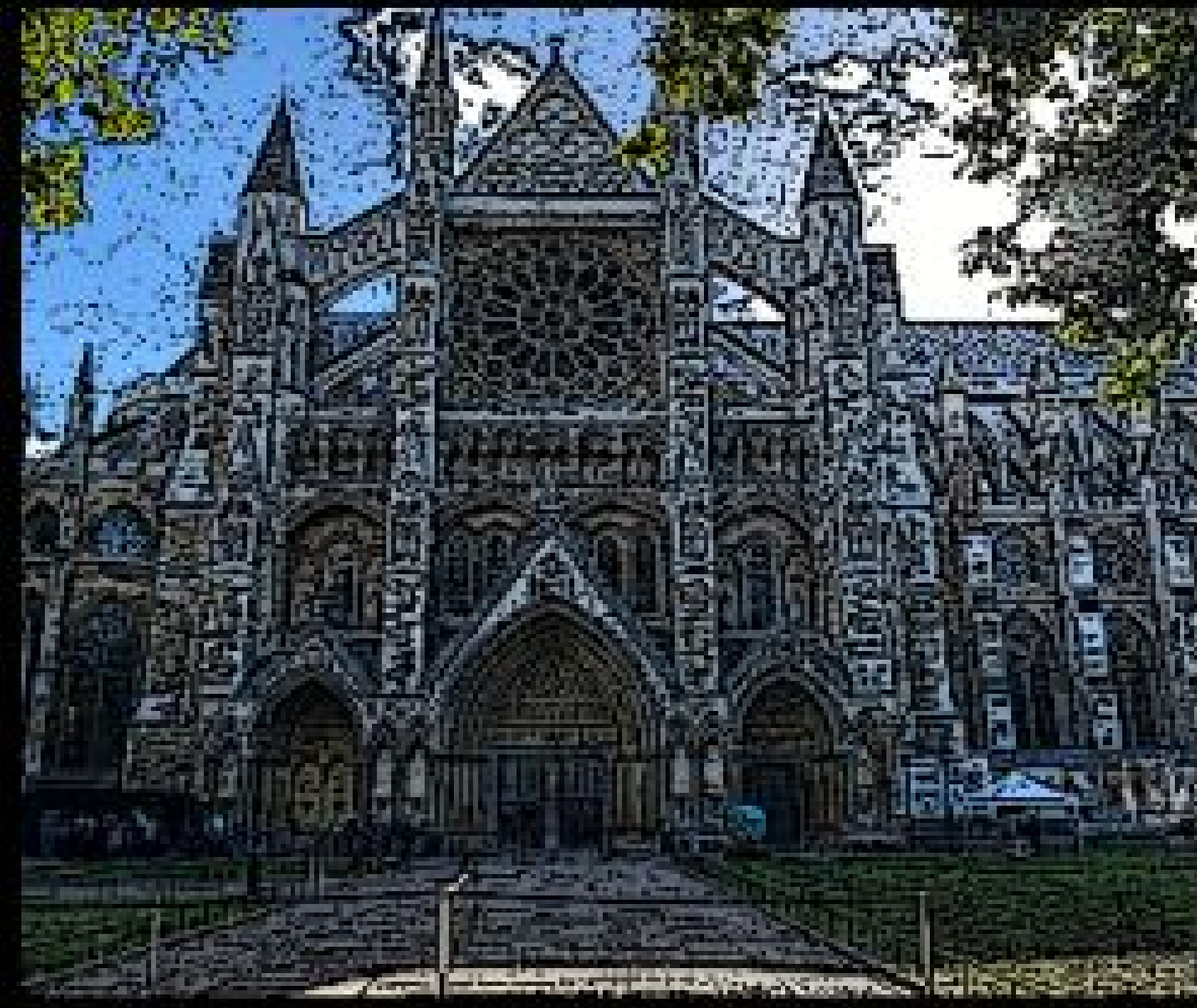


Medusa: How it should have ended

Once upon a time there lived a girl, soft and graceful. Her name was Medusa. She was one of the daughters of the sea deities Phorcys and Ceto and she lived close to the Hesperides in the Western Ocean near Sarpedon. As was common for the time, Medusa committed to devoting her life to the temple of Athena where she was a priestess.



