

When the storm comes

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When the storm comes

by [forthbeaming](#)

Summary

The sea was calm that night. In was sitting on a small rock near the entrance to the bay watching lights in a near village, his tail being swayed by a waves. His enchanted husky voice lurking sailors to their deaths. He never spared a life of a sailor before so why he saved the drowning boy whose small boat was flipped over? Why he makes him remember things he buried deep down determined to forget about them?

Notes

hi! this is my first fic in english and it is also my longest work ever so i have no idea what i am doing. big thanks to myss cosmetics for the win/team ad that gave me this idea. and also tumblr post by screaming-till-im-numb about women that turns into mermaids when they are drowned. i only took uwma characters and create a story based on that post, so characters nor story idea is not mine i just put it together.
if you see some plot holes kindly step over them please.
i would also like to thank my amazing friends Jaz and Sha for keeping me sane and proof reading this for me

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

The sea was calm that night. Fish were swimming peacefully in the bay and lazy waves were crashing on the cliff. In was sitting on a small rock near the entrance of the bay watching lights in a nearby village being turned off one by one and enjoying the literal calm before the storm. Rainy season is getting closer, which meant that life here will soon be very difficult.

In loved this time of the day, right after the sun hid behind the horizon but still some light remained. It felt like everything stopped, even the sea was somehow slower and more gentle. It calmed In, but it also made him remember. Remember of things he did not want to think about. Things he buried deep down in his mind, things that made him angry, so angry.

“Jump! Jump or I will make you, you fucking scum!” Something hit his head and In tried to make himself even smaller. He was lying on the ground near the cliff. He could hear the angry waves crashing on the rocks and the croaking of seagulls flying above him, unknowing what was happening on the cliff below them.

“I said, jump!” the angry voice repeated and In was roughly pushed up onto his knees. He looked up and turned his head around. He was surrounded by a group of boys from the village he lived in. All of them were looking at him with disgust and even anger. The owner of the voice was right in front of him, watching him with a sneer on his face. Suddenly, a hand landed on his cheek with a force and he fell onto the ground again. In groaned in pain and covered his head with his hands. The tears were trying to escape from his eyes but In was trying to hold them in. He will not cry in front of these bullies, they will not see him cry and beg for help. Not again.

When there was no answer, the boy spoke again. “Just fucking throw him to the sea. I can’t even look at him. He is so disgusting and useless.” Loud cheers erupted around him and In felt hands grabbing him with enough force to make bruises. In was being lifted from the ground and dragged towards the edge of the cliff. He tried to fight them, but there were too many of them and his already weak body didn’t have enough power to fight back.

All of sudden, In was, again, thrown on the ground. The only noise surrounding him was from the sea. He was not afraid anymore. He was not afraid of the sea that was ready to swallow him without mercy.

And then, a big hand was holding his jaw, pushing him up. In tried to focus on the person in front of him, but his eyelids were heavy. Then he felt a light touch of lips on his ear and the voice whispered: “I hope you fucking die there, pretty boy. It would make everybody’s life so

much easier, you know?" he could feel the lips moving and the hand making its way from his jaw to his neck, holding him tight. The pressure on his neck was getting bigger and bigger and he was being pushed up on his unstable feet. In looked around. He was standing right on the edge of the cliff. He could see his village and little boats cruising in the bay under him.

Suddenly, the hand holding his throat disappeared and he was being pushed from the edge. In did not know how long he was falling. It could have been seconds but it felt like eternity. There was absolute silence, he never felt so calm and serene in his whole life. Then he hit the surface, the water embraced him and he was falling again. Disoriented, he had no idea where it is up and where it is down, but is it important to know? Directions did not matter anymore. He felt at ease, the subdued noise of waves hitting the cliff made him sleepy so he closed his eyes and let the flow play with his numb body.

"Earth! Earth!" a faint voice was heard over the sound of waves. Earth, who is Earth? The voice was there again. Repeating the word over and over again, like it was some mantra. The voice sounded angry, sad and even desperate, still repeating the same word. "Earth? Please, answer me. Are you here? Earth!" There's the word again. Earth. It felt weirdly familiar? Where has he heard it before?

"Earth, please." the voice was begging with desperation clear in it's tone. Suddenly, all his senses came back to him. It was him, The voice was calling his name! Why would somebody do that? He started to fight against the water, trying to get to the surface. Everything went quiet for a moment and then there was a strong hand on his wrist pulling him up. His head broke the surface and he tried to take a deep breath. As he opened his mouth water got into there which made him cough and gasp for air. He was frantically turning his head to look around. This quick movement made his head spin and he started to cough even more, slowly sinking below the surface again. The hand that was on his wrist started to pull him up again and another hand on his waist was added to keep him above the water.

He was being pushed till he felt solid ground under his feet. His knees hit the rocks near the shore and he collapsed barely holding his head out of the water. It took another shaky step and he was finally out of the sea lying on his back on a sandy beach that was under the cliff he was pushed from. Catching his breath, he slowly opened his eyes to look at his surroundings. The hands that were still holding him disappeared and he tried to quickly sit up, to see who they belonged to. He got dizzy and fell down, his back hitting the ground.

"Earth? Stay calm, okay?" it is the voice again "You are safe now. Everything is going to be alright." That's the name again. What is- In quickly opened his eyes and turned his head on the side where the voice came from. Kao? Is that him? He put his hand up to shield his eyes from the sun to see the person hovering over him worriedly. It was really Kao, looking exhausted but with a soft smile. His Kao. But that means? Earth? That was the name his parents gave him and how Kao called him.

“Kao? I-” In whispered and hugged Kao with the last of the energy his weak body had. Kao quickly embraced him and put him in his lap. He had no idea how long they stayed sitting there like this, Kao with In safely in his lap, quietly talking to In to calm him down, In’s limbs tightly wrapped around Kao.

“Och god. I thought I lost you for good. I-” Kao started to sob and hugged In tighter “Park came to the village with his gang and talked loudly about how you jumped off the cliff. And- and how he tried to stop you and save you but you attacked him and- ” Kao took a log breath to calm himself down and his fingers started to play with In’s hair on his nape. “Of course I knew he was lying, so I ran here, but I couldn’t find you. Not on the cliff or on the shore. I- I was afr- afraid that you drowned. I-” he started to cry so much that he couldn’t talk properly. He just held In in his embrace, burying his face in the crook of In’s neck. The younger boy could feel Kao’s shaky breath on his neck tickling him a little.

“Shhhh, I’m here now. I’m okay.” In quietly whispered to Kao’s ear gently stroking his back with both hands. In could feel Kao shaking his head as he took his face with both of his hands and created some distance so he could look into his eyes comfortably.

“It’s been hours, Earth. You were in the water for hours! How can you- I just.....” Kao again buried his face in In’s neck and inhaled deeply. “Okay, let’s get you back home” Kao slowly untangled all of In’s limbs and stood up, reaching down to help In get up and then carefully lifting him up so he could carry him on his arms to his home.

“In? Hey In, can you hear me? In” The noise of the sea was slowly coming back to In. A hand was gently shaking his shoulder.

“Oh. Hi Pharm.” In smiled at the young boy sitting right next to him on the slippery rocks, their tails being slowly swayed side by side by the waves.” I’m sorry. What did you say?”

“Nothing important.” Pharm answered and smiled back at his friend. “Are you alright? It is getting dark already, we should probably go back.”

“Yeah yeah, sorry. I lost track of time. I was-”

“Thinking?” Pharm chuckled and sat closer to his friend, putting his hand over In’s shoulder.

“Maybe” In sighed and laid his head on Pharm's shoulder and letting his friend to hug him

tighter. "It is just- I don't know. It is all coming back. All the memories. It's been years, why do I keep seeing it?" In whispered and tucked his head closer to Pharm's neck, who started to stroke his hair carefully with his free hand. "I saw his face again. I miss him so much." Pharm could barely hear In's quiet voice. "I know it is wrong, but sometimes I am so jealous of you and Dean. Both living down here together. It's wrong to think like that, but I just feel so lonely, especially now when the rainy season is coming again." In started to cry quietly and gripping tightly Pharm's small waist.

"It is okay, I get it. Dean and I, we were lucky." Pharm paused for a moment and chuckled softly before continuing "Well, if you can call being thrown into water by a bunch of sailors as a sacrifice, and your stupid boyfriend jumping right after you, as "being lucky" then yes, we were so lucky."

It was getting darker and darker, the waves getting more aggressive, but for the boys it felt like they were all alone.

"But everyday I think, what if. I was so sure I was going to die that day and the only thing I wanted was Dean to be happy. But he jumped right after me. I still have no idea what he was thinking at that moment. Now? I'm glad he did, but there are so many "what ifs". What if we both died. What if Myss chose only one of us and the other would die? We were so lucky that Myss chose us both to live with her under the water and I will be forever thankful for that. She gave us the future we wouldn't have. We've been together for almost centuries now and being not able to go on the ground is worth it."

Pharm stopped talking and for a while, they just sat there, both lost in their own thoughts. Pharm's story wasn't a happy one, but he and Dean got that happy ending they deserved. It was not common for Myss to transform two people at the same time, especially if one of them chose to jump to the water by himself. But everybody could feel that there was this thread of destiny, tying them together and not even one of the goddess of the sea couldn't break them apart.

Now, Pharm and Dean were the oldest ones in their small community living in this area, excluding Myss, never leaving her, but instead settling just the two of them on their own, taking care of new people that transformed, teaching them everything they've learned during centuries living under water. In, with only around two hundred years living under water, was the youngest in their small community.

"Pharm? In? Where are you?" There was a loud voice coming from the sea and both boys were brought back to reality.

"Dean? We are here!" Pharm waved at his boyfriend who appeared not even fifty metres away from them.

“What is going on?” Pharm asked when his boyfriend was close enough to hear him.

“ There is another person being transformed near us. Myss told us the place so the rest of the boys are on their way there” without saying another word, Dean helped Pharm and In back to the water and dive under the surface.

“Are you coming with us or you will go back and wait for us?” Pharm quickly asked.

In nodded his head slightly “I am already here. I will be okay.” responded. He then dived under the water after Dean and followed him deeper to the sea.

There were no transformations for a long time in this area. The last successful one was In himself. Since then, there were few transformations, but neither of them were successful. None of them actually knew what makes the person survive transformation. The process is long and painful. The whole body is changing. From lungs transforming into gills, to legs becoming a long tail with scales. Even with Myss' blessing, not everyone is strong enough to survive this brutal change. And even if a person survive this, the healing part is even trickier. There is no guarantee they will be able to live under the water for the rest of their now really long life. In was the last person who survived transformation and managed to cope with changes that came for living with Myss. In never saw a successful transformation in his life and he was scared everytime Myss sent them to a new person being changed.

“We are almost there. According to Myss the person should be behind this small reef. Win should be already there” Dean turned to them after a while. They were near the shore in an area where were a lot of cliffs so they need to be careful when swimming here to not hurt themselves.

When they turned around the reef they saw two people swimming in circles above one of the gaps between rocks. They swam closer and joined the two, all looking down into the gap.

“Oh my god.” In whispered when his eyes focused on a small person lying on the ground below them. He hated this part. They were banned from helping them in any way during transformation. All they could do was to watch them and make sure that nothing will distract them. Their time to act would come after the full transformation was over, when the person going through that change was still alive. In would never forget the first transformation he witnessed. It was just a few months after he recovered and was able to leave his room. That time it was a really young girl, maybe fifteen years old. She was almost fully transformed when something happened and she drowned. She had her tail already grown but her gills did not function well enough to keep her alive. For In it was a torture to just swam around not being able to help her. But it was an important rule. No helping during transformation. When he asked why he couldn't help her, they told him it is the spell that's helping with the transformation. You can't touch the person without breaking the curse.

So since then In never went with the others to wait for the transformation to end. He stayed at their small village near the reef with the rest of their people and wait for them to get back with or without new transformed mermaid. In was in the medical team that looked after the newly transformed mermaid together with other two people. They did everything they could to help them get better, but the chance was small. After In, nobody survived. Everyone lost their life. In took it as his own personal defeat, even though everybody told him that it was not his fault. Somehow In couldn't believe them, crying and running away everytime a new mermaid didn't make it.

And now, watching this boy fighting for his life, all he wished for was for him to make it so he could join them here and live his life happily with them under the water. He was petite with a short hair and flowy clothes that were floating around him. But the worst part was the ropes wrapped tightly around his wrist behind his back so he couldn't swim and save his life. The ropes meant that he was thrown into the water just like In. As a sacrifice before the rainy season came. For some reason sailors and fishermen thought that throwing a pretty boy or girl into the water and killing them would somehow make the incoming part of the year easier. Since being used as a sacrifice himself, In made sure that none of these people who made the command to throw them would survive till next year. With Myss' blessing he was drowning every captain of a ship that used an innocent boy or girl as a sacrifice. Waiting for the biggest storm to come, lurking at rocks near the bay, waiting for boat to sail close to him and singing with his enchanting voice, luring sailors into the water to drown.

And now it looks like he has a new boat to wait for and captain to drown. It doesn't matter if this poor boy fighting for his life below him will survive, the man who did this to him deserves to die and In will make sure that he will end just like he wished for that boy to. Alone and under the water.

"It is almost done." Win's voice brings In back to present."Please, just a little more. You can do it." Win talked to the boy who couldn't actually hear him. In looked at the boy again who had his legs fully transformed into a tail and by small bubbles around his neck, his gills were just created. In hoped for him to make it. His transformation was really quick which was a good sign.

