

SIREN'S CALL



BY KIT H.J.

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CONTENT NOTES



This story contains explicit sex, violence, blood, and blood consumption.

EVERY NIGHT YOU HEAR THEM SINGING.

You don't know how much longer you can resist it.
You don't know that you really *want* to resist it.

You climb out of the captain's cabin, ascending the stairs onto the deck. The wind howls overhead, snapping at the sails and tossing water against the ship—but even the coming storm cannot drown out the song that whispers in your head.

“Captain,” your first mate's voice irritates you. You turn your glare to face them.

Their sword is raised between you, pointed and steady—though their eyes turn glassy as you step closer, tempting the blade, letting it press lightly into your stomach.

“The map, ser. Hand it over,” they say.

You blink slowly at them, before turning to look at the faces of your men, all scowling, all watching with their own swords drawn.

Mutiny.

“If you want the map, Rome, you will have to pry it from my dead fucking hands,” you say.

The map. The map. Everything, for the map. You risked it all for this fucking map. And you can't even

read it. Carved into your flesh by a man who was supposed to be your father, it's all you have left of him. All these years, and you could never decipher the code. All these years of staring at your scarred arm, and you are no closer to finding its treasure than if he had never cut your flesh at all.

Only Rome knows this. They can't read it, either. This is just a show— Rome is taking control from you. They will carry on the lie in your place until someone raises a sword to them and the cycle repeats.

Lightning flashes overhead, a distant cry of thunder. You hear the quiet song beckoning you beneath the waves.

You and Rome have been on this road for a long time. Lately, things have shifted between you— you're not sure if it was you or them. But even now, with their sword raised against you, you want nothing more than to take them in your arms and hold them close.

You remember all that time ago, before you ever stepped foot on this cursed ship, just the two of you back on the island, sharing a room at the parlor. You always shared a room, the same room every time. It was cheaper, and it was habit from your younger years

when the two of you could hardly scrape a copper together.

There were no titles between you yet, you were no captain and first mate— just you and your friend.

You were drunk this particular night. It wasn't as common then as it is now. Rome had to take care of you. You weren't sick, you were just being rude, and they dragged you back to the room before you could start a fight.

The two of you had been working under Captain Reed at the time. You hated Captain Reed, and you tended to let everyone know it— hence the need to drag you back to your room.

You watch as Rome stomps around by the foot of the bed, clearly agitated with your behavior. You find it hard to care.

“What will it be like,” you start then, “when we have our own crew, Rome?”

They glance over at you, frowning.

“Keep dreaming,” they scoff. You click your tongue at them.

“I’m going to get that schedule, Rome,” you say.
“And then we’ll need a crew to go after *The Boudicca*.”

Rome halts their pacing then, turning to take a seat beside you on the bed.

"You really think we can pull that off?" they ask.

"I know we can. We get that schedule and the rest will fall into place," you assure them. You don't really remember if you ever believed that— or if you were just really drunk.

Rome stares down at their boots, taking a deep breath.

"We almost have the money," you say. You've been scraping money from Captain Reed for the last few months. With that money, you can pay the bribe for the schedule. Then *The Boudicca* will be yours, and with it a crew and all the money you'll need to figure out this fucking map on your arm.

Rome smiles wistfully, turning to look at you. They put a hand on your thigh, and something stirs in your chest, an old ache you've done your best to ignore. Rome knows you're not a man. And you know that Rome is not a man. But that's the end of that conversation between you. There's nothing else to say, and even if there was, you dare not say it out loud. These walls are thin.

Still.

You return Rome's smile with your own.

And then you sway forward and kiss them. To your surprise, they reciprocate, opening their mouth for you, and you close your eyes, grasping a desperate hand in their long hair, urging them closer, their own hand tightening around your thigh.

When you open your eyes, you're back on the deck, Rome's sword now pointing at your throat.

You turn away from them, turning your stare to the sea as it crashes against the side of the ship, both you and Rome lurching sideways as the mast groans dangerously overhead.