When she was relieved of her priestly duties, she would often linger around the ocean. She would stare into the horizon for hours, letting her mind wander around love and sacrifice secretly craving it even if she knew it would not be forgiven.



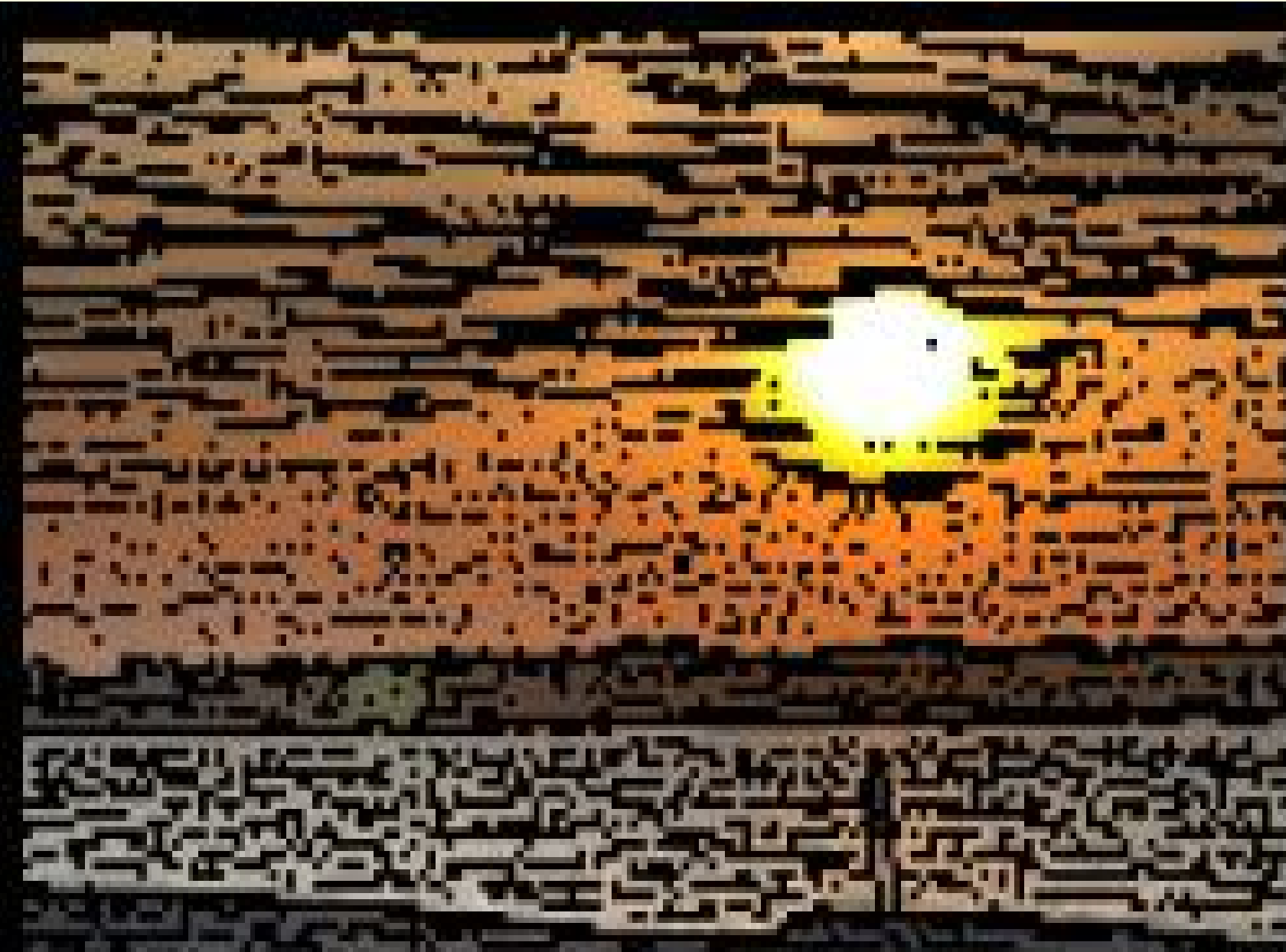
When the moon and the wind would not allow her to be near the sea, she would loiter around lush forests. Her cat, Astro was a lovable creature who would go about these adventures with her.