Suddenly his spine bent in an unnatural angle making his back arched from the ground. And then everything froze for a moment, even the sea somehow became absolutely quiet. Five boys impatiently waited for what will happen next. The unsettling quiet lasted for just a few seconds, then a small wave coming from the boy hit them, making them lose balance for a moment. Win collected himself first out of them and swam down to the boy, now lying unconscious on the bottom of the sea.

"He is alive!" Win turned back to them, checking on the boy who now was lying with his

head on Win's lap. "In and Pham, please go to the village and tell Mannow and Del to get ready. Dean came with them. Pruk helped me with him. He seems fine but just to make sure."

Everybody nodded in agreement, Pruk joined Win, helping him to lift the boy so Win could properly hold him and the rest of them turned back and quickly left them to tell the others to get ready.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

hi! i am back. the start of my semester was postpone for two weeks because of the virus situation so i had some time to write. it is getting worse here so lets see...maybe i will have some more time :)) which is what we do not want....suprisingly i just want to go to school already.

also it is probably obvious but In=Earth and Kao≠Korn, i hope it is not that confusing (dont let me start on how many times i wrote the name wrongly and then i was so confused what is going on)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After bringing the boy to the infirmary all they could do was to wait for him to wake up. Del and Manow, who were in charge of their little hospital, with the help of In and Pharm cleaned his wounds and got rid of the pieces of clothing that were still sticking to his body. Making sure that he was comfortable, they all took turns watching over him, making sure he would not be alone when he woke up.

Nobody actually know how long he will be in a coma, it was individual and it depends on how exhausted his body was because of the transformation that he just went through. In was in a coma for two weeks, which was a normal time according to Pharm, but Del was in a coma for almost a month while her twin brother Dom was unconscious for a whole year, his body refusing to wake up. Everybody almost gave up on him, only Del was not ready to leave him die, lure him back to life. As far as In knew, Del and Don were the only merpeople siblings that existed. Being thrown into the water together, tied up together, their minds were somehow connected and now, they can telepathically communicate with each other, making them the biggest and fastest gossip duo out of their small community.

In was helping Pharm in the kitchen doing lunch for everybody, when Del, who was there with them as usual, because there was nothing to do in the infirmary most of the time anyway, suddenly stopped her movement and just stared at the wall.

Then she shook her head from side to side a little and looked at the boys. “He just woke up. Win is there with him. Let’s go!” was all she said before putting the spatula she was using down and left the room.

“Go first. I will finish the food for him. He is probably starving.” Pharm said to In and turned around to finish the dish.

In nod and made his way to the infirmary.

When he got there everybody, except Pharm and Win who was probably with the boy, were in front of the half open door to see what was going on inside the room. In easily squeezed himself between them so he could watch the scene from the first row.

Inside of the room, the now awake boy was awkwardly sitting on the bed, his tail swaying nervously from side to side. He was watching its movement with disbelief, his hands keeping him still on the bed.

Next to the boy was Win trying to calm the boy down. It looked like he was doing a good job till now. The boy looked freaked out but he was still sitting on the bed willing to listen.

Finally In had a chance to properly look at the boy's features from up close when he was not sleeping. He had a dark hair, a little too long so they get to his eyes easily. In liked his eye colour. He had the dark warm brown colour that made his eyes look friendly and made his whole face more gentle. He had a dark skin, his pretty lips and full cheeks made him look adorable but seeing his well defined body, In knew that the boy was used to do the hard work on the ground.

Win was talking to him quietly, trying to explain as good as he could what just happened to him. It was not a easy job. Most of the time, the first person somebody saw after the transformation became some kind of an ally, somebody they can rely on and because of that it was important to do this part carefully. For In that person was Pharm and he will be forever grateful to him for that.

"Hi, I'm sorry I'm late. You must be starving" Pharm suddenly appeared next to In with a snack in his hand, elbowing people so he could get inside of the room. In easily joined him, going for the "cute duo" energy so they will not scared the boy off.

"I- Hi, I am-" the boy was looking a little bit scared, moving his attention from Win to Pharm.

"My name is a Pharm and how should we call you?" Pharm asked him quickly before the boy could finish the sentence. "It doesn't have to be your old name, you can choose a new one now." Pharm smiled at the confused boy sitting on the bed offering him the snack he made.

"Hi. My name is In. It was not my name on the ground but because i didn't like to be called that anymore I choose In when I've got here." In smiled with his best smile on the boy who was carefully taking the snack from Pharm. He was standing behind Pharm with his hands folded in front of his body, slowly swaying from side to side, trying to act cute, so the boy would relax more. He could see Win smirking at his acting but he choose to ignore his existence for now.

"I- My name is Team." the boy said slowly, his voice just a little bit shaky."It is nice to meet you all." he said and turned to Win and smiled at him, his cheeks on a full display. He looked cute like that.

"It is pleasure to meet you Team." Win smiled at the boy, patting him gently on his shoulder and slowly rising from the bed. " I will leave you with these-"

“Please don’t go.I-” Team grabbed his arm and was looking at him in a panic.

“Okay, okay.” Win looked at Pharm who nod slightly. “I will not go anywhere. Pruk! Pruk, I know you can hear me!” Win shouted and after a moment a slightly embarrassed Pruk appeared. “Go and tell Myss that he woke up already okay?” Pruk nodded and disappeared again.

“We will go finish the snacks for everybody.”Pharm said looking at In pointedly. “Just call us if you need something.” Pharm smiled and dragged In out of the room. In just waved at slightly confused Team who was still holding Win’s hand.

“Phaaaarm.” In whined right after they left the room.”He is so cute. Did you saw his cheeks?”

“Yes, I did. He is cute but not as cute as you are.” Pharm smiled and started to swim back to the kitchen.

“Should I be worried? What about me. Am I cute?” a low voice spoke behind them.

In chuckled as a two big hands sneaked around Pharm’s waist from behind making him yelp cutely.

“Deaaan.” it was Pharm’s time to whine. “ Don’t do that! And you know you are the cutest!” Pharm was trying to get out of Dean’s hold but failing miserably and just plopping himself on his chest with a small huff.

“Fine. I will finish the snacks all by myself then when Pharm is preoccupied with something else...” In said to nobody particular and swam away. He chuckled as he heard Pharm’s weak protests being still trapped in Dean’s embrace.

Team was getting better every day. It didn't took him even two weeks and he was okay to swim around their small village, getting used to the life under water. Even before, he was a good swimmer, so living under the water was just natural for him.

Most of the time, he was with Win, who took him under his wings and took it upon himself to show him everything and trying to make it easier for him. If he was not with Win, he was probably with Pharm and Manow. These three created this unusual trio and quickly became a really good friends and with Team having a bottomless stomach, he was visiting kitchen more often then he probably should.

As far as In knew, Team was another “too pretty boy” without family or somebody else to stood up for him when they choose him as a sacrifice. Team told them, that he lived in orphanage his whole life and being the oldest one there, he took it upon himself to take care of all the kids there, which explain his protective behavior towards Pharm and Manow. Not that they needed it, both of them being more than able to take care of themself but In could see that they were enjoying the attention.

Getting to know Team more, In was even more determined to kill whoever did this to Team and probably would do this to another poor kid from Team's orphanage next year. That's why he was on the rocks near the bay again, searching for the boat that Team was thrown off. With Team's help he was able to traced down the village Team lived in and after few days of spying around he was now sure which person was captain of that ship. After that he just had to wait for the rainy season to come and for the ship to leave the safety of a port. In asked Team if he was okay with this, killing the person who did this to him, and Team's gave him his permission, more for the kids he knew back home than to revenged himself.

So now he was waiting for the right time. Rainy season finally arrived a few days ago making it the perfect time for In to kill the man. He was watching the bay for a four days now when the boat finally sailed on the sea.

In waited for the boat to enter the part of the bay where the water was deeper and there were still many rocks standing out of the sea, making it tricky for the boats to navigate through them.

Then In started to quietly sing with his enchanted voice. In didn't really know how this works but when he asked Myss about it, the only thing she told him was, that when people are getting through the transformation, the salt from the water will get to their mouth while they're screaming, making some kind of protective layer that allows them to speak underwater. The singing part is very individual. Most of the merfolk people were able to control sea creatures to some extent with it but some of them, like In himself was able with his voice to control even people. His theory was, that every merfolk has their own thing, something special, that make them unique. It was something that they could do well when they were humans and the transformation made their talent just grown. As for Pharm it was his empathy and the ease he was able to communicate with other people, or for Team it was his ability to swim. Even with only few weeks of experience, he was now better swimmer than In will ever be. And for In it was his voice. He was a good singer even before the transformation, his voice being one of the things people in the village hate about him. Accusing him that his voice was not natural. For most of them, his not natural voice was the last thing they heard in they life. So after the transformation, In's voice got stronger, huskier and after few accidents he realised how powerful his voice really is.

He was sitting on the rock his lower body under the water waiting for the boat to get closer. His voice was getting louder and louder and he could see the exact moment when his voices reached a ears of sailors. His voice was enchanting for all of them but In's main target was the captain so he was concentrating only on him, making the spell works on him way more stronger than on the other men.

Cause our love is made of tears

And his love isn't everything

Even thousands drop of tears

Wont turn this love to be something

Although i love you

It doesn't matter It is not enough to make you stay with me

In could see how everybody on the boat freezed for a moment and then everything turned to chaos. The captain was running across the whole deck, trying to get closer to In, reaching with his hand over the railing for him to take.

The reactions of the other sailors were different for every person. Some of them just stood on the same place without being able to move, some were also running to him and another were crouching down and covering their ears in a fear.

In had to act fast or he could hurt the rest of the sailors and that was not what he wanted. He pushed himself off of the rock and swam near the nose of the ship where the captain was standing with his hands reaching for him.

No matter how long

I will still remain yours, and only yours

But this yearning must end

Fall in love to fall

Out of love

In was singing while he was getting closer to the boat reaching his hand to slowly wave at the captan, making him lean over the railing of the boat. And then the captain fall to the sea right in front of In who took captain's hands in his keeping him still.

At the exact moment when their hands touched In could see how his emotions changed. His eyes got hazy and unfocused and his smile was enthusiastic but looked forced and unnatural at the same time. In hated this part. He hated the look at their faces, so blissed but so hollow.

After some time captain's body started to sink to the bottom slowly. In was still holding his hand, swimming down with him and continuing to sing the song for him.

Darkness does not last really long

Please hold on, there'll be lights on the horizon

Darling stay here or not

We will get to meet once again

But this yearning must end

Goodbye until we meet again

As he was singing the last verse captain's body hit the sea. He was still looking at In with absolute devotion, absolutely ignoring that he was underwater. In looked him right into his eyes and slowly pulled his hands away from him. Captain's senses were slowly coming back

to him, the moment of realisation clear in his now terrified eyes. He was trying to move but his body was still under In's spell unable to move, making him unable to escape out of the water. He was frantically shaking with his head eyes full of panic and fear looking at In.

And In was looking right back at him calmly, waiting for him to stop moving for good. After a moment, captain's eyes slowly closed and his whole body collapsed at the bottom.

In looked at him for the last time and then without turning his head back, swimming back to the surface. There he started to sing again, this time changing the song to get attention of all the sailors who were still in shock. With them under his spell he navigate them through the rocks back to the shore, making sure they will get to the land safely. Then In turned back to the sea, swimming away from the boat heading back to the area with the rocks to get some rest before he will go back home.

He was sitting on some small rock for a while when he registered a movement on the shore, quite far from the village. He turned his head in that direction, expecting some wild animal on the beach. However there was a boy, standing right on the sea shore, looking directly at In without a blinking of an eye. When their eyes met, In's breath hitched in his throat and he had to grab the rock he was leaning on firmly. They both freeze, neither of them moving for an inch, just staring at each other for what seems like eternity.

"Korn! Why are you standing there like that, we don't have the whole day." a voice called suddenly, breaking the spell. In quickly dived back under the surface, his head full of thoughts on a boy he new a long time ago.

"What are you thinking about?" a deep voice said next to In and he opened his eyes. He was lying on the ground at the hill near the cliff. The sun was shining and there were no clouds in the sky. He could hear the waves crushing beneath him and a seagulls circling above them.

"Hmmmm and what will I get from you if I tell you?" In turned his head to the person lying next to him, rising his eyebrow at him.

"Let me see. A kiss maybe?" Kao answered, looking at the boy next to him using his arm as a pillow with a fond smile.

In looked at him in the eyes his eyebrows rising even higher. "A kiss?" In repeated as he swung his leg across Kao's body to straddle over him, sitting on his stomach. then he put his arms next to Kao's face and lowered his body so their foreheads were almost touching.

"I was thinking," In bumped their noses together "that i love you so much. And that we need to be there for only few years and then we can go anywhere we want. Just two of us." In grinned at Kao and close the distance between them to get his well deserved kiss. He pressed his lips slightly on Kao's, smiling at the same time. It was just a small innocent peck more than an actual kiss, but for In every moment with Kao was special. After a moment In broke the kiss and straighten up, still sitting on Kao's stomach.

“That’s what you call a kiss?” Kao said with absolutely stoic face, just his eyes were giving him away.

