

“Another Life” – a fairy tale inspired by ‘Merman Reaching Up’

Throughout history Merfolk have used the precious minutes between a person drowning and death to harvest the souls of the undrowned to make brides. Once such Nereid bride was the mother of Prince Frederick who was recovered from a yachting accident and now ruled Oceania with his father, the King.

Frederick should have felt excited about his own upcoming nuptials, but his wish was for a love match, not an arranged one. His future bride was extraordinarily beautiful and lay in the depths of the castle waiting to be transformed.

And yet.....he couldn't help feeling that she had not finished her time on Earth. The feeling persisted and on the night before the wedding he stole away to take a final look at her before her transition.

He could see that her tail was now formed, a magnificent green and gold swooping away from her torso. He put his hand on her chest and could feel a faint heartbeat and moving downward to her stomach, he was surprised by a faint kick.

He withdrew his hand swiftly realising what her unfinished business was, knowing then that he could not marry her. He wanted an heir of his own.

Picking her up he swam silently through the waters until he rested on a rock away from the castle.

He blew gently into her mouth until he could feel the rise and fall of her chest. He swam upwards, her tail dissolving as he rose.

She struggled in his arms as her lungs filled again with air. “Don't panic!” he tried to convey with his eyes, “and you will be fine!”

Nearing the surface, he could see an outline of a life craft and released her to the hands reaching downward. Pulling her back to life.

On the small rescue boat, the girl retched in response to the heavy thuds on her back.

She tried to speak but no words would come. Frantically she turned her head as the boat started to move and below the waves, she could just make out a shape of a half-man, watching and waiting.

349 words.