It's too late for this now. You've sealed the fate of everyone aboard this ship— they trusted you. Rome trusted you, most of all. But you've led them here, and there is no treasure here, there is no galleon filled with gold waiting to be looted in these waters. Only your grave.

You take a few steps towards the edge of the deck.

"Captain," Rome says it again, softer this time. Intimate. "Show them the map."

You smile at them just as the rain starts to fall.

"Cut my arm from my body, Rome. It's the only way you will ever have it."

Another wave crashes into the ship, and Rome starts to call out orders, and your crew answers, spurred into action while you just watch the water rush over your boots.

Rome grabs you then, pulling you by your arm. For a moment you think they are going to do it— cut your arm, free you from this curse. But they don't.

"Don't you hear it, Rome?" you say, grabbing at their jacket. "Don't you hear the singing?"

They try to drag you from the deck, back down into your quarters, but you twist free. You run from them, straight to the edge, grasping at the banister as you start to climb over it.

"Captain!" Rome lunges after you, pulling you back by your shirt. Chaos erupts on the ship then, the waves rising higher and higher, and you watch as the helmsman tries and fails to turn the ship in time. Men scramble for a handhold, clinging to the masts, to the ropes whipping in the rain, to anything that will hold their weight. Rome grabs for the banister, holding you tight, but there's no point. You close your eyes as the water crashes down, Rome's hand ripped from the railing as you're both swept backwards, across the deck and into the sea.

The song swells as you sink beneath the dark water.

You and Rome go hand in hand into the deep, the dark mass of the ship tilting ominously over you. It's going to turn over. You've killed them all.

Rome starts to kick, dragging you after them, dodging sinking debris as they fight their way back to the surface. Already you're far from the ship, the current separating you in a matter of seconds, and the two of you struggle to tread water, watching as the ship finally rolls in the distance.

Another wave overtakes you.

The water is cold, gritty between your teeth as you try and fail to catch your breath, earning yourself nothing but another mouthful of seawater.

Rome's jacket weighs them down, but you don't let them go. Hand in hand— you and Rome, always hand in hand. It was always going to end this way.

Nothing valiant about this. No blaze of glory, no legacy left behind. Just a bunch of stupid mistakes, a battered ship, and a crew of dead bodies. Just you and Rome.

You close your eyes.

The sweet song fills you then, warming you from within. Your hand tightens around Rome's. You start to swim.

Something brushes against your leg. A soft touch on your arm, fingers trailing down your back. You open your eyes, the flash of a beautiful tail glittering as lightning illuminates the water from above. Rome shouts for you, but underwater their words are garbled and nonsensical. Your lungs constrict, your body aching for air.

A cold hand wraps around your wrist and pulls you forward.

Another hand touches your face, and suddenly you breathe deep. No water, though the air you breathe tastes briny, thick in the back of your mouth, and you stare at the face of a beautiful woman, her hands cradling you in the water. Another curls around your legs, her long tail thick and muscular and scaled black. She touches your calf, looking up at you curiously. You pull Rome closer through the water, your hands still linked, and she turns to them, floating upwards and wrapping her tail around their torso. Rome's eyes are wide, their mouth open slightly in disbelief.

You let the women lead you through the water, away from the wreckage of your ship, away from all the blood on your hands.

The one holds you against her breast, her tail gold, resplendent with jewels and chains and pearls that trail behind her in the dark water.

Time warps here, in the dark, in the watery silence. All you're sure of is Rome's hand in yours. You won't let them go. The song is beautiful in your head, reverberating through the breast of the woman as she holds you close, and you wrap your one arm around her, wanting nothing more than to feel her cool scales beneath your fingers. Her skin is ridged, down along her spine and between her breasts. The scales start at her waist, thick and larger than the palm of your hand. The gold mesmerizes you.

You're brought to an island. Uninhabited but for you and Rome and these two beautiful women. They pull you up onto the sand, their skin unnaturally pale and almost translucent in the humid air. Long tendrils of dark black hair shift and cling to their shoulders, shining like an oil slick, and their teeth flash dangerously, wolfish and yellowed behind their green lips.