Without a warning he grabbed In and flipped them over. Now he was straddling the smaller boy’s body, his legs between In’s, one hand next to his head to keep him up and the other holding In’s thigh. He only smirked at the boy below him and lowered himself to kiss him. In yelped in surprise but it didn’t take him long to react and kiss Kao back, pushing him even closer with his hands now around the older boy’s neck. They were like this for a while, then Kao pushed himself back and lied on the ground again, taking In with him and tucking In’s head under his chin.

“So that’s a kiss for you.” In chuckled and looked up, smiling at Kao and shaking his head slightly.

They were lying there like that for hours, just talking about nothing important, enjoying the time they could spend together.

When the sun hid behind the horizon, they got up and walked back to the village, walking hand in hand trying to enjoy the last moments of freedom.

“So, what are you doing tomorrow?” In asked, swaying their connected hands between them.

“Hmmm, what am I doing tomorrow?” Kao answered with a small smile, looking down on a smaller man beside him. In beamed at him and took his hand with both of his, swaying it forcefully.

“There is the Light Festival tomorrow and I really, really want to go with you!” In plead, looking up at Kao with his best puppy eyes, swaying their intertwined hands with even more force than before.

“I need to be at the market in the morning but we can go after that, okay?” Kao smiled, when In started to jump enthusiastically next to him.

“Yes, yes that’s perfect!” In was so happy, bouncing with energy. There were not many chances for two of them to go out together. The Light Festival was the perfect chance for them, there will be to many people and also to much alcohol so nobody will pay attention to them.

“Okay, so we can meet arou-” suddenly In’s breath was knocked out of him when something heavy hit him and send him on the ground. In tried to get back up but something was pushing him down, making him unable to move with more than his head.

“Earth!” he could Kao screamed next to him, “Let him go! Earth are you okay?” In wanted to answer him, but the pressure on his back was too big and he couldn’t breathe properly. All he could do was to whimper quietly and he hated himself for it.

“I said let him go!” In never heard Kao sound so angry. He wanted to tell him that he is okay, but everytime he tried to breathe in, his ribs started to hurt so much.

"Calm down, son." a cold voice said and In tried to turn his head to the direction that the voice came from. "Lift that little bitch up." the voice ordered and In could feel two strong hands gripping him and pushing him up. He looked around and his breath got stuck in his throat. Not even five metres away from him stand Kao, who was being hold by two men. In recognised them immediately. They were part of Kao's father's crew. Kao's father was the captain of the biggest ship in their village. They were always swearing at In when they met, always trying to touch him. He hates them so much. Kao was trying to break free and run towards In but the two men were too strong and they held him tightly.

In felt a feather touch on his jaw and then his head was forcefully turned to the side. Now he was facing a men who he feared the most. Kao's father.

"I've never understand what are you seeing in him, son. He is not even pretty and i don't think he is that good in bed so you would waste your time with him." the man scoffed, roughly turning In's head to the sides. In was terrified. He had no idea that he knew about them. Yes, it was well known fact that they are friends. Kao made it clear that if anybody even just look badly In, he will not be very pleased with them. But they were careful to act like best friends in front of the people from village. But somehow, Kao's father knew about their relationship and In was terrified what will come next.

"Father." Kao spoke up. His voice was low and unstable "Let him go."

"No, I don't think I will." the man smirked at Kao and then turned his head back to In, staring at him. "He is exactly what I need. Bring him to my boat, it is time." he said the last part to the man that was holding In.

The man nod and the last thing In saw before something heavy hit his head and he lose his consciousness was furious Kao screaming at his father and trying to get to him.

Senses were coming to In one by one. He was freezing, which was probably the thing that woke him up. His hands were tied up behind his back and he was lying on the wooden ground that was rocking slowly from side to side. He was on sailing boat, In realised. There was only one reason for having a tied up human on a boat in this time of year.

Suddenly he could hear a steps near him and then two hands were roughly shaking with him. In let out a small whimper, which give away that he was awake. The hands stopped for a moment and then he was lift from the ground again. He was thrown over that guy's shoulder and he was carried somewhere.

It didn't took long and he was put down back on his feel but before he could look around, his back was pressed on wooden pole and he could feel a strong rope being wrapped tightly around his torso and his legs. Finally he is able to turn his head and see what is going on around him. He was being tied up to the pole in the middle of a Kao's dad's ship, that was just leaving the safety of the bay. Few metres away from him on the bow of the ship was standing Kao's father just silently watching him. In's breath hitched when he noticed a lying figure next to him, also tied up and with a stains of blood on his head. "

What did you've done to him! Let him go!" In screamed at the captain of the boat who was just silently watching him.

"He is fine. Nothing is going to happen to to him. But we can't say the same thing about you, little boy." the captain smirked and In shivered. He was trying to freed his arm but the rope around his wrists was to tight.

"You and your useless pretty face will be the perfect sacrifice for the gods." Kao's father said as he was starting to walk to where in was tied up.

"Are we far enough?" the captain asked the crew. When he received a positive answer, he stepped near In and started to untangle the big ropes that were keeping him in place.

"Okay, stop the boat!" he ordered "and somebody hold this bitch." he add when In was trying to move away from him when there were no ropes keeping him in place. Two strong arms grab him immediately stopping him from running away. Not that there were many places he could run anyway.

When there were no ropes around his torso and legs, he was being grabbed again and pushed near the edge of the ship.

"Earth, no!" a desperate voice screamed and In quicky turned his head to Kao, who was trying to get up, but the ropes were keeping him in place. "Father let him go, please." his voice broke on the last word a fear cleare in his voice.

"It is time to say goodbye boys." Kao's dad said as he pushed In on a railing. In looked at Kao with tears in his eyes. Kao was still trying to get rid of the ropes but he had no luck.

"I love you and I am so sorry." he mouthed just as he was pushed over the edge of the boat.

The last thing he saw before hitting the surface of the sea were Kao's eyes filled with sadness and anger and he could hear him scream, his voice full of desperation.

And then water was all around him and he was falling deeper and deeper. He tried to freed his hands and swam up on the surface, but the rope around his wrists was to tight. His body hit the ground and the impact made him gasped so he lose all the air he had left. When his head hit the ground a pain went through his whole body, making him lose consciousness for few seconds. In thought that it is the end. There was no way he could get out of the water alive.

And then excruciating pain in his throat woke him up again but his body was too weak to be able to open his eyes. Suddenly there was an air in his throat making him gasped and coughed. But something was wrong with how the air got to his mouth. Even though his mouth was wide open there was no water in his lungs and his throat burned like if it was cut through. The pain was almost unbearable, every breath felt like there were knives in his throat, but then the pain slowly disappeared and was replaced by uncomfortable dull feeling.

He had to lose consciousness one more time, because suddenly he could hear a muted voices whispering around him. He tried to move but his hands were still tied up behind his back.

Then he tried to move with his legs but there was something wrong with them. He felt like they were not there anymore, like his body ended with his torso. He tried to open his eyes to look around him and see who these voices belongs to but his body refused to do it. Then there was a small hand on his shoulder, making him flinch.

“Shhhhh , it is okay. It is over now. You are safe now. Just a rest for a while, okay?” a warm voice said from a side. In tried to fight the voice, but it was so comforting and take a nap sounded like a good idea to him. He relaxed his body and the last thing he heard before slipping back to the darkness was the warm voice quietly saying: “ Let’s get him home, Myss wants to see him. Dean, he will make it right? I don’t want to lose another one.” after that there was a deeper voice answering but In was too sleepy to understand what the other voice said.

Chapter End Notes

uuuuuu finally we have all the characters there yaaaay i hope they are not that oc and the story actualy makes some sence.

if you have any question or suggestion feel free to comment uwu

the lyrics that In is singing are english translation of song by the one and only boy sompob and i got tham at musicxmatch so i hope the translation is good.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

hihi i am so sorry that it took so long. it is kinda hectic here and i love to procrastinate :) this chapter is not proofread at all, I just wanted to post it as soon as possible (if there is somebody with a lot of free time who wants to proofread this thing for me i would send you virtual hugs and kisses) and i will try to go through it later

also this word vomit is now longer than any of my uni papers which is kinda sad lmao

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

In didn't remember how he get back to the village, but somehow he manage to find Pharm, who was taking care of him now. In was lying in his lap, sobbing and being not able to say a word. Pharm was petting his head and talking to him quietly, trying to calm the small boy down, waiting for him to be ready to talk about what happened.

“I saw him, Pharm. I saw him on the shore.” In whispered, when he calmed down a little. “How is that possible? He looked exactly the same. I-”

“Shhhhhh. In, breath.” Pharm hug him even tighter, feeling the boy shiver. “What are you talking about? Who did you see?” There was only one person in could talked about, but Pharm wanted to In to say his name out loud to be sure.

“Kao.” In’s voice was unsure, like he didn't want to say it out loud. “But it is not possible right? And- and I think somebody called his name and it was not Kao so it is not him right? I mean.....there is no way it could be him because we all saw his dead body.” In’s voice was shaking so much that he couldn’t speak anymore.

“Yes, we all saw it. There is no way that this boy is Kao.” Pharm said “Maybe it is his descendant? Who knows, maybe some of his brothers had a children.”

“Yeah maybe. But Pharm.....he looked just like Kao. And he saw me. He was looking right at me and he didn’t look scared.” In buried his head in Pharm’s neck. They stayed like that for a while, neither of them speaking.

“What should I do?” In whispered after while. “He saw me. He probably saw the whole thing from the shore. He saw what i did but he didn’t look scared at all.”

“Let it be for now. Maybe he will think that he was just imagining things. Now, you should eat something.” Pharm gently pushed In off of him and guide him to the kitchen to snatch some snack for him.

It turned out to be easier said than done. In couldn't think about anything else than the boy. Pharm was almost always attached to him, checking if the boy was okay, so In couldn't leave the village and swam to the shore without being interrogated by worried Pharm.

It was a week after that he had a first chance to go back there and look for the boy. He was so focused on finding him that he didn't notice all the signs the sea was giving him. So when he got to the surface he was surprised how bad storm is coming to him. The wind was strong and waves coming to the shore were aggressive and high. He had like five minutes before the storm will come in full force. It was not safe even for him to be that close to the shore when the storm comes, one wrong move and he could bump into some rock.

In didn't want to miss his chance to see the boy so he swam to the bay anyway. When he reach the area with many rocks, there was a heavy thunder coming from the sky and the dim sea was lit by a lighting for a second. In was starting to think that this was a bad idea. He swam to one of the bigger stones, to hid behind it and be at least a little shield from the waves and wind. Now, it was too late co swam back so he had to stay hidden and hope that the storm will not last for too long. Pharm is going to kill him for this.

He was trying to find the best place to hide when he heard a scream coming from the direction where the bay was. He quickly turned his head in that direction and his breath got caught in his throat. In the middle of the rock area was a small fishing boat being rocked by the waves dangerously close to the rocks. In could see a person on the boat, trying to navigate it back to the shore, but In knew that whoever it was, they don't stand a chance against the wind. Then the person turned around and In almost lost his balance and fell back into the sea when he saw his face.

The person on a boat was that boy from the shore. He could see the panic in his eyes when the boat hit one of the bigger rocks. There was a loud sound of the boat breaking in a half and slowly sinking under the water. In didn't even think about it before he dived back to the sea. He manage to avoid all the rocks and in a blink of an eye he was swimming right next to boat, looking for the boy who disappeared in the waves. He was starting to panic because he couldn't see him anywhere but when he swam under the boat he saw the boy holding himself up on one of the piece of wood floating around. In quickly swam under him and catch him by his waist just in the moment the boy couldn't hold himself anymore and he let the piece of wood go out of his grasp and started to sink under the water. In wrapped his hands around the boy's waist tighter and started to swim to the shore.

In tried to get to the beach as fast as possible but the boy's unresponsive body was slowing him down and making it hard to stay on the surface. For In, it would be easier to just to dive under the water but something was telling him that the boy wouldn't like it at all. The rocks all around him and waves trying to push him under the water didn't helped at all but after some time In made it on the beach far away from village. In swam as close to the beach as he could and when he was almost lying on the sand not being able to swim more, he pushed the boy off of himself, putting him down on the sand, making him lay down in his back. In then

sat next to him , his tail was making it kinda complicated, and put his ear to his chest to check if the boy is still breathing.

To his relieve, the boy's breath was stable and In released the breath that he didn't even realised he was holding. Now when he could relax, he finally had a time to properly look at the boy and his heart skipped a beat.

He couldn't believe his own eyes. He knew that the boy looked like Kao, but seeing him from up close, he was almost identical. Yes, In could see some small differences, especially the length of their hair. This boy had his hair cut short, but his Kao had his hair long enough to tie them at the back of his head. His fringe was always poking him into his eyes and In loved to just run his fingers through Kao's long hair. Looking at his face, all the memories were coming back to In and he had no chance to fight them.

It was a nice spring day. There were almost no clouds in the sky, the cherry blossoms were everywhere, making everything looks soft and peaceful and seagulls were flying around, diving into the waves.

Earth was sitting on the beach, enjoying this moment of absolute peace. He loved these days but sadly it was getting harder and harder to come here. Most of the days he was in a shop their family owned, helping his mother and older sister. But today, there was a celebration in their village, so every shop closed sooner and all the villagers went out to celebrate the end of winter and an arrival of a spring. It was just like every year. Too many people and too much alcohol and Earth didn't like neither of these things. He went there with his family, to say his prayers, but right after, he sneaked away. he knew that his sister saw him running to the beach so if his mother asked where he is, his sister could tell her so she would not be worried about him.