She would seldom be with her family but on an occasion that she was, she cherished their company.



While she was determined to stay celibate and honour Athena, she could not stop thinking about love and all the poems written about it. She made a promise to herself that she would only let her mind wander around the sea. Little did she know that the sea would change the entire course of her life.



One day, on a fine sunny morning a man walked into the temple just when Medusa was getting finished with her priestly duties. He was a tall man who was the quiet kind of handsome. He approached Medusa with curious delight in his eyes.



Man: It's a shame that a woman such as you has her soul sold to the gods.
Medusa: The temple is not expecting visitors today. Is there any purpose to your presence?



Man: I'm looking at you. What other purpose would I need?
Medusa: Do you have no shame in courting a priestess?



Man: I have watched you at the south shore in Sarpedon. How does one gaze into the ocean for hours on end?
Medusa: Who are you and why do you spy?



Man: I am not here to hurt you. I am simply fascinated by your trance with the ocean.
Medusa: You have no business in the matter of my dreams and imaginations. Leave now!

Medusa wanted the man to leave but there was something familiar about him. It was almost as if she felt safe around him even though his actions proved he could be dangerous.



Man: Tell me priestess, are your dreams doomed to be trapped inside your head? Do they torment you waiting to be made into reality?
Medusa: I...I don't... how do you mean?



Man: You know exactly what I mean priestess. I am but a curious stranger and your dreams will remain a secret that will die with me.
Medusa: I have read poems of betrayal and sorrow and I refuse to be a poet's subject.



Man: Oh so you're a woman that reads. How fascinating. What are your favorite poems?
Medusa: Poems of flowers and the skies. Poems of the heroic tales of the gods and poems of...love.



Man: Poems of love you say? Well that is odd for a priestess wouldn't you think?
Medusa: My life is dedicated to Athena but I am a mortal after all.

Medusa knew she was walking on dangerous territory with her admission but she was already lost in this strange man's fascination with her. She was failing at keeping the promise she made to herself.



Man: I have never seen anyone like you. Your skin is like sunshine and your words glow with wisdom. I want to give you everything you dream of.
Medusa: I have chosen my life. Nobody can help me.



Man: Can you keep a secret?
Medusa:

