

Sun's Blink

The water soothed me soul as I lay on the hammock over the tide. The sun was red and the coast was gold. Me legs dangled in the wind and me feet skipped on the sand. I gave a lazy look to the lady on me left and smiled, cause she did too. The wind stopped to whistle for her and I hoped, like I hoped everyday, that one day she would be mine. And, cause right now she was, I was about as happy as I could be.

"How come the birds don't fly tonight?"

"I bet if you asked them to they would," I replied, paddling me steps to sway meself in the hammock.

"Birds! Fly cause I said so!" she bellowed, an echo and me affection the only proof of her words.

"Ah, they probably just gettin' ready. Making sure they have their best feathers for you."

"Stupid birds," she giggled, pushing her leg off the tree to swing her to her feet. "I'm gonna go for a swim and count the fish. You comin?"

"Gimme five more minutes o' rest and I go wherever you want me."

"Aight. But don't chew be takin' too much time or I'ma find me self some other lazy-lay-about to watch me play."

"Now what I tell you bout bein' patient?" I joked, as we always did—she was born in a city. And even though the island raised her, you could see her pulse race any time she had to wait.

"I'ma give you five minutes. But afta that, chew on ya own."

"Don't chew be worryin' bout me, girl. I be witchu in a sun's blink."

"Aight den," she finished, her steps bouncing off the sand as she ran into the water. I watched her like anyone who holds love but is too afraid to speak of it. I didn't say because I didn't want her to say no. Things might change if I did, and then I'd be truly sad. At least as friends we'd have each other, or at least that's what I told meself.

The clouds in the sky soaked in the sun and glowed with thanks to have seen another day done. The moon yawned and stretched out to the stars to bid them their morning, so they might sparkle this night. And all the while I hummed to myself, a slow drum beat from me heart to me head. I looked in me mind and decided five minutes had passed. I rose slowly from the hammock and stretched before stepping in the faded prints of her feet.

"Ain't no fish swimmin' the shores neither!" she cried, pulling her hair from below the shoreline as I came to stand by her side.

"What'chew mean girl?"

"Look!" she exclaimed, taking me arm and pulling me below the water. She was right. No fish, nor shell, nor anything that moved was in the water that day.

"Girl... all me days, I never seen the shore like this," I whispered, worried by the empty water.

"Mother nature needs to keep betta track of her children."

"It's a bad omen this... somethin' not right in the sea."

"Bah... It's no bad omen, it just means there's nothing to do," she huffed, walking out of the water to her towel by the hammock. "I'm a go give me girls a shout. Maybe tomorrow they'll be some fish we can swim with."

"Yes... tomorrow," I sighed, watching me lady walk away. Only... she wasn't me lady. And I scorned myself for continuing to think it every time I thought of her... every time I thought.

I trudged out of the water, forgetting about the barren sea as I was now alone. It's a strange thing to step through life, completely in love, only to stumble every time I tried to say it. For when I looked in her eyes, I could see the depths of her soul cryin' for me. But, once again, I told myself it wasn't worth the risk of losin' her for the chance to make her mine. She wouldn't be interested anyway... "How could she be?" I thought to myself...

But me concentration broke as I left the ocean. A rustlin' came from the palm tree by the hammock and I froze to watch what I didn't understand. The leaves blew against the wind and the moonlight throbbed in the distance. A cool breeze hit the back of me spine and me thoughts returned to the empty beach. Nothing that lived dared step there but me, and I felt sick to remain. Something wasn't right... something was very wrong.

I'd heard stories from me brotha but had never paid them any mind till now. The palm tree started to sway itself, soaking up the moonlight until it lit the shore. Me heart pounded in me chest and the sand blew circles around me ankles. I heard a whisper from inside me head, telling me to run, but I couldn't move. Soon enough that whisper became a scream as I heard a voice echo from the tree.

"A lover's chest and a pirate's breast, a woman who plundered a man possessed..."

The sun fell below the ocean and the night came without stars. The voice grew louder.

"When he was lost, another was found, first love forgotten below the ground..."

The tree morphed to the figure of a man, shining an eerie blue light across the sand.

"He returned for her, but she escaped his grasp, vengeance destined to be became the past..."

And then, before I could scream, before I could run—a ghost stood before me.

"But by moonlit night, the ghost's love will see lovers reunite," spoke the spirit. I trembled in me place as he raised a transparent hand towards me, releasing a locket that fell to me feet.

"Ahhhhhhh!" I screamed, me dread locking me in me place. The ghost shone of an eerie blue light, like the moon poured into a man. He grinned and pushed his chin towards me as I shivered away, falling on me backside. And just as I found the strength to run, the ghost and his darkness disappeared, replaced by the setting sun.

I frantically looked for him, but there was no sign—save for the locket he had dropped at me feet. The waves whispered, gracing the shore, and the sun's golden light blanketed the sky as birds returned to the beach. A crab tip-toed from shell to shell, looking for a good bed. And I wearily plucked the locket from the sand, opening it to see a faded picture of me lady.

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