The beach was the only place for Earth where he could relax. He didn't have to look over his shoulder. He didn't have to be afraid to walk alone.

Earth was sitting on the sand, his feet getting splashed by the water with every wave. The ocean was still too cold for swimming and Earth felt goosebumps all over his back every time another wave hit his feet.

He was quietly humming some unknown melody when he heard aggressive voice yelling his name from behind. He turned his head around and he saw group of boys running towards him from the forest.

Before he could react, they were around him and pushing him more into the water. They made a circle around him with their so-called leader standing right in front of Earth. Earth looked up to him, looking him straight into his eyes. He was done with being afraid of them, and begging them to just let him go.

Things like this were happening too often and for so long, that Earth just became used to them. Mostly, it was only verbal insults. When he was going to school, they yelled at him every day, stealing his snacks from him, or pushing him out of their way. Nothing that aggressive.

That changed when they grow up little. At that time it became more obvious that In is just a little bit different than everybody else. He was always petite and you would describe him as beautiful or pretty more than handsome or manly. Even his interest were different from boys in his age. He never get their obsession with playing all these aggressive games to just burst their ego. He liked to be alone in a nature, drawing or just enjoying the silence. All these things together made a perfect target for almost everybody in their small village.

Now, being surrounded by at least 5 boys, he was feeling more angry than scared. This was his safe space. He went to the beach to spend some time alone. They should be celebrating not hunting down some poor boy.

“You thought that you can hide from us, scum?” the leader, tall and lanky boy named Park, said, but his words were unsure, like it was hard for him to create sentence. His legs were also kinda wobbly, making it hard for him to keep balance in the water.

Looking around, all of them were not much better. Earth swore under his breath. They were drunk and that always made things so much worse.

“What did you said” the boy in front of him screamed right to his face. Earth flinched which angered the boy even more and slapped Earth.

“I asked you something, you piece of shit! Are you that useless that you can’t even answer simple question?” Park screamed again and pushed Earth into the water. Earth was not quick enough to catch himself with his hands so he fell right into the water, his head now below the surface.

“Answer me, bitch!” the boy was holding Earth by his shoulders from behind, shaking them aggressively while putting his one knee on lower back making it impossible for Earth to get his head out of the water. Earth was trying to fight him back but the boy was way stronger than him, keeping him under the water easily.

Earth felt that he was slowly losing consciousness, his throat burning and he was trying to get out of the water.

And then the pressure that was on his body disappeared and he could hear muffled sound of unknown voice. Earth pushed his head out of the water but he was too exhausted to move away from the boy.

“Who do you think you are?” Park was yelling to somebody who was out of Earth's field of vision.

"I said let him go." different voice answered. That voice was absolutely calm without any emotions in it and Earth turned his head to see who is that person.

When he saw him, his heart skipped a beat. There, still standing on the beach, was a boy a little bit older than the rest of them. Earth saw him only few times because he moved to the village with his family recently. He was tall and he was a muscular, his body resembling more man than a boy. He had a short dark hair and stern emotionless face. Earth didn't know his name or how old he was. He met him few time in the village but they never spoke to each other. As far as he knew, so as far as his older sister knew, nobody really knew who he was, but his father was rich making his suddenly one of the most powerful person in the village.

"Who the fuck you think you are?" so-called leader yelled again. His face was red and he was shaking with anger. There was nobody in the village who stood up to him like this before. He looked down at Earth who was still lying in the water. Without a word he kicked him in the stomach and walked to the new boy. Earth fall back into the water with a groan, hands protectively around his body.

He watched as Park walked to the newcomer, his legs being almost unable to hold him upright. When he was right in front of the new boy he swung his hands to punch him. In hold his breath waiting for what will happen next. The new boy, without any reaction, catch his hand in the air and twisted his hand so Park screamed in pain and fall onto his knees in front of him.

"I said, get the hell out of here." the new boy bend forward so their faces were on the same level, his voice still without any emotions. He released his hand and pushed him away. Park, now fully drenched, quickly scramble back to his feet and run to the forest aggressively swearing at the new boy. All of the boys who were just standing there till now exchanged quick looks and followed the boy.

Earth slowly manage to get on his knees, doing a few small steps towards a shore and then plopped himself back to the water, but this time his head already hitting the sand on the beach. He stayed there like that for a while, just breathing slowly, trying to calm himself down.

He opened his eyes again, when he felt a movement next to him. When he turned his head to the direction, he saw the new boy sitting next to him, his legs crossed under him, looking towards the horizon, face still without any emotions.

"Thank you." Earth whispered, looking up at the boy. He just looked at him, not saying a word for a while. Then he just shook his head slightly frowning a little. "There is no need to thank me. They should not do that." he then said.

"Well, I still want to say thank you for it, because nobody stopped them before." Earth answered. "I am Earth by the way."

"That's because everybody is too scared to be his next target." the boy scoffed, disgust being obvious in his face. "And I know who you are." he chuckled a little.

"Hhhh?" Earth looked at him with confusion.

The boy seeing his confusion smiled a little and maybe Earth's heart skipped a beat, again. "Everybody knows who you are. You have quite a reputation here. And my name is Kao. It's nice to finally meet you." he said, looking him straight into his eyes.

"Oh, I see." Earth chuckled and rolled onto his stomach, propping on his elbows so he could still look at the boy next to him. "So Kao, what did you exactly heard about me?" he said wiggling his eyebrows at the boy, who looked at him with slightly amused face.

He looked really good up close, Earth thought. Not that he looked bad from afar, but seeing him like this with his face having some kind of emotion on, he looked softer. Like a big teddy bear, Earth thought and shook his head to concentrate on the boy again.

"You know, the usual." Kao said, his tone flat as always as he turned his head back to the sea "That you are Devil's child that was conceived during the full moon while human sacrifices were made. You possess superpowers that will bring a doom to this village." Kao chuckled, still not looking at Earth. "Also I heard that your voice is enchanted and that everybody who will hear your voice will must follow your every order until the death itself will release them."

Hearing this in Kao's stoic voice, Earth lied on his back again laughing out loud, closing his eyes, his hands and legs stretched to the sides making a little starfish out of himself.

With his eyes closed, Earth couldn't see the surprise visible on Kao's face, when he heard Earth's carefree laugh.

"Interesting." Earth chuckled, still lying on his back with his eyes closed. "Superpowers and enchanted voice? Sounds good."

Kao hummed in agreement, laying down next to the smaller boy, letting the waves reach his feet. He fold his hands under his head and closing his eyes.

They laid there like this for a some time. Enjoying the peaceful atmosphere that was surrounding them. After some time they started to chat. Well mostly it was Earth talking about everything and Kao only humming or making some small comments here and there to show that he was still listening.

Earth was still in a shock but who he was to complain. As stoic as he was, Earth found out that Kao was a really good company. He was calm, not saying more than he needed to, always thinking through everything before he said it. But he was intelligent and he observe the world around him quietly, making his own opinions on things. And he saved his life after all so that was a big plus.

They spend the rest of the day just laying on the beach, talking and getting to know each other, before Earth had to go back home so his mother would be not worried.

In was bring back to reality when the boy next to him shook his head slightly and made a quiet coughing sound. Looking around, In cursed out loud. He didn't notice it before but the shore he took the boy on was separated from the bay by a reef so there was a no way he could get to the village by foot and swimming in this weather would be too dangerous and In had no idea how long this bad weather would last. That meant that he had to help the boy to get to the village if he didnt want him to starved on this small beach right after he saved his life.

The boy as slowly starting to wake up so In couldn't risk to go to the water with him because he didn't want him to fully woke up in the middle of an ocean with a mermen holding him. So all he could do was wait for him to wake up and do something. In had no idea what but Pharm is going to kill him either way so it didn't really mattered.

In slowly got back to the sea and sat on a rock that was close to the beach and waited for the boy to wake up.

He didn't have to wait for long. After few minutes the boy opened his eyes and slowly sat up and was looking around in confusion. When their eyes met both of them froze for a second just silently watching each other. In was sitting still, only his tail slowly swaying under the surface, waiting for the boy's reaction. Then the boy sat up with his legs crossed, never breaking the eye contact.

"You are real." the boy whisper quietly, his voice full of wonder."It is you, right? I saw you few days ago in the sea during the storm. Oh my god, you are real."

The boy was rambling, his eyes shining with curiosity, his whole body unintentionally leaning closer to the sea. In was just sitting without moving. He was expecting the boy to start panicking or screaming, but not this. There was no fear or turmoil in his eyes. Only wonder and confusion. That was not a normal reaction of somebody who saw a living mermaid for the first time.

"What is your name. Or should I just call you water boy?" the boy asked, getting In's attention.

In watched him for a moment, his head slightly tilted to the side, his own eyes also filled with curiosity. Who is this boy and why is he not afraid of him?

"Do you hear me?" the boy said louder this time. "Do you understand what i am saying?"

In scoffed at that and nod. "Of course I can hear you and yes, I can understand you." he answered.

The boy smiled, just small smile, only one corner lifting up a little, but In's heart missed a beat, or two, because of that. He had the exact same smile as Kao had. The boy stood up and walked closer to the water, the waves now reaching his ankles. He was watching In with his soft smile, then a cold wind blew and the boy visibly shivered, when his wet clothes touched his skin. In cursed quietly. He needs to get that boy home or he will catch a cold, from being in his wet clothes in this bad weather. Now the problem was, how is he going to do that.

“So what’s your name, water boy?” the boy asked again, sitting down again his ankles still in the water. If there will be a stronger wave, he is going to get wet again, In thought, but on the other hand, it’s not like he can get more wet then he is now so he didn’t comment on that.

“Don’t call me water boy.” In said instead with a little pout. “Tell me your name and I will tell you mine.”

“My name is Korn.” the boy, Korn, answered without hesitation.

“Well Korn, my name is In” In answered and lazily swayed his tail so it would peaked a little. He wanted to see Korn’s reaction because he probably not be able to get Korn home without him seeing his tail anyway. He could see Korn’s eyes following the movement of his tail and again, to In’s delight, the boy didn’t freaked out, his eyes widened and his smile got a little bit bigger but that’s was it.

“So it is real. The stories didn’t lie.” he whispered, his voice soft and full of wonder. “ You are mermaid, right?” he ask, this time his voice a little bit unsure, as if he was afraid to asked that question.

“Well technically, I’m mermen, but yes. I am mermaid, we do exist.” In rolled his eyes at the boys, who was still watching him with that little side smile. “What story?” In asked, but continued speaking when Korn wanted to answer him. “Wait that does not matter now. You need to get home and so do I. Oh my god, Pharm is going to kill me.” In whined, now actually scared to go back home. Angry Pharm was dangerous.

In pushed himself off the rock he was sitting on and swam to the shore till he could reach the sand with his hand to keep him steady.

“Come here.” he ordered to now very confused Korn. when the boy did not react In sight and repeat himself. “ Come on, we don’t have much time. You will get sick. Just put your hands around my neck. I don’t bite. I swear.” In rolled his eyes, again.

“There is no way you can carry me. I am too heavy for you!” Korn protested.

“I carried you here during a pretty bad storm, when you were actually dead weight. Thanks for worrying but I will manage. Now come here, we really don’t have much time. The storm is not over yet.” In scoffed and rolled his eyes even more.

“Oh okay. Sorry for that and thank you for saving my life.” he looked that he is really sorry at In who just smiled at him and reach his hand to the boy who finally stepped into the water.

It took them awhile but they manage to get to the bay without Korn slipping from In’s hold and drowning,so that was a win. When they reach the shore near the village, In carefully stopped swimming between two big boulders coming from the sea at the beach so he would be covered if somebody from the village was looking in their direction. Korn let go of him and slowly walked out of the water.

“I- thank you for saving my life, In” Korn said quietly “Will you come back?”

“Of course I will.” In grinned at the boy with only his head visible above the water.” You need to tell me the stories!”

“Bye Korn.” In waved and turned around to disappear under the surface with his tail dramatically splashing the water around the place he dived into the sea.

In’s head was spinning when he was trying to swim home. He was so confused. Who was the boy? And is there something connecting him to Kao?

When he arrived home he was welcomed by angry and really worried Pharm, who was waiting for him there but after seeing In’s condition, without saying anything he just grabbed him by his hand and dragged him to his room. He did not ask a single question but his stern look was telling him that they will have the talk right after In will wake up.

Chapter End Notes

yaay they talk to each other finally :) we are half way through! i am planning 4 chapters and epilogue yayaya

Park is that annoying dude from 2moon2 and i just used his name

stay safe and i love you and maybe i will even finish this thing (one day)

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

hi :) i am so sorry for taking this long but my life is kinda all over the place i had no time to write this.

i wrote this InKorn part today in one go so it is going to be one big error but i wanted to post it as soon as possible. also google doc 's grammar corrector is my only friend so dont expect much :))

this is not how chapter for was suppost to go but it was long enough to post so i just go with it. that means that this word vomit will have more chapters that i expected to have (yaaay or nayyy)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When In finally got back home, after saying goodbye to Korn, it was late in the night and he was really tired. Pharm was waiting for him in his room, worried about his younger friend.

“In? Finally! Where have you been? Do you know how late it is?” Pharm lifted himself and swam closer to In, when he noticed the boy entered his room.