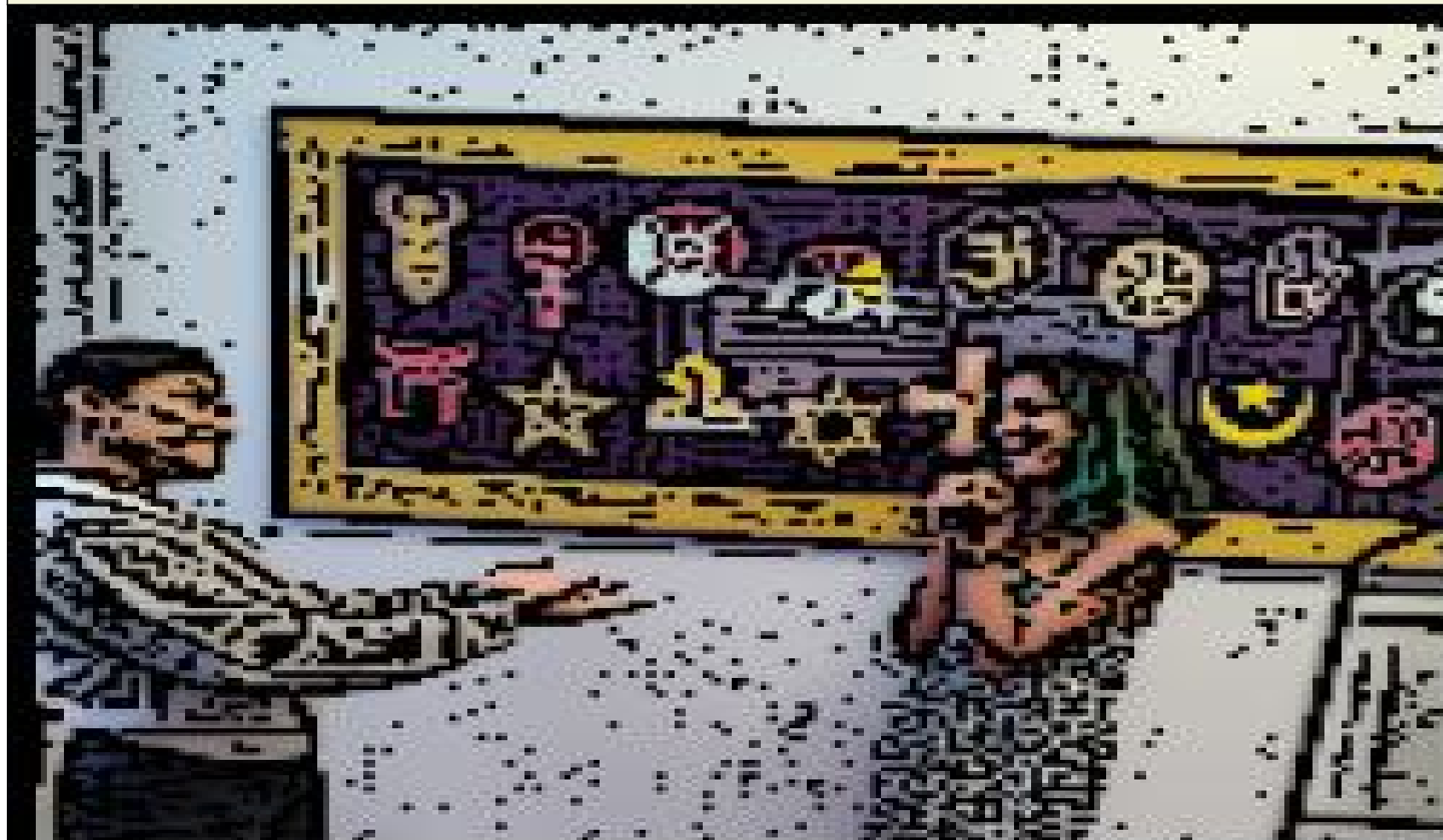


Man: I am Poseidon, god of the seas. I have been watching you for a long time priestess and your mannerisms have bewitched me, body and soul. Tell me what you want and it shall be yours.
Medusa:



Medusa: I dream...I dream of love. I dream of the kind of love that the poets sing about. The kind of love that I am forbidden from.
Man: You mean you want to feel what I feel for you?

Medusa instantly knew why she felt safe with the man. He was the sea and she had fallen in love with the sea already. To have bewitched the sea itself was a possibility she could not imagine and yet, it was a reality that was happening.



