

For the Love of the Sea

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Samantha dwelled in the shadows of the western seas. She was of a kind that detested the light. And she herself was not very fond of land, especially not after what happened there...

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1. Samantha

A round white moon shone like a ghost on the surface of the rippling sea. The waters were a dark blue from the lack of light. Gray wisps of clouds scattered the navy evening sky. Not far from the reflection lay the western shore of seventeenth century Europe. A sandy beach wound along the edge, sometimes blocked by great gatherings of rocks and coral reefs. The sand was white, and glowed silver in the radiant moonlight.

A shadowed figure could be seen emerging from the water behind a towering cluster of black shore rock. From a distance it was indecipherable. But upon closer view it could be seen as a girl. No older than seven years one would assume. From her torso she was seen as a human child. But what really made a difference was hidden under the darkened water. The girl submerged under the water and moved swiftly under its surface. She reappeared behind a smaller rock. Placing her hands on the rock she pulled herself up onto it. She rested on her stomach, as the rock was smooth and round.

Her violet eyes shaped up the shoreline in the darkness. She came here often, just to rest beneath the moon and watch the calm beach. Her hair was black as pitch and ran just past her slightly pointed ears, jutting out messily in different directions. Some clusters of hair were longer and some shorter, layering her hair like a huntress. Her skin was fair, almost white. Making her glow with the rest of the scene. Around her neck was what looked like a thin strand of black sea weed. From the strand hung a deep purple amethyst gem cut in the shape of a human skull. The eyes were cut in and filled with a pair of emeralds and a set of pearl crossbones behind it. She called it her diamond jolly roger.

The Jolly Roger was the symbol she often saw on the flag of a pirate ship. And even though there was no diamond on the necklace, she thought it sounded nice. She never took it off. Her father had forged it from a sinking pirate ship in the midst of a great hurricane. Humans had claimed her father a year ago. The captain of a Navy ship had harpooned him. The girl had never trusted that there was a good thing about humans since then. Yet they still fascinated her. She gently wrapped her thin fingers around the diamond jolly roger and brought it up to see. The moon light behind her went through its translucent form, causing a small rainbow on the face of the rock.

She then heard a feminine voice call her name, "Samantha?" She instantly knew it to be her mother. Placing the diamond Jolly Roger back against her collarbone she slid off the rock and began swimming to the sound of the voice leisurely. "Samantha please, hurry! Sailors are near by!" at the sound of the words Samantha perked up a bit, but didn't really speed up. She looked around as she swam. She saw no ships and heard no bells or voices besides her mother's. Samantha continued swimming when she heard her mother yell "SAMANTHA UNDER THE WATER QUICKLY!" she saw a blurred figure suddenly disappear under water and made to follow when she was stopped by the sound of several voices shouting.

Some of the things she heard were, "Hurry lads 'fore the fish get away!" and "What 'ave ye done to that net boy?" among many other things she rather not consider. She began to shake as she slowly turned around to see a large wooden ship looming over her head by several feet. She turned her head up to see a warn eel carved into the bow of the ship. An eel was the symbol of fishermen. The worst thing for Samantha to come across. She tried again to dive into the water, but only got down two fathoms before a rope net the sailors had set a day before yanked her up. She watched as fish of all kinds and size thronged around her squirming and fighting for freedom helplessly.

Before long the net was pulled up out of the surface. Samantha felt her chest tighten up as water fell from the slits in her fishlike tail. She had to be the largest catch in the net. Samantha was completely engulfed in the feel and smell of caught fish. She was beginning to cough as her throat contracted and her tail began to dry out, even with the sodden fish around her. She was without water like the rest of them, but something told her she would go sooner than any of them would.

Suddenly the net was cut open and the hundreds of fish poured out and splattered sloppily on the deck soaking it. Samantha was tossed onto a large pile of fish and then covered by a large heap of them. She didn't know which would come first or which would be worse: dying before they even sorted the catch, or being seen and put to whatever torture the humans could dispense. She preferred neither, but knew she had no choice. It had been about five minutes or so and she was barely hanging on. The pounds of fish crushing on her already thin and dying frame were quickening her end. She was starting to lose whatever focus she had in the darkness and her eyelids fell heavily over the violet rings.

A small light shown through the slits her eyes had been left in, causing her to try and open them. Somehow the moonlight was even more blinding after being in darkness for only a few minutes. She could feel weight of the fish gradually lessening as air for her lungs returned. Though she still had no water for her gills. Until she did, there truly was no hope. Samantha shamed herself as she slowly began to fall unconscious. She had been fighting long enough, and now lacked the strength to go on. Right before she passed out she felt a pair of small scrawny arms slip around her stomach from behind her, the arms began to pull her off the pile of fish. The last thing she saw was a pair of blue orbs, deep as the ocean she soon fell crash around her.

Her eyes finally closed as the arms removed themselves allowing a gust of air to go past her until she hit the water once more. When Samantha finally came to, she was in her sleeping chamber back under the dark sea. Her stomach and gills ached and her throat was soar. Looking to her left she saw her mother by her shell, rubbing her arm gently. "Oh my precious Samantha! I am so glad you are safe!" Her mother pulled her into a tight hug. Samantha sputtered into the open water, her ribcage objecting to the pressure. Her mother snapped back and sighed. "Get some rest Samantha, I'll be back later." Her mother swam out of the chamber and Samantha eased back in the shell. She spent the remainder of the night contemplating what had just happened to her.