“I- I don’t know. I am sorry.” In answered quietly, swimming slowly to his bed, ready to fall asleep in his bed. He had to look as tired as he felt because Pharm swam even closer and was watching him with worry.

“In? What happened?” he said as he was carefully leading him to bed. He laid him down and put a light duvet on him, tucking him in. In closed his eyes for a moment, calming himself down.

“I saw him again. The boy that looks like Kao, but his name is Korn and he is not afraid of me.” In said quietly.

“Did you talk to him? Wait- what do you exactly mean by “he is not afraid of you”? Did he saw you? I mean, all of you?” Pharm sat on the bed next to In.

“Yes. I saved him. He was going to drown in the sea. I helped him to get to the shore. I- He looks so much like Kao. Pharm, how is it possible?” In’s voice was getting weaker and weaker and at the end Pharm had a problem to even hear what he was saying at all.

“I don't know In. But it is not him. We all saw him die.” Pharm sighed.

“I know, Pharm. I know! But there is something on him. He makes me feel safe and like I have known him for a long time. there has to be something, don't you think?” he sounded

almost desperate, like he wants to convince more himself than Pharm.

“That's possible. We don't know the path God's chosen for us.” Pharm slowly patted a In's head, “But now, go to sleep. You are exhausted. We can talk about it tomorrow, okay?” Pharm asked, while lifting himself off the bed and tucking In more tightly into his blanket.

“Hmm okay. I love you, Pharm.” In mumbled almost inaudibly.

“I love you too, In. Good night.” Pharm said with a soft smile while he was leaving In's small room. He turned his head back to the boy to look at him, now peacefully sleeping, sad smile on his lips. In went through a lot and Pharm was scared that the history will repeat itself. He was scared because he had no idea who this boy was and what he will do to In. But there was nothing he could do to top In to do whatever he wants. He can stand by and be ready to be there for In, when he will need him. He and everybody else in their small village.

After that incident on the beach Earth didn't talk, or even see Kao for several weeks. But the information that it was Kao who beated Park's ass had to spread around like a fire because since then, nobody bothered Earth that much. Yes, they stared at him and not-so-sneakily whispered all the bad stuff about him behind his back but nobody was attacking him or trying to drown him again.

Earth wanted to ask Kao if he said something to them or if it was just his little act against Park, that kept everybody away from Earth. But it looked like Kao disappeared or is doing a really good job at avoiding Earth. There was no chance for him to meet Kao in their little village school because of their age difference so Kao had no reason to visit that god forsaken place and he didn't come across him even in a village center.

Time passed and Earth again found himself sitting on a beach watching the sun slowly disappearing below the horizon.

It was when the sun almost fully disappeared when he felt a movement behind his back. He turned his head and saw Kao just lowering himself to sit beside him. Earth smiled at the older boy, silently waiting for Kao to sit down.

“Hey.” Kao said when he was sitting comfortably.

“Hello to you too.” Earth answered “you are really hard to find.”

Kao smiled at Earth apologetically. “I am sorry. I had to help my dad with something. I finally had some free time, so I thought that I could just relax here for a little bit.”

“So you didn't go here just to see me? I am hurt!” Earth answered looking at Kao with the saddest eyes he could muster without laughing out loud. He could see Kao hesitate for a moment but then just shrugging his shoulders and nodding a little: “Yeah, maybe that too a little.”

“Good” Earth chuckled while lying down on the sand, one hand under his head and the other stretched to the side away from Earth.

They were quiet for some time. Just enjoying the peace surrounding them. Earth was a very chatty person but for some reason he didn't feel the need to fill the silence when he was with Kao. At some point Earth stood up and slowly walked into the sea, waves hitting his bare ankles.

“Come here.” Earth turned around with laughter when a bigger wave hit him and water reached almost to his knees. Kao still sat on the beach near the water, just watching Earth playing in the water with a soft smile on his lips.

“No.”

“Come on! Don't be like a boring old man! I mean, you are old but not that old!” Earth whined why he was walking out of the water.

“As you said yourself. I am too old to go to the water.” Kao said, looking at approaching Earth with a worry in his eyes.

“You are what? Fifteen? Sixteen? Come on old man, you are going into the water with me.” said the younger boy while tugging at Kao's hand trying to make him get up. He was trying to make Kao move but there was no point in that because the older boy was way stronger and had no intention to do as he was told.

Suddenly Earth was pushed down by Kao who started to fight back. In one moment Earth was standing over Kao and just a second later he was pushed down falling flat on the older boy's chest with one hand still connected with the other's boy hand, squished between their bodies and the other lying somewhere on the other's boy stomach.

“What-” before he could even finish his sentence he was being lifted up in a bridal style, quickly putting his free hand around Kao's neck in a shock.

“So I am old and boring?” Kao asked while spinning them both around making Earth yelp and grasp Kao's neck harder.

“No of course not! You are the most not boring person ever!” Earth screamed when he felt cold drops of water reach his back. Kao was walking deeper and deeper into the sea holding Earth who was trying to escape from his embrace before it was too late.

“Sorry, what? I can't hear you over the waves.” he heard Kao say mockingly. Earth looked at Kao and moved up a little bit so he was closer to Kao's face. “I said,” Earth screamed into Kao's ear, “that you are the mo- no!” Earth was interrupted again, this time by Kao spinning around once more and then throwing him into the water. Earth had no time to prepare himself for the impact and just dive right into the water while still screaming his lungs out.

When he reached the surface again the first thing he saw was Kao standing a few meters away from him laughing loudly with his smile on a full display. Seeing him like this took Earth's breath away more than being thrown into the water just one minute ago. It was the

first time that Earth saw Kao so carefree and just enjoying himself. And not to be dramatic, but Kao's loud laugh was maybe the most beautiful thing Earth ever heard.

Earth shakes his head to clear his mind and also gets water out of his ear. He looked at Kao with his threatening glare, which made Kao laugh out loud even more.

"You will pay for this old man." Earth screamed while running towards the other boy with a loud and a little bit hysterical cry. This time it was Kao who was not ready for the impact of a smaller body when Earth jumped at him making both of them lose their balance and dive again under the water. Earth who was ready this time, just held his breath and tangled his hands and legs around the older boy, waiting for him to get back on his feet.

Earth didn't loosen up his grip on Kao even when they were back above the surface, lying his face on Kao's shoulder.

"You are a really evil one. People in the village were right about you." Kao chuckled after he was able to speak again. He tried to pry Earth's hands and legs away from him but Earth was holding too tight so Kao just made a long suffering sound and walked back to the shore with Earth still being glued to his front.

When the water was reaching his knees, Kao sat down with a smaller boy now sitting in his lap, hands around his neck to keep him in place. Earth slowly adjusted his legs to fold them over each other behind Kao, so he could sit more comfortably, his face never leaving it's spot on Kao's shoulder.

"Hmmm you are right. I am the evil one." Earth hummed into Kao's neck suddenly feeling very sleepy.

"Yes, you are." Kao chuckled, putting his one hand on Earth's head and playing with his hair. Earth made a pleased hum and wiggled a little to get into a more comfortable position. Kao looked down at him surprised by Earth behavior but he shook his head and just held the boy in his lap.

They sat there in the water for a while and then Kao managed to move them on the sand so they were able to dry their clothes and not catch a cold. With a little struggle, he separated sleepy Earth off of himself and lay the little boy down on a warm sand and sitting next to him. Earth opened one eye and looked at him with a sad pout.

"You are such a baby." Kao huffed while he sat in a pretzel style behind Earth and put his head gently into his lap.

"Hmmmm. Evil baby." Earth hummed happily, closing his eyes again. Kao shook his head laughing at him. After a moment of an inner battle he lowered his head to press a soft kiss on a top of Earth head. Earth's only reaction was reaching his hand for Kao's and laying them on his stomach. Kao looked at their joined hands with a smile and put his other hand on top of Earth's head to play with the boy's hair again.

It was long after sunset when they parted their ways both feeling the happiest they felt for a long time now.

When In woke up the next day, he was exhausted and so confused. He talked with Pharm about everything, just like they promised. In felt much better after that and he even felt good enough to go with Team to teach him about the water plants that were growing near their village. They swam close to the seabed, In showing all the places where different types of algae and corals were. He showed him the good ones that they can use for food and the ones that were good as medicine or for wound healing. He also showed him the bad ones, which could poison them so quickly. Team was listening carefully, asking so many questions when he was not sure about anything or just wanted to know more. Team was good company and after their little trip, In felt so much better.

He wanted to swim ashore again, to see Korn, to talk to him. Pharm was not really happy about it, still not being sure what it all meant, but he eventually agreed to it with one condition. He will go with In, to see if Korn is there, waiting for him. In was firstly against the idea, but he also knew that Pharm was just trying to protect him. So after dinner, they swam back to the shore, where In said his goodbyes to Korn. When they were close enough so they could see the beach clearly, they stopped and sat on rocks that were above the surface.

The beach looked abandoned on a first glance, but after a moment they saw a movement under the first row of trees.

“Oh goddess. He is here. Pharm. He is here. What should I do?” In was rambling, suddenly nervous about talking to Korn again.

Pharm was looking at the person that was hiding under the trees and he couldn't believe his own eyes. The boy that was sitting there really looked exactly like Kao. Suddenly all the memories of the day came back and he was overwhelmed by it.

It felt like yesterday. The day when they all watched Kao being executed and they couldn't do anything to stop it. It was about a year after In was thrown to the water. They didn't know what was going on in the village at that time. But one evening, they saw a big fire on the top of the biggest reef and a lot of people screaming around it. They swam closer to the shore to see what was going on. Suddenly, a man was thrown in front of the crowd, near the sea and they all could clearly see his face.

In recognised him in second, screaming in agony because he knew what was going on now. It was only Dean's hands that were keeping him in place so he would not swim to the reef. He screamed Kao's name, his voice hoarse after a while. Two people grabbed him by his hands and tight him up to the pole that was erected on the hill. Everything went quiet for a second and then there was a one loud gunshot and Kao's body stopped moving, his limbs hung limply beside the body. After that they untied Kao's lifeless body and without a second glance, they threw him over the reef into the water. Without saying anything, Win and Dom dived under the water to save the sinking body. Pruk had to help Dean with In, who was trying to dive under the water too. They had a hard time to calm him down enough so they could safely swim back to the village. They buried Kao's body on a shore under the reef that was not accessible from the coast, putting a rare corals on his grave and with a Myss help, the corals grow faster and cover the grave and its surroundings in a colourful blanket.

It was a few weeks after, when they finally found out why the villagers killed Kao. It was Del who swam close to the shore and heard two fishermen talking about it. As far as they knew, after Earth was thrown into the water as a sacrifice, Kao couldn't really come to term with it and little by little lost his mind. And after almost a year he killed his own father, who was the one who was responsible for Earth's death.

Del telepathically shared everything she saw with Dom, so when she returned to their village everybody already knew.

“What should I do? I don't-” it was In's voice to bring him back to reality. In was dramatically waving his arms around and suddenly lost his balance and with a high pitched shriek and big splash, he fell into the water. This sudden movement caught Korn's attention and he stood up and walked near the water, looking at the sea carefully.

“In? Are you okay?” Pharm asked watching the boy emerge back on the surface.

“Ughhh yes. I am fine. But I think he kinda saw me.” he answered, looking on the shore.

“Yes. It was kinda hard not to notice. But he really looks like him. It is unbelievable.” Pharm was looking at the boy now sitting on the beach close to the water, just quietly

watching them.” You should go now. He is waiting for you. But be careful! I love you.” and with the last sentence, he dives with a loud splash into the water. He even emerged back just to jump like a dolphin out of the water, his scales softly shimmering on the setting sun.

In rolled his eyes and smiled. Pharm could be pretty dramatic when he wanted to be. He shook his head and swam to the shore where Korn was waiting for him.

He swam to the shoal, his lover body lying on the sand in the water. He was still fully not out of the water, just his head peeking out.

“Hi.” Korn whispered like he was afraid that if he spoke too loud In would disappear. “I was starting to think that you will not show up.”

“Now way. You still need to tell me the story, don't you remember?” In smiled and swam even closer, now his full upper body out of the water, his hands keeping him above the water and his tail lazily swaying behind him. He was Korn following it's every move.

“Of course I remember.” Korn answered, mirroring In's smile. “But who was the person in the sea with you?”

“That was my friend. If you tell me the story I will tell you about him!” In changed his position, now leaning on his elbows so he would be more comfortable. “Well, go on! I am listening!” Korn was sitting right next to him, his ankles in the water and elbows resting on his bended knees.

“So the story. Well I don't really remember how exactly it was, but in a nutshell it was like this. Many centuries ago, there was a boy living in this village. He was petit and so beautiful. He was kind and selfless but the villagers were afraid of him. They say that he had an

enchanted voice and when he sang, he made all the men do what he wanted them to. Everybody was afraid of him and they all avoided him. And then the beautiful boy fell in love with a boy who saw his beauty and loved to listen to him singing. But fate was against them and the petit boy was sacrificed for his beauty. The legend says that after he sank to the bottom of the sea, the Goddess of the ocean herself took him under her protection. His lungs became gills and instead of two legs he suddenly had a tail with glittering scales. His voice really became enchanted and with Goddess blessing he is lurking sailors to their deaths till now.” In was listening to Korn’s story, his own story, and tears starting to roll down his face. He didn’t know that Korn stopped talking and was looking at him, confused not knowing what to do.