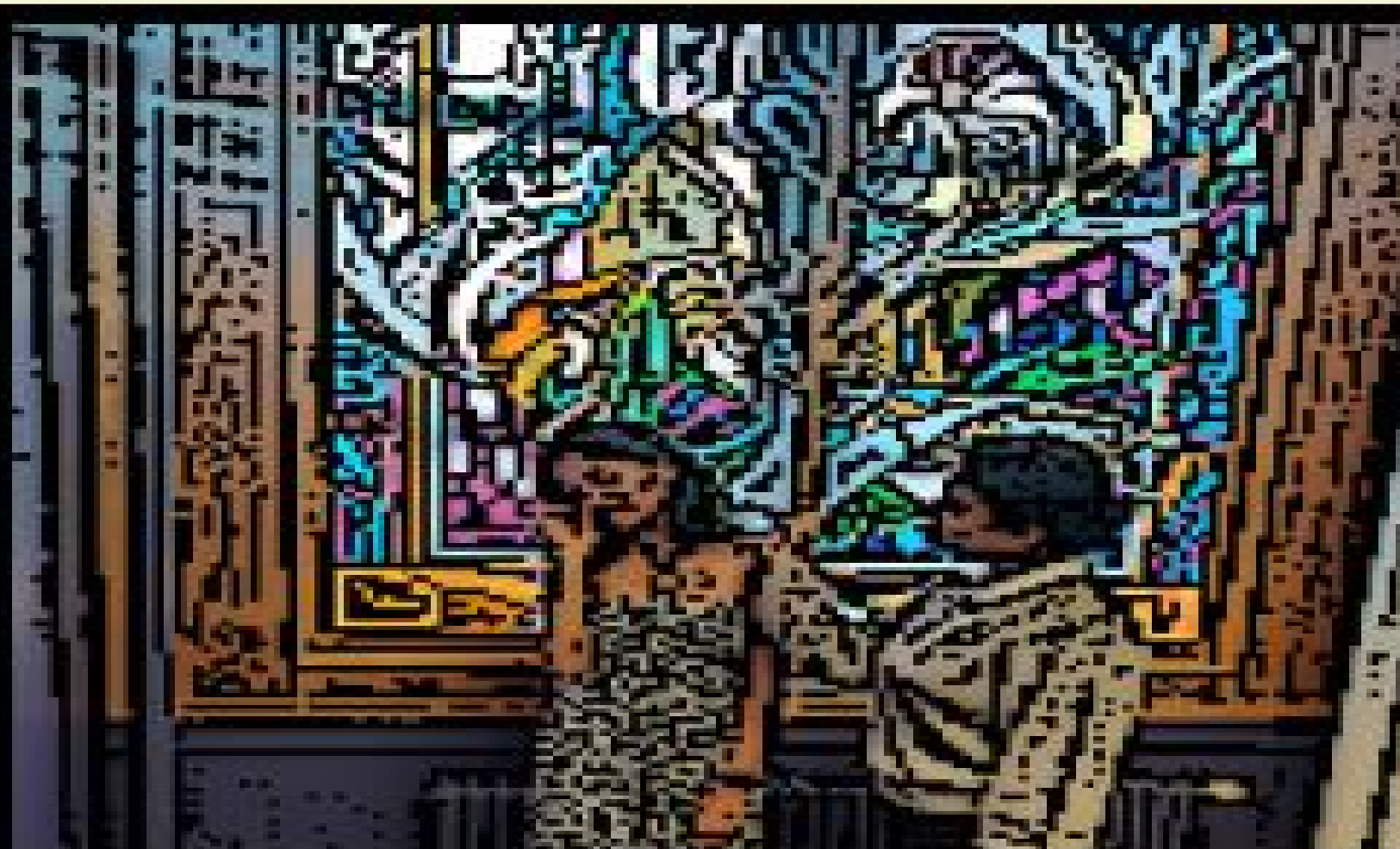
Medusa: Do you really? Do I possess the traits to make a sea god fall in love?
Man: That and more my love.



Medusa: No, but Athena. What will she think of me? I cannot leave my duties.
Man: I am the god of the sea. She cannot harm you. We will run away. No one will know your betrayal.



Medusa: My betrayal? Oh no! It is a betrayal! I cannot betray my family and this temple.
Man: This is not the life you were meant to live. Tell me priestess, what is your name?



Medusa: Medusa
Poseidon: A beautiful name for a beautiful woman. Come with me Medusa and we can both live a happy life together in open seas and happy sunsets.