The woman that cradles Rome moves like a snake, her tail long and flat with glistening obsidian scales that shimmer in the water. She curls herself around them, pulling off their jacket and pressing her lips to their throat.

“Rome,” you rasp, and then you vomit a mouthful of water. The golden woman holds you, pulling back your hair, her tail and her long, trailing fins splashing water as she sidles up beside you. You stare at all of the gold, the chains and the scales still begging to be touched.

Water burns through your nose and you cough up another mouthful, mixed red with blood. Your eyes widen, but a hand on your back soothes you. The gentle song soothes you.

Rome calls your name, too, and then groans, and you turn to watch the snake woman rip open their shirt.

You reach for Rome, your hands grasping each other once more, dirty with muddy sand and blood. You pull yourself towards them, and the snake woman watches you drag yourself through the wet sand, her black eyes endless as she blinks through a pair of translucent eyelids.

“You are not men,” the golden woman says then, her voice both familiar and inhuman, beautiful and haunting all at once. You hadn’t even realized she was touching you, her hands trailing down your sides, touching the waistband of your soaked trousers.

You swallow loudly. “No,” you say.

She pulls at your shirt, the buttons opening easily enough at her urging, displaying your bound chest. Her hand runs up your stomach, tentatively touching the tight fabric that constricts against your ribs.

“Not even you?” the snake woman prompts, her hand sliding between Rome’s legs. They shake their head.

The two sirens exchange a look.

The golden woman hums, propping herself up on her elbow. She keeps stroking your stomach.

Rome sits up a bit then, their long brown hair full of salt and sand, their brown skin bruised and burnt from the last few weeks spent in the sun. Their torn shirt exposes their chest, and they watch the snake woman warily, her tail still wrapped tight around their legs, holding them in place.

“You are one from the islands,” she says. Rome just nods.

The golden woman's hand slides from your stomach then, to your arm. She pushes up your sleeve, her finger tracing the raised skin of your scarred forearm.

"You are no man, yet you bear the mark of one," she says softly.

You pull your arm away from her, but she grabs your wrist and keeps you still. You hold your breath as she leans in, her long nail drawing each curve, each harsh line carved into your forearm, and despite her icy touch your arm is getting hot, the scars seeming to strain and bulge at her urging, a pained whimper sounding in the back of your throat as she lifts her gaze to study your face.

She releases your arm, and the pain vanishes, and she lowers herself on top of you then, her tail draping over your legs. Her one hand reaches for your chest again, and she curls her nails beneath your bindings, pulling gently. You grimace, your ribs shifting painfully, your breath shortening as it constricts your lungs for a brief moment.

Her nails suddenly tear through it, and it splits down the middle, an immediate relief as the tight, wet fabric falls open and reveals your breasts.

You press your head back into the sand, staring up at the dark sky above, at the black clouds that slowly crawl along with the storm, raindrops catching in your eyelashes and dripping back through your hair.

“You going to kill me?” you ask her then.

She tilts her head at you, pressing her cold palm against your sternum.

“Is that what you want?”

You lift your head and blink at her. Rome squeezes your hand.

“There’s only one thing I want,” you say. She smiles, rows of sharp teeth forcing you back against the sand as she leans in close.

“I can give it to you,” she murmurs, pressing her lips to the hollow of your throat. You sigh, closing your eyes, reaching up to touch her black hair, slick and viscous beneath your fingers.

Rome suddenly gasps, squeezing your hand again, the snake woman’s tail constricting around their legs as she scrapes her teeth over their bare chest. You watch while the golden woman starts to kiss and suck at your pulse, her hands wrapping around your waist, her tail shifting until she slides it between your legs.

She bows her head, trailing her kisses lower and lower, her tongue snaking out and leaving a glistening mark across your collarbone.

She kisses your chest, one hand sliding up to grope your breast and pinch at your nipple until you yelp. Then she takes your breast in her mouth, her long tongue wrapping around your nipple as she sucks gently, making your back arch unexpectedly.

“Please,” you whine, and she smiles, her black eyes boring into you.