“In?” he asked quietly, putting his hand on a top of In’s head and patting it softly.

“His- his name was Kao. The boy who he fell in love with. His name was Kao.” In hiccuped, covering his face with both hands. “Does the story tell what happened to him after that? Because they killed him. They shot him and threw his body to the sharks.”

He was sobbing now, gasping for air. All the memories back, suffocating him. He felt two strong arms embracing him and lifting him up for a moment. And then he was back on the sand, but this time he was lying on his back with his head in Korn’s lap. He felt one gentle hand in his hair again and the second one grabbing one of his hands, Kao’s thumbs stroking the back of his hand comfortingly.

“Shhhhh. It is okay. I am so sorry.” Korn was speaking to him, trying to calm the smaller boy down.

They sat there like that for a long time, Kao holding him tight. After a while, In calmed down, his tears stopped falling down and he could breathe normally again.

“I loved him.” In started to talk “He was the first person, beside my family, who really saw me. He was not afraid of me, just because I looked different. We were happy. We wanted to move away and live together for the rest of our lives. Does the story tell who was that person who threw me into the water?”

“No. I do not.”

“It was Kao’s father.” he answered, feeling Korn’s embrace getting tighter. “He used me as a sacrifice for safe sail. Well.” In chuckled bitterly. “It didn’t really matter because Kao killed him after that. And if it was not Kao, I would do it myself.”

Korn just pulled In’s body up, pressing his front to In’s back and hugging him tightly. They sat there like that, watching the sun disappear under the water. They also talked a lot. In talking about his life before transformation, about Kao but also about Pharm, Dean and everybody else who were now his family.

Korn also talked about his life, about the things that changed since In was walking on the land. It was comfortable and In felt safe. When the stars were shining in the sky, In said his goodbye to Korn, splashing water with his tail.

He felt content because they will see each other again.

Chapter End Notes

(i absolutely forgot if In killed Kao's father or not. i tried to find it in a previous chapters but i couldnt. so if he did and i am just stupid please tell me so i could rewrite that :)) i think it is better if Kao will be the one who will kill him)

i hope you are all safe and doing as good as you can. i hope that this piece of word vomit will make your day at least a little bit better and if you need somebody to talk to i am always here

AND if there is somebody who wants to beta read this thing i will give you all my smooches and cuddles :)

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

I am back!!!

So this is the last chapter. It took me a long time (over half a year) to write :) i really hope everything makes sense and there are no obvious plot holes

just a warning, there is a description of panic attack and an open wound after the flashback. It is nothing graphic or explicit but please be careful!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Rainy season was slowly but surely ending and the weather was getting warmer. In was visiting Korn as often as he could. Pharm trusted him and let him go to the shore with a small sad smile not really reaching his eyes. But he also had things to do for their little village, like catching fishes, taking care of plants that were growing nearby or even treating wounds of animals that seeked out their help.

So when he could spare some time to visit Korn, usually they sat at the far corner of a beach where big rocks were shielding them from somebody who could come to the beach. Most of the time, Korn was sitting near the water, the sea now warm enough for him to sometimes dip his feet into the water. In was usually sitting on some rock near the shore with his tail in the water, swaying lazily from side to side, or swimming slowly near to Korn so he could still hear him. They could talk for hours about nothing important, just enjoying the presence of another person.

“Pharm?” In called his friend, when they were swimming around one of their coral reefs near the village. Pharm looked at In, gesticulating for him to continue.

“I- well. Would you like to meet Korn?” In said, swaying his tail nervously.

“I would love to, In. If you are okay with it.” In smiled at his friend, eyes almost disappearing and swam to Pharm, almost tumbling him to one of the reefs they were taking care of right now.

“Thank you. I will talk to him about it.” In said and got back to checking the corals.

They worked like that for a few more hours before In said goodbye to Pharm and swam to the shore where he was meeting Korn. They talked about nothing in particular, In telling him about the corals and Korn talking about what he did that day. When it was time for In to come back under the water, he asked Korn, if he wanted to meet his friends. Korn agreed happily, wanting to meet the people In was talking about all the time. He was excited to meet them but also anxious that they will not like him. He told this to In, who just smiled at him,

saying that they will love him for sure. With that, he slid down from the rock he was sitting at, and diving under the water splashing the surface with his tail.

When the time Korn was supposed to meet Pharm came, In was nervous. He was swimming around the kitchen, rubbing his hands over his soft scales. Del was there with him, trying to make the boy eat some lunch before he will go meet Korn with Pharm.

“Here.” she gave the boy some seaweed, making him calm down enough so he could eat. “It is going to be okay. Calm down young man.”

In took the food from her, giving her an anxious smile. He nervously munched on every bite, finishing it when Pharm swam into the room.

“Are you ready?” he asked his friend, watching him with a smile. In nodded at him and hugged Del, who pushed them both out of the room.

They swam to the shore in silence, In being too nervous to talk and Pharm didn't want to make him nervous even more. They reached the beach in a moment and In could already see Korn standing near the sea, behind the rocks. In took a deep breath and he swam right to him, waving a little. Korn waved at him right back, watching the two men getting closer. He was nervous to meet Pharm. The boy meant so much for In, all of his friends did.

In pushed himself on the rock that was reaching the shore, his tail still in the water, and leaned towards Korn, who was standing right next to it and pressed a quick kiss on his cheek.

“Hi.” he said quietly and reached for his hand. Korn sat on the top of the rock next to him, grabbing his hand and kissing him on his lips. Then he turned around and looked at Pharm, who was still in the water, only his head above the surface.

“Hello, you must be Pharm. It is a pleasure to meet you.” he said, bowing his head slightly.

“Hi Korn. It is nice to finally meet you in person. In is talking about you all the time.” the smaller boy grinned at his friend who was now pouting at him.

“Pharm! Not all the time. Just here and there.” In whined, hiding his head in Korn's shoulder. Korn chuckled at the boy in his arms, shaking his head a little in amusement.

“I talk about you all the time too. I don't think my brothers are appreciating it very much.” he said, playing with In's hair with his fingers.

Pharm laughed at that, pushing himself on the rock next to them. They talked for a long time, Korn and Pharm getting to know each other better. Pharm shared a lot of embarrassing stories about In, making In dramatically toppling over the rock with a loud splash. Pharm laughed at him, helping him up just a moment after and Korn hugged him tighter, telling some embarrassing stories about himself too. Before they knew, the sun hid behind the horizon and they had to return back under the sea.

“So?” In asked Pharm when they were back in the village.

“He is a good guy.” Pharm answered, gently grabbing In’s wrist and leading them to the younger boy’s room. He sat them both down on In’s bed, looking at the boy. “But In, please be careful. I can see that Korn really likes you and you obviously like him too. But....”

“I know Pharm. I know.” In lay his free hand on their connected ones, squeezing them a little. “But what if this is Myss giving us another chance? I can't be wrong and make a fool out of myself but- what if?”

“I wish you are right, so much.” Pharm looked down at their connected hands. “But you can't just focus on a good side and ignore the bad one. You are living down here. You are almost immortal. He is a mere human. He will grow old and he will die one day. And i am not even speaking about the difficulties with you meeting. You can't get out of the water and he can't go in.”

“I know all of that Pharm. i know it since the beginning. I wish there was some spell, anything.”

“Like a kiss of true love?” Pharm chuckled a little.

“Yeah, something like that!” In laughed and put his head on Pharm’s shoulder. “But imagine if it was possible and we would kiss and nothing happened? That would be so so awkward!”

“Maybe a little.” Pharm hugged the boy, leaning closer to him. “But if there is something like this, don't you think Myss would tell us?”

“Yeah, she would probably do that.” In yawned, hiding his face behind his palm. “That means, we will have to find a way by ourselves. And if it means that I will see him grow old and then die, let's be it.”

“We will see. Now go to sleep.” Pharm gently pushed In down, kissing him on his forehead. “Sweet dream.”

“You too. Go to sleep!” In said, waving at his friend who smiled at him as he swam out of the room, closing the door behind him.

Around two weeks later, In managed to get everybody in their small village to meet Korn. It was a lot of work and a lot of planning but he managed. Now he just had to tell that to Korn, who had no idea.

Summer was in it’s strongest, the weather was warm and there was almost no rain. That meant that they could spend more time together, Korn being in the water with In for a longer time before he got cold. They were seeing each other as much as they could, finding a little abandoned beach, near Korn’s family house, where there was a lesser chance for somebody seeing them.

Still, it was something different to be here alone then bringing all of his friends there. It would be too risky to bring them all here so he came up with a plan. He will get Korn on that

isolated shore he dragged Korn during the storm. There is no chance for them to be seen by people from the village, so all of them can be out of the water. Not hiding their tails under the surface.

He swam to the shore, already seeing Korn under the tree line near the water. He waved at him and pushed himself on a top of one of the rocks there. Korn stand up and walked over to him, walking into the water and sitting at the rock next to him.

“Hello.” the boy said and kissed In on the lips. “How are you?”

“I am fine. A small group of rays visited our village and one of them was badly injured so Pharm and I took care of it. Pruk played with the younger ones. It was fun to watch. He was attacked by a bunch of hyperactive sea carpets. You should see it! They are so cute.”

In laughed, remembering Pruk being tackled down on the seabed by baby rays that covered him whole, only the tip of his tail being visible. Win tried to help him, but he was ambushed by a small ray who sneakily swam behind him and pushed him right on the pile that was Pruk and all the other rays. It was a good day.

“So! Are you up for an adventure today?”

“What adventure?” Korn asked, looking at In who was watching him with his puppy eyes in full force.

“Well. What do you think about a little trip to meet my friends?”

“Trip to where exactly?” Korn raised his eyebrow. It is not like he is able to say no to the boy, but he wants to know more before agreeing.

“You remember the little gulf I dragged you on when you almost drowned? It is not possible to get there from the mainland so it would be safe for us to be there all at the same time.”

“You want me to meet all of your friends now?”

“Yes. It was a lot of planning, so yes. Please?”

“Of course. But how do we get there?”

“Ehm just like the last time?” In looked at Korn and with a smirk he slid into the water.

“Come on, pretty boy. It is time to get wet.”

“Are you sure- Yes, I know you can swim with my dead weight but- okay okay i am going into the water.” Korn slowly submerged into the water. The rock they were sitting at was still close enough to the shore so he was still able to reach the bottom. “Okay. What do yo-”

Before he was able to finish his sentence he was manhandled by In who swam in front of him and pushed him on his back. Korn had just enough time to grab In’s shoulders before the boy started to swim away from the shore.

They arrived at the abandoned shore, In let Korn go when he was sure he would be able to reach the bottom. Korn stepped out of the water, sitting on the sand, each wave hitting his ankles. In chose to lazily sway in the waves, balancing himself with his hands propped against the shallow bottom. They talked for a while like that, Korn slightly nervous about meeting all of In's friends at once.

Suddenly, In turned his head around, looking at the surface. He smiled a little and just when Korn wanted to ask what he was looking at, three colourful tails breached the surface, sunlight reflecting on their scales. They all did a little twirl and disappeared back into the water. Korn looked with his mouth wide open and In laughed at him, his eyes sparkling with joy. A few seconds after, three heads appeared right next to them. Korn looked at their faces. All of them were boys, looking around the same age as he was, all of them were grinning at In who just rolled his eyes at them and splash some water in their direction. And then two more heads appeared. This time two girls.

"What did we say about showing off?" the one closer said, and Korn could imagine her hands propped against her waist. The three boys looked at her with a grin, not looking sorry at all.

"Oh. Hi Korn!" the other girl exclaimed. She had a round face and she was grinning from ear to ear. Korn was trying not to stare but they were all beautiful and he could see the outline of their tails under the water. "I am Mannow. In's best friend!"

"Hi. I am Del. It is a pleasure to finally meet you." The first girl said. Her voice was much softer than Mannow's, her face delicate. "And these three idiots are Pruk, Win and Dom." She introduced the three boys, each of them waving at Korn when she called their name. Korn bowed at them a little, not sure how to react to that.

"Pharm and the rest of our little family is going to be here soon. They got caught up with some reef problems." Mannow said, swimming closer to the shore, grinning at Korn and oh boy he did not like the evil glint there. "So...Korn"

In groaned and tried to push her under the water. He managed to do that but she just rolled around like some seal, her stomach facing the sky and just looked at Korn with her head angled up so she could still see him. It did not look comfortable but she didn't seem to mind. The rest of them also swam closer to the shore so they could hear everything. Del rolled her eyes and swam next to In, gently nudging him with her shoulder. In smiled at her and then looked back at Korn who was trying to please Mannow and answer all of her questions.

He was in the middle of telling her how they'd met, not that they didn't know it already but they wanted to hear it from Korn's perspective, when Pharm and the rest of the boys showed up.

"Hi In. I'm so sorry for being late." Pharm said, swam up to them and pressed himself right between In and Mannow, the girl whinnying a little. "Hello Korn. It is nice to see you again. This is my boyfriend Dean and-"

"Team?" Korn was looking at Team, his eyes wide open and In noticed that his hands were slightly shaking. Team looked up from Win he was talking to, looking confused for a moment

but then his lips stretched into a wide smile and waved at Korn who still looked like he was seeing ghost.

“Ehmm, you know each other?”

“I- Are you...”

“Well, kinda?” Team answered when he saw that Korn will not be helpful. “We met a few times at the market and I visited Korn’s family store when I needed some little gifts for the kids.”