The man had Medusa's heart. She wanted to leave but she was afraid of the consequences that would come. She was however convinced that Poseidon would be able to save her from the prison that was her life and the consequences of leaving.



Medusa: I'm scared.
Poseidon: Oh don't be





Athena: Who dares taint the walls of these temples?
Poseidon: Athena?

Athena: Leave this temple at once! How dare the sea god walk into my temple and dishonor my priestess?
Poseidon: Watch your tone when you talk to an upper deity Athena! You cannot harm me without dire consequence

Medusa was truly scared. She did not anticipate repercussions to come so immediately. The only thing she could do was trust Poseidon's word and hope that he could save her



Athena: And you!? Are you not a priestess? Did you not take a vow of chastity?
Medusa: Your highness! I hold you in high regard and would never do anything to disappoint you. But I am a mere human and I dream about love. Why sin?

Athena: Love?! You fool! Do you think the sea god loves a pathetic mortal?
Medusa: Yes...yes...he...he said so himself.

Athena: You poor woman. Poseidon does not love you. He is a serial philanderer and you were just another pitiful conquest.
Medusa: Tell her she's wrong! Please!

Medusa:
Poseidon: The girl didn't do anything wrong. It would be best if you let this go.

Medusa could not believe what she was hearing. She had fallen for Poseidon in spite of knowing his history. She was truly fooled and she had no other choice but to face the wrath of Athena



Athena: Let this go? A priestess has dishonored me in the walls of my own temple. She has broken her vows. This is the highest form of disrespect!
Poseidon: She is just a woman who let her feelings consume her.

Medusa: Your highness! Please forgive me! I have spent a long time reading about things that do not exist. I let myself get carried away and that is a burden I will carry with me forever.
Athena: It is not enough!

Athena: Your arrogant contempt shall not be forgotten. I will speak to Zeus about your misdemeanor.
Poseidon: Convey my best wishes to Zeus.

Poseidon: "Teaves"
Medusa:

Medusa had no hopes left. All she could do was beg Athena for mercy.



Athena: You have embarrassed me with your naive behavior. Your punishment will be pitiful.
Medusa: Please your highness! Forgive me! I will spend the rest of my life repenting and will never think of such debauchery again.

Athena: Your striking beauty is your biggest weakness. Had your skin looked like ash and your hair atrocious, you would have been safe from the hands of devious men.
Medusa: What are you saying my highness?

Athena: I am going to take away your beauty. Your skin will forever look ashen and your hair will no longer be like a human's. Any man or woman that looks at you will turn into stone.
Medusa: Please, I beg you.

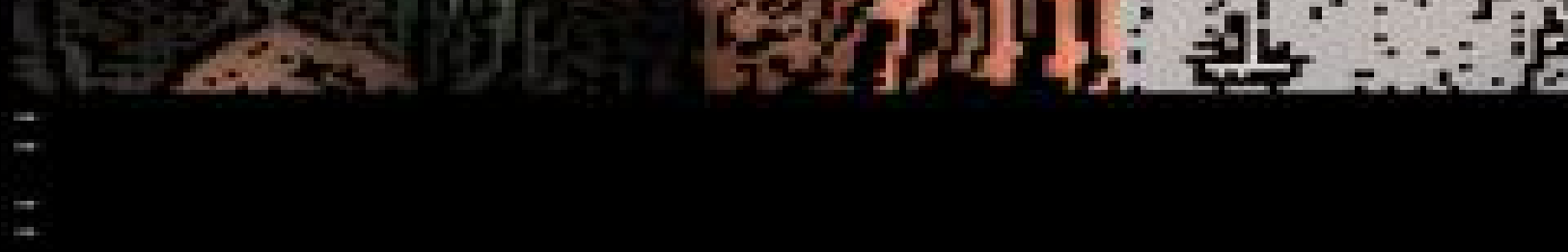
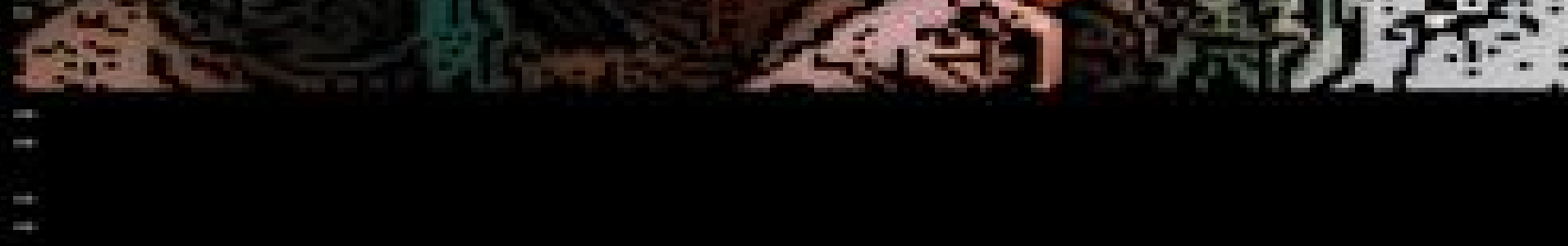
Athena: "curses Medusa"