You sit up then, pushing her back, surprising her as you tangle your hand in her thick hair and pull her in for a kiss. You push your tongue into her mouth, feel her rows of teeth, prodding the sharpened edges with a morbid curiosity. She hums as she tastes your blood, her hands tightening around you, her nails pricking your skin until it bleeds.

Rome moans beside you, and you break the kiss to look at them, splayed open in the sand, their eyes closed as the snake woman strokes their cock and sinks her teeth into their hip. You release their hand and reach for their face, and the golden woman lets you go, lifting her tail so you can pull yourself up next to them.

Rome opens their eyes and blinks up at you, their breath quick and shallow, their dark eyes a glaze of pleasure and pain. They mutter your name, and then they kiss you, their arms wrapping around your shoulders, warm and heavy and desperate.

The golden woman reaches for your belt, and you let her take it off, you let her do whatever she wants to you while you kiss Rome. Years of repressed desire burn hot in your loins, and you want to shove the snake woman off of them, you want to taste them yourself and feel them hit the back of your throat as they come.

Rome pants your name, and it makes you moan theirs– or maybe it’s the lips wrapping around your clit, the long tongue slipping into your cunt as your hips buck in the sand.

“Fuck,” you gasp, and Rome grunts as you slip from their arms, their hand reaching to cradle the head of the snake woman as she bobs up and down and coils her tail excitedly.

The golden woman grabs your thighs and pulls you closer, burying her face between your legs, making your back arch again. Her tongue– *fuck, her tongue*. You can feel it pressing inside of you, slow and deliberate and agonizing in the best way.

Rome isn't faring much better, groaning while grasping at handfuls of wet sand, and you watch as the snake woman slowly tilts her head back, revealing her long tongue wrapped around Rome's cock in the same way her tail is wrapped around their legs, and she smiles a fanged, open-mouth smile as her tongue seems to *pulse*, caressing their tip and stroking all the way down to their base.

You twist yourself towards them, reaching out to touch their stomach, licking their chest and sucking on one of their nipples as you barely manage to suppress a desperate moan from escaping your lips. The golden woman has your legs pushed wide open, your boots and trousers lost in the water, and you know you're going to come soon, from her tongue and from Rome's soft little moans filling your head.

It's not the worst way to go. Better than drowning with everyone else, you suppose.

Her tongue curls slowly, flicking over your clit before slipping back inside, and she moves her head and thrusts herself deep, grasping roughly at your hips as her lips smack loudly against your wetness. One of her hands reaches around and rubs mercilessly at your clit, and you release Rome to throw your head back in

ecstasy. She doesn't stop, her tongue plunging even deeper, and you feel the song on her lips, feel her teeth as she opens her mouth wide and sings and sings and sings, all while you cry out and writhe in the sand.

Slowly, she draws her head back, cum and blood dripping from her chin as her tongue lazily twirls through the air before retracting back into her mouth. She licks her lips, bows her head and licks at your thighs, dragging her tongue across your stomach as she pushes herself up, her lips eventually finding yours again in a fierce kiss.

She pulls you off the sand, your body limp in her arms— but not dead. Not dead yet. She nudges your head to the side, kissing at your throat again, humming softly. She slowly rolls onto her back, holding you on top of her, pressed against her chest, your name whispered from her lips like a prayer. It takes you a few more minutes to regain control of your body, drooling on her bare skin as a painful ache slowly spreads from your chest and into your stomach.

You're hungry for her. You have to touch her, to taste her. Thoughts of Rome vanish, replaced with her beautiful, horrifying face, and you sit up, licking your lips as you blink down at her, her black hair pooling

across the sand. You feel the shore rising, water lapping at your feet as you straddle her tail, your hands reaching out to touch the sharp ridges sprouting from her shoulders. You touch them slowly, trailing a finger across the ridges that converge down her chest, between her breasts, down her stomach and only stopping where the scales begin.