“You are alive. That’s- That’s good to know” Korn said quietly, looking like he can't believe it. “You stopped showing up at the market so went to the orphanage but they threw me out right when I said your name. Few weeks later I was told that you’ve got some nasty flu and didn't make it.”

“Flu? That’s so boring!” Team whined and put his head at Win’s shoulder who patted him a few times, laughing a little. “Are the kids alright?”

“Yeah. Mew is taking care of them.” Korn laughed at Team’s horrified face. “I know how it sounds but surprisingly it is not as big a disaster as we thought.”

“Can't believe.” he swam to the shore, right in front of Korn, propping his elbows against the sand, face in his hands, tail swaying lazily behind him. “Do you remember when he lost like half of the kids at the market and we had to catch them all?”

“Don't remind me.” Korn groaned, hiding his face in his palm. “What a day.”

The rest of them watched the two boys. It was rare to hear Team talked about his life on the land, they still didn't know much. He looked absolutely relaxed while talking to Korn about their common friends.

They talked like that for a long time, all of them getting to know Korn way better. They said their goodbyes when the sun hid behind the horizon. Korn and Team agreed on meeting each other again soon. Win scrunched his face and Team rolled his eyes and kissed his cheek before diving into the water, leaving very confused Win behind him. In laughed at him and pushed him under the water to swim after him. All of them left, leaving the two boys alone again. They stayed there for a few more minutes, just enjoying the quiet. Then In swam with Korn to their little beach, not really wanting to say goodbye but it was late and they had things to do the next day. With a soft kiss on Korn’s lips In dived under the water, his tail shining in the disappearing sun.

Earth and Kao started to meet each other at the beach as often as they could. With Earth helping in their little family shop and Kao assisting his dad, there were weeks when they saw each other only once or twice, but when they were lucky, they were able to escape to the beach almost every evening. They got really close, talking about their families and future plans and dreams.

Winters in their region were mild, only wind coming from the sea was more icy than usual. So now, more than two years after they first met, the two boys were sitting on the beach, huddled up in thick layers of clothes, preventing them from freezing on the spot.

Nothing really changed in the village and its people during these two years. People were still avoiding Earth and Kao was still the same unknown for them like the day he and his father came to the village. But for the two of them these two last years bring lots of changes. They became closer each day. From an absolute stranger who was in the right place at the right time to a good friend who they trusted with their deepest secrets. Their relationship didn't end there. For a long time they carefully danced around each other, not knowing how they really feel, what the other person feels, and if the things they feel are even right.

After a lot of stolen glances, kisses on cheeks and goodbye hugs that were just for a second too long they came to the conclusion that seeing themselves as a best friend does not fit their relationship entirely. They were something more than just best friends. For the both of them, the other person was the best thing that ever happened to them, giving them comfort and understanding them better than anybody else could.

They never talked about it with somebody else. There were not many moments when the two of them crossed their paths in the village anyway. Kao being almost all the time with his father and Earth spending his time in school or in his family shop. Everybody knew about their friendship but they didn't ask or they didn't really care and both of them prefer it that way.

Only person who guessed what was going on with them was Earth's older sister. After months of Earth disappearing almost every night and coming back late with suspicious looking bruises and some nights Kao randomly appearing near their houses she started to help Earth with coming up with excuses. She never asked any questions. She was happy that after so long her younger brother found somebody he could trust.

Today was a windy night, Kao and Earth were sitting under the trees close to the sea, so they would be at least a little covered from the strong and icy wind coming from the sea. Kao was sitting with his back leaning against a tree and Earth laying on his back with his head in Kao's lap. Kao's fingers were on the younger boy's head, lazily playing with his hair. They were quiet most of the time, just enjoying the time they could spend together.

"Sing for me." Kao whispered to the boy in his lap.

Earth tilted his head backward so he could look at Kao above him. "Don't you remember? My voice is enchanted. Are you not afraid that I would lure you into the sea?"

"Too late for that I think. I am already enchanted" Kao chuckled watching his boyfriend fondly.

"That was cheesy even for you, my love." Earth laughed, reaching his hand to poke Kao's cheek.

"What can I say. I am under your spell and there is no way back now." Kao replied trying to keep his serious face, his one hand catching Earth's hand that was poking his cheek and

putting them on Earth's chest.

“Oh god, please shut the fuck up.” Earth covered his face with his free hand whining quietly.

“Then sing for me.” he took Earth's hand that was covering his face and put it on his chest next to his other hand.

“You are so annoying!”

“But you love me anyway.”

“Hhhhhh, that's debatable.” Earth said while making himself more comfortable on Kao's lap. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Then he started to sing. His voice was soft and stable, reaching Kao's ears as he also closed his eyes, enjoying Earth's velvet voice.

Cause our love is made of tears

And his love isn't everything

Even thousands drop of tears

Wont turn this love to be something

Although i love you

It doesn't matter

It is not enough to make you stay with me

Earth's voice echoed across the deserted beach, drowning out the sounds of a sea and nearby forest. It almost felt like nature stopped for a moment to listen to Earth's voice that sounded like something out of this world. Even seagulls calmed down and sat on the rocks near the shore to listen. And Earth sang more.

No matter how long

I will still remain yours, and only yours

But this yearning must end

Fall in love to fall

Out of love

Darkness does not last really long

Please hold on, there'll be lights on the horizon

Darling stay here or not

We will get to meet once again

But this yearning must end

Goodbye until we meet again

When Earth sang last word and his voice faded out, for a second there was absolute quiet. No waves were crushing on the shore, no seagulls circling above them and no rustling of leaves at nearby forest. And then all at once, the seagulls took off of the rocks and with a squawk they circled once above them and disappeared beyond the horizon.

The two of them sat under the tree in a silence, Kao brought Earth closer, Earth's back pressed tightly to Kao's front, hugging him firmly. Earth turned in his hold putting his legs at both sides of Kao's hips and wrapping his hands around the other boy's neck, burying his head in Kao's shoulder. In Kao's presence Earth always felt safe and protected from the world and this time was no different. He loved singing. He felt powerful when his voice was resonating around him, everybody's attention just on him. But it also made him defenceless and he always felt naked and somehow blank. That was the reason why he didn't like singing in front of people who could see him when he was the most vulnerable.

With Kao, he knew that he would protect him and be there for him so he was not afraid to sing for him, because he knew how much Kao loved his voice and he will sing for him as long as he will be able to.

Winter came again, days were shorter and harsh cold winds bite their faces. Even the water was colder but that was no problem for the merfolk. The problem was that with harsher weather In was not able to stay out of the water. His skin would dry out faster while being in contact with dry cold air blowing from the sea. This meant that In couldn't emerge from the water and at the same time, the water was too cold for Korn to be in even for a short amount of time. Even staying on the shore so he could talk to In was difficult and he caught cold too many times.

This made their meeting shorter and very uncomfortable for both of them. From seeing each other almost every day they went to meeting barely once a week. In didn't want Korn to get ill every time they spent time together and he was not able to leave the water so they could go to some warmer place then was the windy beach. Their meetings were rushed and they had less and less things to say to each other.

In was moody and irritated, waiting for winter to be already over. He missed Korn. He missed their dates where they could spend together in the water without any obstacle, maybe get a little more handsy. In didn't remember when was their last kiss. There was too much of a space between them working like an invincible barrier. He missed being in Korn's embrace, the waves reaching them everytime they crushed against the shore, Korn's kisses on his shoulders and back. He was sick of Korn freezing in the cold when he was safe in water. He felt guilty every time he saw Korn shiver, cold wind tousling his hair, smiling at In like everything is okay. But In knew that things were not okay. He could be home with his family or with just somebody who was not In, and not on the beach, sitting on the cold sand and talking with In who had to be at least a meter away from him. He felt so guilty. During their

meetings he was not able to feel truly happy. All he could think of was how better for Korn it would be, to not to be here with In.

Everybody in their village could see that In was unhappy. They tried their best to keep him occupied and accompany him where they could. But there was not much more they could do for him and they all felt helpless, especially Pharm. He knew this thing could happen, their differences getting in their way and all he could do was watch his best friend get somber more and more each day and drowning in guilt.

It had been almost two weeks since In last saw Korn and he was anxious. They planned to meet in the evening right before sunset. Korn had a busy week in their family shop so they were not able to meet during the day when the weather was warmer.

In swam near the bottom of the sea, gently touching corals with his hands. He reached the shore quickly, not able to stay under the water anymore without his belly scratching over the rocks that were on the bottom. He was there first. Not a sign of Korn on the beach. In pushed himself on a bigger rock, letting his head drop on the hard surface of the stone and closing his eyes. He was exhausted.

With his eyes closed, he could hear waves crashing against the cliff and wind blowing through the trees near the beach. Suddenly there was too much noise attacking him from every side. All of his heavy thoughts, his guilt. The ache for the boy he loved who deserved so much better than In could ever offer to him. Normal life without all the secrets and hiding. Without hours and hours spent on the harsh cold beach because of his boyfriend not being able to survive on the land.

He could not breathe, his lungs too heavy, his throat tight and gills shaking frantically without taking in any air. His whole body was trembling, the sea swaying with his body and cool air making his skin burn. Everything was too much and In could feel hot tears against his cheeks and down his neck, gathering on his gills. He was so exhausted. He could feel the darkness around him getting closer and closer, a distant voice whispering sweet nothings. If he could just lay there for a few more minutes and let everything behind. No more guilt and no more ache. But then, no more Korn.

Korn. The boy he loved. The boy who was not afraid of him. In took a deep breath, desperately gasping for air, his throat felt like on fire.

“In! In, please answer me!” a voice broke through the waves that were surrounding In. He knew that voice. The voice repeated itself, calling his name over and over again.

In tried to answer but the excruciating pain in his throat made it impossible. All he was able to do was a soft whimper that left his lips, his head turning a little to follow the voice. And the two strong hands were around his waist, pulling him under the surface, water flowing into his gills. He was shaking in the embrace, his head heavy.

“In? What is going on.” he could hear the voice, muffled by the water that was between them.

Korn? In took a deep breath, his lungs filled with fresh water. He started to writhe in Korn's arms, trying to get away from him. He needed to get away. Away from him, from everybody else. Korn was better without him, without In's secrets and guilt.

"In, please stay calm." Korn said, his voice full of panic. He grasped In's thrashing body tightly and In could feel that he was trying to get closer to the shore.

Korn walked out of the water and then falling on the sand, In's body between his legs. He pushed In's body so the boy had his head in Korn's lap, laying on his back, the majority of his body still in the cold water. In was freezing. The waves were crashing against their bodies, making him shiver violently.

"Korn?" the boy whispered, looking up. He could see the worry in his eyes, soft hand touching his face. All the guilt was back in full force. Seeing the boy in front of his, seeing the pain and being the reason for it In spiraled back. He could feel the darkness getting closer again. "No. no. no. Let me go! Leave me alone."

He was trying to push the boy away and crawl back into the water again but he was not strong enough. Korn's hands secure around him, not letting him go.

"In, please. I am not letting you go." he grabbed the boy tighter, pushing In's head against his neck, gently playing with his soaked hair.

"You don't understand." In sobbed, panting against Korn's neck. "Please, let me go. It is for the best. For you. Let me go, I am not worth it."

"In. Listen to me." Korn said, his voice wavering, tears running down his face. He took In's face between his palm, pushing him away from his neck so he could look at him. "In, look at me. Please. Look at me."

In lifted his head a little, bracing himself against Korn's chest. He looked into his eyes that were full of tears. Korn was looking at him with fear in his eyes, his hands that were holding In's face were shaking slightly. There was also something else in his dark brown eyes. In saw it before. Before everything happened, when he was still just a human. Korn was looking at him with his eyes full of love and In was not able to look away.

"In. I am not going to let you go. I love you, In." Korn's voice was weak but he was looking at In, his eyes focusing only on him. "I love you so much and I am not letting you go."

He pressed their foreheads together, stroking In's hair at the back of his head with his shaking hands. In's body was thrashing in his embrace, his broken sobs heareble over the waves. In took Korn's face into his hands, pushing their faces away from each other so he could look at the boy.

"I love you too, so much." he whispered gently rubbing his thumb over Korn's wet cheeks. He gathered the tears that were there, gently wiping them off. Some of Korn's tears got on his own hand, running down his forearm, gathering on his bent elbow. In looked down and watched as one perfect little teardrop fell down, shimmering in the disappearing sun.

Everything around him was in focus and numb at the same time. He could feel his palms against Korn's somehow still warm cheeks. He could feel Korn's fingertips tangled in his hair and his thighs pressed against his tail, peaking out of the water. He could feel the untamed waves crashing against the shore around them, the harsh wind making his bare skin crawl. But at the same time, everything seemed to be too far away from him, dull, without any relevance. Just the teardrop falling from his elbow.

And then the single drop hit his waist, right where his skin was gradually changing to his aquamarine scales. For a moment everything simmered down, not even seagulls were heard. In took a deep breath, breaking the spell.

All the noise came back, stronger than before, attacking In from all sides. He felt a sudden heat on his waist, expanding to his tail. With horror he watched as one by one his scales started to fall off of his tail, taking a little chunks of flesh with them. There was blood everywhere, waves around them coloured in red and the sea foam turned pink. He screamed, not able to move, his body shaking violently in agony. He could feel Korn's hands around his upper torso, careful to not touch his bleeding tail. His spine bent against his will, making him pushed against Korn's body, his neck bent at an unnatural angle. He felt the boy move and then he felt a water surrounding him, salt getting into his fresh wounds. The pain got unbearable for a second and then easing a little, water cleaning all the wounds taking his scales away.

