

The Sea of Aubree

Her hair was a raven. The seemingly endless strands breezed in the wind like the feathers of a flying bird. I watched as maroon shimmered in the blackness like a purple fire. Her mouth was stretched into a brilliant smile that I wanted to put in my pocket and keep forever. She wasn't thin. I loved how her tanned stomach peaked out of the bottom of her tight black shirt like sunshine behind a storm cloud. However, she was not fat, merely plump. I liked to call it "healthy."

Oh, how I loved these things about her, but what I adored most of all was her eyes. They hypnotized me, calling me to come closer and listen to their secrets. Each eye was a vast sea. Dark blues rolled around with light greens and yellows to make a swimmingly perfect, watery emerald.

That day, my favorite day, I had convinced her to give me a chance. The sun beamed its smile down onto the meadow. The daisies' stark white petals gave the roaming hills a pureness that reflected her. The dandelions winked at the oak trees above from underneath their taller white friends. Oak, willow, and maple branches spread out across the waving grass casting small shadows to break up the sunshine.

She danced along the meadow with the grace of falling leaves as she headed to a picnic blanket I had spread under a billowing willow tree. I could recall exactly what she said when she noticed what I did for her.

"Mark! You did this for me? How.... How did you know?" She had said.

"I notice things Aubree. How would I ever convince you to go on a second date if I didn't?" I chided her with a slight grin. Her ever-present smile twitched into a lopsided stretch and she clapped her hands in an excited rhythm. I produced a wooden bow, and arrows, that I had crafted, from behind the willow. Her excitement quickly turned to awe. Her eyebrows pinched together as her mouth gaped open and her aqueous eyes widened.

"You did this..." wind chimes oscillated from her mouth. Her voice was quiet and full of wonder. It was not a question but a statement. I nodded.

Her silky smooth hands wandered along the wooden upper limb where her name was carved delicately in cursive. The string glittered like gold.

"I don't..." Aubree began before coughing slightly.

"Don't say anything. It was my pleasure. Go ahead, shoot Aubree." Her hands grazed mine as she grasped an arrow. She resembled the Greek god Artemis as she raised the bow up with a sure confidence. A breeze tossed her raven hair over her shoulders. The purple tint does not show in the shade. Aubree aims and makes a straight shot to the middle of the target.

The willow under which she shot was gnarled. The oval leaves kissed the dirt, occasionally swirling with dainty movements. My eyes wandered back to her. She had forgotten that I was there, but I was happy. She was happy. The shimmering pools of her eyes squinted in concentration. Her arm muscles tensed, her mouth puckered, her nose crinkled, and she shot again.

That was how the day went. Her hitting bulls-eye after bulls-eye, while I watched her absentmindedly on the red checkered blanket. She didn't mind that I stared at her. Aubree seemed to enjoy the attention. She drank it like she had been deprived of it all her life. To anyone watching, it may have appeared that we weren't communicating. However, it was quite the opposite. Every eye flicker, leg twitch, and hair toss told me everything I needed to know.

The rays of sunlight were flickering out when Aubree sat down next to me. The meadow was a pastel painting with reds and pinks reflecting over the whites and greens. Her body shook as I felt the side of her head tap my shoulder. Her hair spilled out in front of me. A sigh graced her lips and her eyelids blinked closed. Aubree's last whisper is forever etched in my mind.

"Thank you."

"Mark...? Mark? Mark! MARK!" I was zapped back to reality by the irritated sound of Aubree's raspy voice. Blonde tufts swept off my forehead as I snapped my head to look at her. The cement walls were stark white like the daisies in my flashback. The scent of cleanliness, lemon and hairspray, hung to every item in the room.

She was lying on a pillow under the fluorescent yellow light. This made her pallor look even more flaxen and her eyes more sunken in. Her raven hair held no more purple fire, just vast, ugly blackness. Clumps of it stuck to the pillowcase. Her mouth was no longer rosy, but pale pink stained crimson. Her plumpness had dissolved into tightened skin stretching over ribs.

"Yes, meum mare?" I responded in Latin, the forgotten language. Aubree's lips elongated into a frown; her slender pink tongue darted out to lick her upper lip. The iron taste of blood, I knew, displeased her. I could tell she was queasy when she grimaced.

"I will never understand why you call me that," Aubree twittered.

"Maybe you would if you learned Latin," I quipped back. Her mouth opened as if to say something, but fear crossed her eyes and she started to violently cough. She spluttered and retched for a good five minutes; blood splattered her lips and was thrown up onto her dirty linen. I rushed to her and clasped her now dry, cracked hands. I could feel the tremors going through her frail body.

"...Can't... breath..." Aubree choked out. Her eyes... they were the same as they were that spring. Beautiful seas full of sparkling mystery, they were just as wide and innocent.

Aubree's eyes never dimmed for a second, even as her eyelids slid continuously lower until they fluttered shut.

“Mark....”

My world? No, she was my sea.