She watches you with those black eyes all the while. You touch one of the scales, sharp and dangerous as your fingers curl around the edge of it. You want to take one for yourself. You pull it off with a flick of your wrist— you're surprised at how easily it comes free, and the woman inhales sharply, her tail flicking in pain, her brows furrowing as she glares up at you. You turn the gold slowly in your hand, watching the way it shines even in the dark.

“You're beautiful,” you say softly.

The woman suddenly grabs at one of your thighs, her nails easily piercing through your flesh, and she peels a strip of skin off, as easily as you tore away her scale— you scream, doubling over her and slapping your hand over the open wound.

“You’re beautiful,” she murmurs, your own voice echoing back at you. You watch as she raises the strip of flesh to her lips and devours it whole.

Your heart races in your chest, glancing over for Rome– but they’re gone. The snake and Rome are gone.

“Rome!?” you call out, but there’s no answer. The golden woman repeats you again, Rome’s name shouted back at you as she smiles wide, her teeth stained with your blood.

You stand up, more blood gushing down your leg, burning as it mixes with the salt water, and you try to stagger away from her, but she grabs your ankle and drags you back down into the sand.

“Captain,” she says, Rome’s voice in her throat this time.

She pulls herself back on top of you, and you glance down to see some of her scales shift, an opening in her tail suddenly appearing, pink and wet. Your breath hitches, fear and arousal making you pause as she presses herself against you.

“Rome?” you ask her.

She just hums that beautiful song, rolling her hips– her tail– against you. You blink up at her, still clutching

the golden scale in your palm, hard enough that it slices your fingers open, more blood staining the sand beneath you.

She bows her head and kisses you again, harder than before, her tongue making you gag. She nips at your jaw, moving her hips faster, groaning softly as she rubs her opening against your stomach. Her lips brush along the curve of your throat, and then you feel her teeth—the only warning you get before she sinks them into your neck.

You close your eyes, letting the scale slide from your hand as you reach to grab at her hips, pulling her closer. Her tongue presses against your pulse, tasting your blood, and you let out a pained whimper as your flesh tears between her teeth.

But it feels good. You want this. Lust twists low in your belly and lances up your spine, needling its way into your skull. You open your eyes and push yourself up on your elbows, breathing hard as warm blood spills across your chest. The woman pulls back, licking blood from your face before reaching for your hand. She guides it to her opening, and you tentatively touch her, the strange cold wetness beneath your fingers swollen and sticky.

“No one ever wants to touch me,” she says then. You tilt your head at her.

“I’ll touch you,” you say. You’re compelled– it’s all you want.

Her breath tickles your throat as you slowly draw your fingers up and down, caressing her, getting a feel for her. You can feel ridges similar to those on her shoulders inside, but they’re soft, giving away as your finger explores carefully. You imagine it would feel good if you had a penis.

You curl your finger, making her gasp, and you pull your hand out then, rolling her onto her back and straddling her again.

Your hands slide down her stomach, over her scales, spreading her opening wide between your legs. You watch it for a moment, the strands of fluid dripping between her walls, the way it pulses slightly as her tail shifts under you.

You lick your lips, saliva thickening in your mouth before you spit on her. She exhales slowly, twitching between your legs, growing impatient. You run your hand over her a few times like before, wetting your fingers with your spit and her leaking cum before you slip back inside.

Her tail flicks behind you, her black eyes wide as she arches her back.

Bowing your head, you kiss her breast, though there's no nipple there for you to taste— but still, you suck roughly on her soft skin, your hand moving in and out as the ridges inside of her massage your fingers. She moans loudly, her tail thrashing again, one of her hands grasping at your thigh, her thumb digging into the still bleeding wound she gave you and making you grimace. You just move your hand even faster, biting down on her breast, easily breaking through her thin skin. Her blood tastes bitter with brine.

You pull your fingers out, slick with her essence, and you ease your whole hand back in, up to your wrist as she sings your name. You watch her, enraptured, studying every little expression you manage to draw out of her, feeling her inside while you trace bloody circles around her breast with your tongue. You breathe hard through your nose, your arm aching as you move it faster and harder— you have no other purpose than to fuck this woman into the sand.

