

Into the Ocean (Man to Mermaid TFTG)

FoxFaceStories

When George catches a gorgeous mermaid in his net, he is reluctant to free her, hoping for fame and fortune. His stance begins to change as the mermaid tells the sailor that she was once just like him, long ago, until she was turned into a voluptuous siren myth.

Into the Ocean

This is a story from years ago, but one I feel the need to inscribe upon paper and leave to my extended family. You have often wondered why I never married, never sired children, never left this little coastal village. Perhaps you will not believe the tale I write, but I shall write it anyway. Consider it an interesting final note on my life, and a useful distraction from the bloody fields that mark this so-called 'Great' War.

It was the year 1883, and I had taken my uncle's fishing boat out to haul in the netting while he battled the influenza. But things quickly changed when I brought in that first catch. I could barely believe my eyes as I pulled the net in. I thought I'd caught *The Big One*, the kind of fish that would make all the boys on the docks cheer, maybe even get me into the local newspaper. That would have been great enough, but instead I found something truly mythical. At first it was just a large green fish tail, but then I noticed the shape of her, the odd way she struggled and growled as I pulled her in, the thrashing of limbs that were far, far too human. And then I saw her body, her breasts, her emerald-green hair that spilled out around her. I won't lie, I actually yelled in shock, dumping the net into the boat as the girl continued to tear at the netting, growling like a beast.

"By the Lord," I said, forming the sign of the cross over my heart. "M-Mermaid. I've caught a mermaid."

She was starting to choke. The netting was wrapped around her neck, and I quickly moved to untangle her as much as I could. My boat was large; there wasn't a chance of her escaping unless I willed it, not unless she had a great deal of arm strength. As it was, she took a great gulping breath when I released her, giving me a look at the gill slits on her neck. For a moment we just stared at one another, me standing over her, she laying back and propping herself up on her arms. She was the most beautiful creature I'd ever laid eyes on, and that's making no mistake. Her skin was olive in tone, quite unlike the pasty white skin I had with all its red splotches, the same as everyone else back at the village. Her hair was green to match her long tail, and her scales sparkled in the sunlight, getting thinner around her trim stomach. Her figure was slender, her breasts small but pert and naked to the air, which made me feel as aroused as I was scandalous by the sight of it. And her face . . .

I'd never seen the face of a woman like her. Like a goddess. She had almond-shaped eyes with green irises, and a long nose like she was descended from old royalty. She couldn't have been older than twenty to twenty five years of age. As she picked away bits of the netting with one hand, I noticed that she had a slight green fin along her forearms. Her own tail fin shifted between my legs, and I stepped back with alarm.

"You're astounding," I said.

She looked up at me, then immediately tried to escape. It was a futile effort though, and she soon realised it; she couldn't get herself over the lip of a rig. Hell, it wasn't even meant for just one person, but my uncle had come down sick, so it was just me today looking for a good haul. She turned back and gave me a glare, pointing over the edge, then to herself, then the edge again.

"Oh no!" I said. "I'm sorry, but you're an actual mermaid. There's no way in Heaven or Hell I can be sending you back to the water. You can clearly breathe, and I can get you some saltwater if you need it, but I'm taking you back to the village. I'll be the first man in history to catch a mermaid!"

"You won't even be the second," she replied in a musical voice.

I just about dropped the net I was pulling together.

"You can talk?"

She covered her breasts with one hand; probably a good thing, given how I was rather sinfully staring at them, God forgive me.

"Yes, I can talk, man of the surface," she replied. She had an accent I couldn't place, but every word was almost hypnotic. "And I am telling you, you must release me. I am a mermaid, I am not meant for the surface."

"Maybe so, but you're my ticket to fame and fortune."

At this, she gave a high laugh, siren-like in its musical quality. It made me weak in the knees.

"Foolish man. What is your name?"

"I'm George. And you are?"

She smirked at this, her bright green tail flapping on deck. "I am Selene. But I was once Simon, many years ago."

At this I had to pause, puzzling that out. "Wait, are you telling me you were once a man?"

"I was once a *human* man, Sailor George. Until I found myself in a situation just like this once."

I folded my arms. "You're having me over one."

She simply arched an eyebrow, dropping her hands so that I could see her bare chest once more. Her tail flopped in a way that seemed to me, at least, to display a resignation that she would be 'sitting' here for a while.

"I am not, George the Sailor. Do you think mermaids just exist beneath the oceans? That they reproduce in communities much like humans do upon the land?"

"Well, I, uh, didn't think mermaids existed until this moment."

Another laugh. God, it was sweet to listen to. "It was the same for me, sailor. In fact, I was a sailor just like you, only even more foolish. It was over a hundred years ago that I caught a mermaid just like you have. Her name was Nerai, and she was of great beauty, as I am now; I can see from your gaze you think so too."

I shuffled a little. My own arousal grew just at the sight of her, and it shamed me to be so wantonly lustful. I'd be having a serious confessional after this . . . after the fame and glory.

"I admit, you are a creature of great temptation. Are you saying you're an old woman?"

"Hardly, by mermaid standards. We live as long as we do, though there are not many of us, and I don't know how long. One I met was from before the fall of Rome. In truth, I don't even know the year now. What is it?"

"The year eighteen eighty three, in the year of our Lord."

She smirked. "Ah, then I am one hundred and thirty, at least. The passing of years is difficult. But I lose track of myself: I caught Nerai and was worse than simply wanting fame like you did. I wanted *her*. Myths and rumours said that if a man caught a mermaid and married her, then she would become his loving servant for life. The perfect dutiful wife, always beautiful even in old age, always fertile, always healthy and submissive. How wrong I was."

