

Sirens

By O. Grey

I stripped completely. Peeking at the window behind me, I let my clothes fall onto the boat deck. The sun was going down and I didn't have much time. I had to submerge myself before the moon rose and the current picked up.

The intelligence was beyond anything my colleagues could comprehend. Their inability to get a grasp on the world below would not stop me from taking my next step.

They showed themselves to me. There had to be a reason.

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I looked up toward the surface and watched as the Ionian waters engulfed me. There was no time to waste. As my body sank to the sea floor, I held my breath and removed the dagger from my thigh holster. The dark blue waters held only one beam of light, the moon. I was out of time.

Fighting to hold my breath for as long as I could, my chest muscles began to convulse. I watched as my body gave up. The last bit of oxygen escaped in the form of bubbles through my nostrils, and disappeared into the cloud of blood that surrounded me. Just as my body sunk deep into the sand, a pair of glowing eyes appeared in the distance.

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The intricately scaled creature, moved us effortlessly through the water. She carried me on her back with ease, holding my arms around her shoulders. I learned my lesson from the last time and kept my eyes closed as we plunged forward. I was glad I had chosen to leave my clothes behind, I looked more like them this way.

We halted suddenly, and I opened my eyes. The magnificent realm before us was so bright, it made the surrounding sea appear black and obsolete. About a hundred ancient pillars were connected by a wall of

luminous jelly fish. The nymph put a large white shell to her mouth, as if signaling with its sound. But I heard nothing.

Like a thick theater curtain, the wall of jellyfish parted, allowing us to pass through to their world. *They trusted me.*

Sharks guarded the inside of the ancient palace, swimming near the entrance. The glowing walls were misleading. The world inside was nearly barren, aside from the ancient statues of the sea goddess, Calypso, and her many nymphs.

The creature released me from her back. She didn't speak, but something in her eyes told me that I should stay put. Before I could blink, she disappeared.

To say that I was afraid, would have been an understatement. There were many things that I didn't understand, but I knew that whatever gods had brought me to them, needed something.

A school of tiny orange fish split around my body, as if I was just another statue. They weren't afraid. It then occurred to me, that they had never seen a human before.

My team had been searching for Calypso's jewels, but the radars had picked up nothing. I laid a hand on the tail of massive likeness of the mythical goddess, just then, a hand rested on my shoulder.

I turned to see the most beautiful creature I had ever laid my eyes on. The drawings in Greek history books, did her no justice. I trembled in her presence. She was much larger than her nymphs, probably three times their size. I attempted a bow, but she lifted my chin with her hand, and looked into my eyes. Her eyebrows furrowed with concern, as she moved aside to reveal a nymph lying on the palace floor.

She was dying.

I moved closer to the nymph's body, looking to Calypso for approval. She followed. I knelt beside the body and examined her features. She looked so young.

Green glowing eyes appeared in the shadows all around the palace, watching me. It seemed that I was never alone in the first place. There was a thick black liquid oozing from the nymph's mouth. I touched it and rubbed it between my my fingers. *Oil.*

My stomach tightened as I turned to face the sweet visage of Calypso. I wondered how I could communicate with her. The goddess held out her fist, revealing the biggest ruby I had ever seen. She gestured for me to take it.

Looking around us, I realized the hidden glowing eyes became beautiful creatures, watching our interaction. They would all be in danger if I didn't stop whoever was causing the spill. I gently reclosed her fingers around the ruby and gave her a small nod, hoping she would understand.

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A small breeze rushed over my bare body, as the gentle flap of sails awoke me. It was still night. If it weren't for my bleeding hand, I would have considered everything a dream, maybe even a plea for adventure. I grabbed my t-shirt from beside me and pulled my knees to my chest, watching the waves break before me. A pair of glowing eyes watched me, bobbing up and down in the distance, before disappearing into the dark waters. I had to help them.