The worst had happened. Medusa would have to live with this monstrosity until the day she died.



Athena: I am the goddess of wisdom and I have done you a favor. You will forever be safe now. You are free of your duties as a priestess. You may have the freedom you always wanted.
Medusa: Don't call this curse freedom

Athena: Don't you dare question my methods. Live long O pathetic mortal.
Medusa: ..



Medusa couldn't save her loved ones from her dangerous gaze. She lost everybody she ever loved and was doomed to live a heartless life. She eventually became a bitter woman and would turn anybody that tried to speak to her into stone. She lived in a dark cave with all the statues of the people she turned into stone.



The people in the kingdom grew scared of Medusa. The king sent many of his men to defeat Medusa but they never came back from the cave. In his last attempt, the king sent Perseus, a demigod who was the son of Zeus. Perseus was known for his bravery and intelligence. He was the only one who could be strong enough to defeat Medusa. On a rainy day in August, Perseus started off on his quest with a shield and a sword. After a long walk, he finally found her sleeping away from him close to the statues.



Perseus: I am Perseus, son of Zeus and I have come here to kill. Do you surrender?
Medusa: "Laughs" Many have come here on the same quest and have failed.

Perseus: I am not afraid! Look at these people! You deserve to be slayed!
Medusa: You are a fool! You cannot slay a demon you can't look in the eye.

Medusa was right. Perseus would not be able to behead her without looking at her. He would never be a coward and go back to the kingdom so his only option was to die trying. Perseus almost accepted his fate when suddenly he discovered that he could see her reflection in his shield!



Perseus: Never! I will not leave until I get your head!



Perseus: .
Medusa: I surrender! Kill me! Relieve me of this life! I deserve it for all that I have done.

Perseus: You want...to die?
Medusa: What creature would want to live a life this life? All I did was dare to dream and this became my fate. Please liberate me!

Perseus: A monster dreams? Who are you?
Medusa: I was but a naive maiden, a priestess that fell in love with the sea god only to be doomed to this existence by Athena.

Perseus: Athena stripped your life away because you fell in love?
Medusa: Please end my misery!

Perseus was sent to kill a monster but in its place, he found a damsel in distress. How could he kill her now after knowing the monster was just a woman with a heart?



Perseus: Blindfold your eyes with this.
Medusa: what...what are you doing?

Perseus: It goes against a man's principles to kill a woman who's only sin was having a heart. Please, drape yourself with this cloth and we can find another way

Medusa: How can I trust you?
Perseus: Because I'm your only hope.

Perseus took Medusa back to the kingdom and explained to the king and the townsfolk that Medusa was merely a misunderstood woman. While it took Medusa a significant amount of time to win their trust back, they succeeded in looking past her snake hair and ashen face.