In felt exhausted, pain now more numb than anything else. He was terrified to look at his tail. He could hear Korn calling his name, shaking with him a little but he had no energy to answer. The darkness was there again, inviting more than ever and In closed his eyes.

There was a comfortable warmth surrounding him, but it was the sun against his closed eyelids that woke In up. His senses came back at him slowly. He tried to open his eyes, the direct light making him wince. In turned his head a little to get away from the light. Just that one little movement making him feel dizzy.

He could hear a sharp inhale coming from somewhere near, and then there was a shuffling of clothes and a footsteps approaching him.

"In? Are you awake?" In could hear Korn's soft voice from his left side. He turned his head towards the voice slowly, opening his eyes. It took a few moments for his eyes to focus on anything.

"Korn? What-" he whispered, his throat burning.

Everything came to him at once, air being pushed out of his lungs making him gasp. All the pain, his aquamarine scales ripping off his tail, blood everywhere. His tail, he needs to know what happened to his tail. He tried to push himself up, his head spinning. He lost his balance, dark spots appearing behind his eyes, and he would fall back onto his back if it weren't for two strong arms catching him and putting him back on the bed.

“In. It is okay. I need you to calm down.” Korn put one hand on his cheek, rubbing it gently with his thumb. When he was sure In was listening, he put his hand on his bare shoulder. “I will help you up, okay?”

In nodded his head slowly, not wanting to get dizzy again. Korn lightly squeezed In’s shoulder and with his other hand he pushed him into a sitting position, tucking pillows behind his back so he could lean onto them. With a deep breath, In looked down, when his tail was supposed to be. Supposed to, because there was not a tail but two human legs, wrapped in layers of wet seaweed, making him unable to see the skin underneath.

Looking at his lower parts, he felt the panic creeping up at him, his breath getting shorter and shorter. Korn squeezed his shoulder again and In looked at him, eyes full of fear.

“Calm down In, please. I know it is too much to take in, but please calm down. I will tell you everything that happened, but you need to calm down.” he was gently stroking In’s back, calming him immediately.

“Here. Drink some water.” Korn gave In a glass with clear water and In drank it without thinking, not really caring what is happening right now. When he was done, Korn put the glass away and sat next to the bed, taking In’s both hands into his bigger ones.

“Okay. I- I am so sorry, I-” he took a shaky breath, and squeezed In’s hands. “After- After you passed out, I panicked. There was blood everywhere and you were not moving. So I yelled at the ocean. That sounds so absurd, oh my god. But I had no idea what to do and I hoped that somebody could hear me. And they did. Del and Pharm appeared after a moment. They had to know already, I don’t know how, but they did. Without a single word they pushed you out of the water and put seaweed around your wounds. Del was- Del was shaking so much and- In I was so scared.” he stopped talking, gasping for air and looking at In, who was looking at him back, tears in his eyes. “I thought I lost you. You were so cold, the blood. Anyway. They covered your body in the seaweed. And Pharm told me to get you somewhere warm. Somewhere you will heal. So I took you to my house, because there was no other place I could think of.”

“How- How long?”

“Almost a week.” Korn grasped In’s hands tightly after the boy’s sharp inhale. “It is almost a week. I was changing the seaweed everyday, making sure you are okay. And I was talking to Pharm everyday to let him know how you are doing. He was also bringing me the seaweed.”

“I- I have legs?” In whispered, slowly touching his covered legs. The touch hurted little, the wounds still too fresh.

“Yes, you have. I- I can’t explain a thing to you but when you are feeling better, you should talk to Pharm or the others.” Korn put his hand on In’s head gently playing with his hair. “It is time to put fresh seaweed on your legs. Do you- Do you want to? Are you ready to see your legs?”

“I- Yes.”

“Okay. Just, be careful. It is not healed yet. If you feel uncomfortable let me know, okay?” Korn looked at him, waiting for affirmation. When In nodded, he stood up and took a bucket from a cabinet at the other side of the room.

In looked around the room for the first time, realising he is in a small room with a fireplace, little table with cabinet next to it and the bed he was laying at. The room was warm thanks to the fireplace, which explained why In felt so comfortable and warm even though he was absolutely naked except the seaweed layers covering his lower body.

Korn came back and sat on the chair that was next to his bed, putting the bucket that was full of water and seaweeds on the ground. “Okay, let's get started.” he muttered and started to peel off the old layers.

In was silently watching how Korn put all the layers away, his fingers firm but gentle, careful not to hurt him. When there was no piece of seaweed left, Korn sat down and let In just look at his legs for a moment. His legs were bruised all over, some spots angry red and some a little pink-ish with scratches all over. But what took his breath away were spots with few scales that were still attached to his skin. There were not many of them, maybe around a dozen of them in total scattered around his legs and hips. The bright aquamarine scales contrasted with his bruised skin, some of them had still some dried blood on them. He gingerly reached out his hand, touching one of the scales. When he touched them, it stinged a little, the skin around them still raw.

“They stay there after I washed you.” Korn said, watching the other boy carefully. “I tried to tug at them a little, but they didn't move so I just let them be. They are beautiful.”

“They are.” In whispered, tracing a line between the scales with his index finger. “Thank you, I- i love you.”

“I love you too.” Korn pressed a soft kiss on In's forehead. “Now, lay down and relax. This will take a while”

It took In almost two weeks to fully heal. He had hard time getting used to having two legs again, the unnatural feeling of it keeping him awake most of the night. And when he did fall asleep, he had nightmares about it but Korn was always there, comforting him till his breath didn't even out and he was able to fall asleep again. He also had to learn how to walk again. For a long time, his legs were too weak to support his weight, but when he got stronger, he tried to walk from one side of the room to the opposite. It did not go well for the first few tries. He lost balance, collapsing on the hard floor. But he was persistent and after some time he was able, with Korn's help, to cross the room .

When he got out of the cottage for the first time, the winter passed and spring came, fresh air playing with In's too long hair. It was still chilly for them to stay outside for too long. In was wearing a warm cotton tunic and a long flowy skirt. His legs were still healing, making it hard to wear any kind of pants, the material rubbing against the raw skin. They figured out pretty quickly that he did not have that problem while wearing skirts. It was comfortable and

In liked the feeling of fabric moving around his legs when he walked. It reminded him of the waves in the ocean.

They decided that In was strong enough to accompany Korn to go to the beach nearby to meet up with Pharm, who wanted to talk with In as soon as possible. In missed Pharm so much. He missed all of his friends. Korn always brought some gifts from them, a necklace with seashells from Del or a delicious snack made by Pharm. It tasted different then it did under the water but so did everything else. Not being in the water felt so weird to In. Not feeling the pressure of mass of water all around him, not to be able to seamlessly swim around. Everything was new to In, overwhelming him. But he had Korn with him. Patient and kind Korn who never got mad at him for being stubborn or irrational. They talked a lot about their future, about what they will do after In will be fully healed, about their life together. Their life together that none of them dared to even wish for. It was terrifying but also exciting at the same time.

Seeing the ocean for the first time was overwhelming for In. He took a deep breath, he did that a lot these days, and walked on the sand near the water. He walked up right where the waves were meeting the wet sand and scrunched down, his arms wrapped around his legs, chin propped up on his knees. He traced the lines of the last wave with his finger, following the movement with his eyes. He could feel Korn watching him from distance, not getting into his space but standing close enough for him to be comfortable. In missed the water. It was his whole life. After he turned, he thought that the water was his home. A place where he will live till his last day, no matter how long it would take. But now, things were different. He was on the land again, without his tail covered with beautiful scales. Honestly, he was not as scared or angry about it as he thought he would be. He had Korn by his side and all of his friends living near him.

“In?” he heard a voice coming from the water.

He quickly looked up, smiling brightly when he saw Pharm, swimming near the shore. He stretched his arm and Pharm swam even closer, his tail peeking out of the water, and took In’s outstretched arm in his.

“It is good to see you again.” Pharm said, making himself comfortable in the shallow water. “You scared the shit out of all of us.”

“I am sorry. It is not like I plan it or anything.” In chuckled, smiling apologetically at his friend. “What- Do you know what happened to me?”

“Not really. I was working on the garden behind the reef when Del suddenly appeared, told me to get the special seaweed we have there for more serious injuries and dragged me away. Dom was at the shrine, talking with Myss at the time. She knew what was happening and told Dom to send us here as fast as possible. It was-”

Pharm faltered, looking at In with sad eyes. “In. Seeing you like that, all covered in blood and screaming. Not knowing what is happening and if you will be okay. It was terrifying. Watching people go through transformation is scary, but this- this was terrifying.”

In felt the tears starting to fall from his eyes and without thinking he run into the water, dropping on his knees and putting Pharm's upper body on his lap.

"In." he could hear the two boy scream at him, one looking at him with wide eyes from under him and the second one standing on the beach, his hands stretched out like he was trying to stop In.

"In. You need to get out of the water. It is still freezing and you are not entirely healed yet." Korn said.

In looked around him, his legs and waist under the water. He should be freezing but for some reason, he was not feeling any discomfort. The water felt warm, just like he remembered.

"I- I am not cold. I don't know why but the water feels warm." he looked form Korn to Pharm, who had his head in his lap."

"Hmmm maybe it is the spell. Maybe you lost just your tail, not your ability to survive in the water." Pharm hummed, softly stroking In's bare legs. "That reminds me."

Pharm moved from In's lap so he could talk to him while looking at him more comfortably. He raised his one hand and slowly untangled the string he had there with his other hand.

"When we came back, Myss gave me these. The scales from your tail. She wants you to have them so you will never forget about us."

In took the string from Pharm, his hand shaking. The scales were shining in the sun, all the different shades of blue and green creating a breathtaking sight to see.

"Korn? Can you please put them around my neck?" he asked the boy, his voice shaking. The boy only nodded and walked closer to the water, bending down so he could tight the string around In's neck. When he was done, he kissed In's cheek softly and walked away a little, giving them some space.

In looked at Pharm, who was now silently crying, and hugged him tightly.

"Thank you." he whispered, his face hidden in Pharm's neck "I- I don't know what to do. I thought I would spend the rest of my life under the water with you. I have no idea what happend. Why did it happen. I- i love Korn and I am so happy that I will be able to spend the rest of my life with him but- I don't know."

"I get it. Don't feel bad about it. We will be here for you. We are not going anywhere. You will be just fine." Pharm said softly, hugging the boy tightly. "You have a chance to grow old alongside the person who you love and who loves you. And you deserve it. You went through hell before. I am so happy for you."

"Thank you. I would wish the same for you but you will literally spend eternity alongside the person who you love so it can't get any better."

"True." Pharm laughed and pulled away a little so he would be able to look at In. "But you are not doing bad yourself."

They talked like that for a long time, Pharm telling him everything that happened under the water and In sharing his future plans with Pharm. The sun already disappeared behind the horizon when Pharm decided that it is time to go back to the village. In was almost falling asleep in the water, making Korn nervous.

“I will come back tomorrow and bring some of them with me. They all miss you so don't you think you will just get rid of us so easily.”

“Oh no. You are stuck with me. Tail or not. There is no way I can live a happy life without your delicious cooking.” In grinned at his friend. Pharm shook his head, a large smile on his face. and dived under the water. He emerged a few metres away from them and with a little wave of his hand he disappeared under the water.

In turned back to Korn and reached out of him, making grabby hands at the other boy. Korn just smiled at him and without a word he picked him up. He carried him all the way to their little cottage, putting him down right in front of the fireplace. He took In's wet clothes away and put him in a new dry ones. In was exhausted, the long time spent in the water taking all of his energy away, he let Korn change his clothes and then put him on the bed, covering him with a blanket. He could feel the matrace dip next to him and a strong hand embracing him. He shifted a little, his head lying on Korn's chest and his hand grasping the fabric of Korn's shirt. It didn't take him a long time to fall asleep.

Maybe he lost his tail but he gained so much more. Myss gave him another chance. A whole life next to the person who he loved, friends who were there for him no matter what and he will not take it for granted.

Chapter End Notes

Well?? Please let me know what do you think!!

This was a long long ride that i was definitely not ready for but i hope you like it :D I cant believe i actualy finished this. I started this fic exactly one year ago and honestly, it was too much for me. I was struggling with the writing the whole time, doubting if i will be able to create a work i can be proud of :D now i can say that i am proud of this. It is not good or well written fic but it is my first work like this in english. It would meant a lot to me if you could comment your favourite part or what did you enjoy in this AU so I would know that I didnt write it for nothing

I decided to have a [twt acc](#) just so i could cry about wrining so follow me there if you want!! Please i want friends :(((
(i changed my name here so it would match my acc's @ so thats why are you maybe confused about my new name here)

I hope that this fic made your day at least a little better and i hope i will be back soon with another work (not mermaids, i had enough of mermaids for the rest of my life but i

am thinking about witch changki au? what do you think?)

i love you and stay safe,

End Notes

i have already planned out the whole story so i should finish it but life sucks so i cant promise anything uwu.

i have no idea how mermaid anatomy or social life works so there will be some inaccuracy :) and did i make a Myss a water goddess? yes i did, because i can uwu (if you want a specific face you can put a Jennie there because Jennie is a goddess and i love her)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!