

Afraid to Fly

The rumble of the ocean was low and deep, as it crashed down into the shore, sending little bits of sand away in splinters. It was music, mixed with the melody of grass to the high wind, which swished above my head.

"You ready?" My dad said to me, drawing my attention to the ravel of string in his hands.

"I think so," I said, before I turned my eyes to the flashes of red, pink, yellow, and green. They did twists and turns, dancing to the song that was a cool summer day. "Will you be able to teach me to do that?" I pointed at one of the green ones, as it did a spin in the air, bending and crossing the string, back and forth.

My dad laughed, only giving it one look, as he placed most of his attention on untangling the mesh of fine rope. "Those are stunt kites, Ella. This one isn't made to do that."

"But I wanna try it," I said.

"Sure," He looked up again, "Those guys are pretty good too, I don't think I can quite do that." He went quiet, watching, "But I'll show you, next time... Right now, we gotta start small."

"But..."

"Just try," He said. "I'll get it up in the air, then I'll give it to you, okay?" He offered out the kite itself. An Ariel themed kite, highlighting all the aspects of the disney princess, from her smile to her green dress. Printed across the kites face.

I took in my hands, slow to hold the ends. "Now?" I said, looking from it to my dad.

"Now!" He replied, then, he ran.

I held the kite as tight as I could, watching as he spirited down the sand. "I'll tell you when!" He called out at me, farther and farther back as the string kept extending. He went away from the rock, lurking behind me, a bit like a shadow. Down towards the cliffs and the lighthouse, way off like a dot in the distance. When he was all the way down, that he had run a good several meters, he yelled. "NOW!" His voice battered by the wind, which lifted the kite as I opened my hands.

I watched it, my head tilting up as it moved, until the kite was among the others, way in the sky. There with the greens and pinks, doing its own dance just below the clouds.

My dad came back, holding it and fighting the wind, laughing as he stopped by my side. "You think you can do it?" He said.

"Yeah! Give me, dad, please!"

"Just one second, okay? You sure? The winds really..."

"DAD I got it!" I continued, jumping as I tried to take it from his hands. He laughed again, bending down so he was closer to me.

"It's going to pull a little, if you need to give it back to me, I'm going to be right here."

"I've got it, I saw you do it, I'll be fine," I told him, eyeing the kite.

"Alright then," He said, holding his hands out. They still had a tight grip on the string and handle, his knuckles white on the end. I reached out, waiting as he moved the two parts he held to my hands, keeping his there well he explained. "This lets you reel in some of the string, you can bring it down or let it up," He touched the handle and the small grip at the side. "Hold the string here, it gives you more control."

"I've got it, I've got it!" I said, pulling back. "Let me have it."

"One second," He told me, looking up at the kite. "You sure you got this?"

"Yeah," I said.

“Okay, I’m letting go…” He stepped back, walking two paces.

The wind was fast, I looked up at the kite, watching it as it was pulled, moving like everyone else's. It twirled about, following the current of the wind. Around, to the side, around, around. I smiled, “Dad I’m doing it!” I yelled, my head so tipped back it was only angled towards the sun.

“Good job,” He said.

The kite swirled, and I giggled. The dance, like the princess was a figure within the sky, turning and twisting, as she moved and bellowed. The little tail at her end even swayed, as she led the way with the tip of the kite, up and up and up.

The wind was heavy, it sounded collective and loud, blowing my hair and dress. Though it was in the sky, the kite moved just like it. To the sharp right.

Then came the first gust. One that was so loud it echoed just as the waves did, rupturing against the shore. The kite pulled hard, the wind tugging it so it lifted, causing some of the string to run through my fingers. “Ah…” I yelled out, grabbing it and pulling back.

The wind pushed again however, the waves becoming even louder. ‘Crash… gushhhhhh’ wind and ocean, as my feet slipped in the sand. I was forced two steps forward. There was another gust, another pull sharp and fast. My feet moved even more. I pulled, the kite staying, but my body was staggering on. “DAD!” Coming to my lips. “DAD HELP!” The kite pulled again. “DAD! DAD! DAD! DAD I’M FLYING AWAY!” I screamed. My heels dug into the sand. “DAD I’M FLYING AWAY!” I yelled louder. “DA…”

The kite was taken from my hands. “Oh yeah, the wind is really pulling isn’t it?” My dad said, turning to me, he still smiled.

I stared at him, with wide eyes, my mouth still opened. “I was gonna fly away,” I said. “Dad, I didn’t want to let the kite go, so I was gonna fly away.”

“No you weren’t, I told you, I’m right here,” He said.

“But… but I almost flew away,” I repeated, watching the kite again. “It’s not fair, you’re bigger than me, I can’t hold that. I’m too small, the wind makes me fly away. I don’t wanna fly the kite anymore. You get to do it. I don’t wanna fly. Not like that.”

He laughed, “Okay, maybe next time, when the wind isn’t so fast?”

“Yeah, maybe it’s the kite too. Maybe I need a little one.” I stood closer to my dad, watching the greens, pinks, yellows, and reds, as they fluttered and moved.

“I’ll get you a little one,” He said, “For next time. I don’t want you to fly away either.”

And I held on, so I wouldn’t, watching as the wind and kite battled, each swirl and twist like a never ending dance.