At this, I found myself sitting down, enraptured by this strange tale.

"You were cursed?"

She grinned, and I felt my heart skip a tremulous beat. "All mermaids are cursed, George the sailor. It is the transgression for trying to take one. I don't know where our kind first came from, I suspect God made us to be a thing of beauty in this world, and to appreciate his vast oceans - which I do, every day and night. But to steal a mermaid from her ocean is a grave sin, and the punishment became clear to me. I kissed Nerai, forcing my lips upon hers to seal a betrothal that I believed would become a marriage pact. Instead, the 'gift of the mermaid', as she called it, passed to me. I became possessed with chills and sweats. I began to grow scales. I shook as my legs merged, and I was compelled to throw my clothing into the sea. My manhood withered away, and I bloomed the breasts and womanhood you see before you."

It was at the moment she said 'womanhood' that I noticed something almost imperceptible: her fishtail half did indeed have a single vertical slit, near-completely hidden, right where her entrance would have been were she a regular woman. I blushed a deep red at this, I will not lie. This part of the tale is most certainly true.

"You became a woman?"

"I became a mermaid," she said, flourishing her smile once more. She ran her hands through her emerald hair, and gestured to her form. Strange as it may seem, there was none of Eve's sin in it, no taunting sexuality. In fact, she was like a painting, her beauty tempting, but somehow beyond the boundaries of sin. At least, that was how it felt to me at the time.

"My hair became the green you see here now, and the same for my eyes. I could still breathe the air, but it was far more difficult, and I could not do it forever. I had to get into the ocean, it was a compulsion that could not be denied by my new nature, even as I feared what I had done. But I knew, on some deeper level, that I deserved it.

"Ever since, I have been a mermaid, George the Sailor. No longer a sailor myself, but a woman of the ocean. It took me years to come to acceptance my womanhood, and longer that I was to be a siren, but I have revelled in it and my role in creation ever since. I see a beauty that no man shall ever bear witness to, and have known the company of philosophers, strategists, traders, diplomats, and monks, fellow women of the sea who once lived a surface life but now bear the curse - and blessing - of the mermaid. And this I have accepted and now celebrate."

At this she paused, staring into my soul as if she truly were the Peter at the pearly gates himself.

"The question is, George the Sailor, would you celebrate such a fate? For such a fate you are heading for, should you sweep me back to your village. It is a transgression against my nature, and so my nature would become yours. Do you desire it? More than that; would you dare to take the risk?"

It was akin to an arrow to the chest. I can't say for certain that I entirely believed her at the time, though I definitely believe her now. Something in her words conveyed a truth. Perhaps this was the 'siren song' of legends; not a hypnotising hymn, but an undeniable truth that could not be avoided. Either way, I recall that my young shoulders sagged, and I approached the mermaid, knife in hand.

"Beware," she told me. "But a kiss from a mermaid will seal your fate as one of my kind. I will not take kindly to unwanted advances."

Instead, I knelt down and cut the netting that still caught around her tail, then helped to hoist her up. She clung to me, curiosity in her gorgeous green eyes.

"You are going to return me?"

"How could I not?" I replied.

“You are wise to avoid the curse, George the Sailor.”

“Please, just call me George, Selene. And I’m not afraid of a curse, though I probably should be. I just . . . can’t bring myself to capture one of God’s unique creations and put her in a bottle.”

Her expression softened, and I think on that expression every day. I have dreamed of it. It felt like seeing the face of the Virgin Mother Mary smiling upon me as she granted me a blessing. It felt like I had experienced something I would never truly understand, but would be changed by all the same. Selene raised a hand up and caressed my cheek, and she laid a soft kiss there.

“Fear not, the curse is transferred upon your lips. This just a small blessing of my own. Go in good health, George. And thank you. I hope to see you again, one day.”

“I hope so too, Selene,” I replied.

I helped her slip back into the ocean. She gave a brief wave, and then was gone. I watched the oceans for hours afterwards, and my uncle berated me for the poor catch when I returned, wheezing obscenities between wet, coughing breaths.

I never saw Selene again, but her blessing remained true. I have not had a day of ill health since she kissed my cheek, and I have aged rather gracefully, as many a woman has reminded me. And yet I have spurned so many women’s affections. This is not because I have disinterest in them, but because, I suppose, some part of my soul descended into the ocean with Selene that day, and never returned. The years slipped me by, and I grew older. And now the rumblings of war and death ripple across the continent, and men lay unburied in fields, their numbering like the doomed cod I used to bring in. They say it is for a better world, or to stop the evil German Hun, but I see no fruit in it. Perhaps because I have the good fortune not to be called up I can make this foolish judgement, and the young fighting for Lloyd George and King and Country have a different perspective. Perhaps I am simply an old man now, and I grow tired of a world of smoke and anger and violence.

You do not need to believe the tale of Selene, but it is for her that I go. I am taking my old boat out for one last voyage, as close to the spot that I found her as I can. I will place down my netting, but not to catch any fish or even a mermaid, but to send a message. I have written in seashells: perhaps she shall like that. It simply asks for her to see her old friend George the Sailor again. Maybe she will never see it. Maybe I will die on my boat a foolish old man. But I’ve enough supplies to last me quite a while, and a will that knows no bounds. And if I do see her again, I shall ask her to kiss me upon the lip and make me one of her kind. I have mourned ever since that day that I did not ask her to change me, and this may be my final chance.

So, goodbye, and wish me good luck. I am going into the ocean one way or another, but something in my soul tells me I shall succeed. I always did love the sea more than the surface. Perhaps I was always meant to be a mermaid, too.

- George the Sailor

The End