She sings louder, bucking her hips and taking even more of you, nearly up to your elbow now. Her tail is thicker than your torso, and you wonder how far you

can go, if she could devour you up to your shoulder, to your neck, if you could climb all the way inside and *really* make her sing.

You release her breast to bow your head and kiss her scales, the sharp edges slicing at your lips as she writhes under your touch. The scales seem to shiver, just as sensitive as the rest of her, and you press your lips to the sore spot you tore one from earlier. She sighs dreamily, her tail waving and splashing behind you, your arm plunging deeper and deeper as you grunt in pleasure.

The ridges suddenly tighten, locking your arm in place as she moans loudly, cold silk enveloping you. You panic for a moment, trying to pull back, her body coiling tighter until you open your hand and curl your fingers against her walls, and you come free all at once as her hips snap upward and her tail slams down into the wet sand. You fall back in surprise, and her tail nearly bucks you off completely as she comes. You grasp at her hips, regaining your balance before examining your tingling arm, watching the thick, viscous fluid stretch deliciously between your fingers and drip down to your elbow, gathering along the raised flesh of your scars.

The slit in her scales swells then, more fluid pulsing out as she pants over the sound of cresting waves. You stroke her with your thumb, making her whimper while she caresses your thighs, then you lean forward, pressing one hand to her chest and offering her your sticky fingers. She takes them in her mouth, blinking slowly up at you, her black eyes mesmerizing as her tongue flicks over your knuckles.

“Is this what you want?” she asks softly, her breath hot on your wet hand.

You don’t even remember what it was you wanted before. All you want now is *her*.

Before you can tell her, though, you hear someone calling your name.

You turn to see Rome staggering up the beach, clutching their side, brandishing a bloody sword. You’re thrown sideways then, into the shallow water, hands roughly grabbing at your shirt and pulling you back into the waves. You cry out as your torn thigh scrapes through the wet sand, and you kick with your other leg, somehow managing to free yourself. You crawl up the shore, glancing back to see the siren clawing her way after you.

Rome raises their sword as they get closer, and you realize what they're going to do— and you don't want them to.

“Don't hurt her!” you shout at them, but they ignore you.

The golden woman starts to retreat then, realizing her mistake, but she's too far up on the sand, flopping awkwardly as she tries to get back into the water. Rome lunges for her— but you stop them, grabbing their arm before they can bring the sword down on her head.

“Don't,” you beg.

Rome is breathing hard, covered in bites and claw marks, tears in their eyes as they look at you. The woman cowers in the sand at your feet.

“She's in your head,” they say. “How long has she been in your head?”

“Please, Rome,” you say.

They lower their sword.

You let their wrist go, reaching to take their face in your hands.

“Come into the water with me,” you plead. They shake their head.

You close your eyes, pressing your face to their chest for a moment. Then you lift your head and kiss them.

Rome sighs into your mouth, their sword slipping from their hand and embedding deep into the wet sand.

The golden woman watches. She slips back into the water, and you let her, glimpsing a flash of black and gold scales cresting the surface as she bobs in the shallows, her dark eyes staring back at you. But you turn your back to her and squeeze your eyes shut, wrapping your arms around Rome, deepening your kiss, and it's like that one night all those years ago. If you keep your eyes closed, you can almost pretend. If you ignore the pain and the storm and the wet sand beneath your feet, the years of mistakes and failures and all the dead men floating in the water, you can pretend.

Is that what you want? Her voice sounds in your head. She's sad. Maybe even disappointed.

Yes, please, please. Please.

When you open your eyes, you're on the bed. You're in your room at the parlor. Rome kisses you slowly, their hand still grasping at your thigh. It slides higher, their fingers trailing along the seam of your trousers, and you wonder if they can feel the heat between your legs this close. You close your eyes again, letting Rome lower you back onto the bed. The kiss is desperate and

hungry— if only Rome knew. Your hands curl around their bare shoulders, your nails leaving little half crescents in their skin as your grip tightens possessively.

They mutter your name between kisses, and you release their shoulders to tug at their shirt, slipping your hands underneath and trailing your fingers up their back and then down their sides, feeling the plane of muscle over their ribs tense beneath your palm.

The sound of crashing waves carries through the quiet room, intruding through the open window on the far wall. For a moment, you feel yourself sinking into wet sand— but no. You're on the bed. You're in your room at the parlor.

Rome sits back then, your hands on their hips. You look up at them expectantly, watching shamelessly as they reach back and pull their shirt off over their head. Their long hair falls across their shoulders, and it looks ink black in the dark room, until they lean forward into the lamplight. Brown hair, brown eyes, warm as they peer down at you, a tender touch as they trace one of the many scars across your face. No— only one. You haven't earned the others yet.

You're on the bed. You're in your room at the parlor. Before everything.

Rome bows their head, trailing kisses along your jaw, sucking gently on your pulse. You wrap a hand around the back of their neck, cradling them there, tilting your head back and exposing your throat to them. Their teeth scrape along the curve of your neck, nipping at your collarbone, their hair tickling your face as it falls like a curtain all around you.

Rome pushes your shirt up, caressing your stomach, toying with the bindings around your chest. They give you a questioning look.

You sit up, taking a deep breath, pressing your hand to your chest. You take off your shirt, and then slowly remove your bindings. Rome sits back in your lap, patient as they watch. The pressure on your chest eases, and you take another deep breath— deeper, free of pain.

“You’re beautiful,” Rome says quietly. You kiss them again, pulling them back down onto the pillows.

You take their weight as they press their bare chest against your own, and you feel the frantic beating of their heart. Skin on skin, mouth to mouth, you make a soft sound in the back of your throat as Rome sucks on your tongue, unraveled by that familiar desperate ache.

“Rome,” you whisper their name into your kiss, and they kiss you harder, biting your bottom lip and

drawing another sound of pleasure out of you. Then they start to move low again, from your lips to your jaw to your neck, pressing their tongue into the hollow of your throat before dragging it down the dip between your breasts. They turn their head and carefully wrap their lips around your nipple, caressing your other breast with a steady, calloused hand. Wet and warm, their mouth leaves glistening kisses on both breasts, down your stomach, stopping just above your belt.

Rome reaches for your buckle, and you pet their hair as they pull it free and unbutton your trousers. Their dark eyes peer up at you, their pupils blown wide with desire. You feel it too, heat pooling in your belly and aching between your legs, your lips parted hungrily as you watch them remove your trousers and underwear.

On their knees, between your legs, they press sharp kisses along your inner thigh, their teeth making you groan and shudder back against the mattress. You're panting by the time they finally press their mouth against your cunt, breathing in your scent as they stroke you slowly with their tongue.

You reach out to grab a fistful of their hair, urging them closer.

“Yes,” you gasp as they wrap their lips around your clit. They hold your thighs in an iron grip, bruises blooming beneath their fingers, marking your body where only you can see. Rome’s mouth makes vulgar sounds as they taste you, pressing their face deeper, their tongue making your back arch against the mattress.

They move with a surety that makes you jealous of whatever lovers came before you— licking and kissing and bobbing their head, their eyes watching you all the while, half-lidded as they shift their focus back to your clit. Your hand tightens in their hair, and you keep them there this time, your hips rising off the bed, grinding into their mouth as you gasp and moan their name. It’s been so long— you’ve missed this. You’ve missed them so much. Rome’s hands slide upward then, groping at your breasts, their touch rough and eager, their eyes flashing as they keep watching, as you lose yourself in your pleasure.

Your hips buck off the mattress again as you come, Rome slowly easing off of you as your body falls back and slackens with bliss. They’re panting loudly, and their face is slick with your essence, shining in the dark room as they blink up at you. They climb back onto the

bed and crawl up onto the pillows, and you pull them into a fiery kiss, tasting yourself on their lips, your hands roaming over their chest, their skin hot and flushed beneath your fingers.

You can see their desire tenting their trousers, and you pull at their waistband, making them laugh softly against your lips. They reluctantly break your kiss and stand from the bed again, slowly dropping their trousers in front of you, and you slide to the edge of the mattress, reaching out and touching their lower stomach, Rome inhaling sharply between their teeth. You comb your fingers through the tight curls around their base, leaning forward and brushing your lips against their tip, a little kiss before your tongue flicks out for a taste.

Rome groans, and you can see the ache in their eyes as you pull back, draping yourself across the pillows again. You urge them to join you, reaching out as they crawl back onto the bed, leaning over you while you trace light circles around their tip with your finger.

“*Fuck,*” Rome grunts, their hips jerking in response, their face pressing into the crook of your neck. You cradle them there for a moment, and you think you hear a familiar song outside, down the beach, the wind

carrying it through the open window as you wrap your hand around Rome's base and guide them to the wet heat still slick between your legs.

Rome slowly, slowly, *slowly* pushes themselves inside, both of you moaning at the sensation, your bodies locking together as if you were made for each other. You were made for each other. Your nails drag down Rome's back as they roll their hips, their breath hot on your throat as they bow their head in reverence.

You close your eyes, your heart thundering in your veins, your body winding tighter and tighter with each thrust. You see the coming storm, inevitable as you stand in the rain, and Rome rises before you with their sword drawn. You gasp as they plunge the sword between your ribs, again and again and again, skin slapping on skin as Rome grunts and grabs at your waist. You say their name, again and again and again, and Rome unravels you completely, splitting you apart at the seams. You feel their blade between your ribs, feel it twist as Rome pulls you close, and then the wave crashes over you both, washing you off the deck and into the sea.

You open your eyes, Rome collapsed on top of you, their hot skin wet and sticky. You wrap your arms

around them, breathing them in, their musk familiar and comforting. Their heart beats against you, though you find it hard to distinguish it from your own.

They sit up after a few quiet minutes, rolling off of you with a contented sigh.

You stare up at the ceiling, waiting for it to shift into dark clouds, waiting to feel the rain on your skin and the waves lapping at your waist. But it never comes. You turn to Rome, who smiles softly, reaching out to touch your cheek.

You want to say something, but you have nothing left to say. How many times can you say it before it loses its meaning? It doesn't matter what you say— you just have to do it right this time.

Rome slides closer, draping an arm around your waist. They mutter your name, and you shiver despite the heat, their arm tightening around you.

You pet their hair until they fall asleep.

You wait a while longer, listening to the slow, steady rhythm of their breathing, until you're sure. You slip out from beneath their arm, sitting at the edge of the bed. You stare down at your own arm, tracing the raised scars, studying the map carved into your skin. You raise your hand and sniff at your fingers, the smell of ocean

brine lingering. Then you stand, walking over to your clothes, carelessly discarded in the corner.

Your mind is already growing heavy, thick with a sudden fog as you blink down at your clothes. What did you come over here for? It slips through your fingers like the water outside, crashing against the rocks, memories chased out with the receding waves. You reach down and grab your trousers, only to drop them, recoiling with a pained hiss as something slices open your hand. You quickly glance back at Rome, holding your breath and listening– but they don't stir, the rise and fall of their chest slow and predictable.

You crouch down, grabbing your trousers again, carefully holding them between your fingers. You cautiously reach into your pocket, and there you find a golden scale, as big as your palm and sharp as a knife. You turn it over in your hand, admiring the way it shimmers even in the dark. You stand back up, tip-toeing across the room, reaching up and running your fingers along the top of the doorframe, knocking a dusty key out of hiding and wincing as it clatters to the floor. But again, Rome doesn't stir.

You take the key and creep back over to your side of the bed, ducking down and intuitively reaching for a

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loose floorboard. You quietly pull it back, revealing an old, weathered lockbox, rusted with age. Using your key, you open it on your hands and knees, blinking down at the dozens of golden scales inside. You drop in your newest addition, stained with blood. You lock the box, return it to its spot beneath the floor. You return the key, too, and then slink back into bed, nestling into your familiar spot alongside Rome.

This time it will be different. This time, I'll do it right. This time, I'll remember.

