

A Storm of Salt and Fate

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Capítulo 1

Never had the young mermaid ventured to the open world. It was a risk, as her father reminded her and all her sisters every day of every month of every year. And had the youngest of the family had more restraint than curiosity, the warnings would have been heeded. Even so, the mermaid had obeyed for sixteen years, fearing the punishment that would come from breaking the principal law of the king's court. Not until her seventeenth birthday did she gather the courage to follow her whim.

It was at night, when the ocean is darker than ever and misses the rays of the sun. The young one swam and swam until she could see the other ocean. The other has a court of its own, yet so vast is the distance between one and the other that the only thing she could see from down there was shiny points of gold and silver. They were, of course, the jewels that adorned the courtiers. That night, however, she could not only see the lights, but hear them. There was music and loud voices singing and laughing.

Up went the mermaid, once more, until her head broke the barrier between the sea and the open world. She looked to the starry sky, but to her surprise, the lively noises were coming from somewhere else. Something that floated above the sea like a dead fish. Only once had she seen something like it, in the bottom of her ocean. However, the quiet giant drowned in the abyss had neither lights nor life.

And so, she approached the ship, guided by her curiosity as it was her custom. The closer she got, the more excited she became. There was much merriment up there and she wanted to be a part of it. Now, she still had some common sense left, so she listened to the little voice in her head urging her not to show herself too quickly. She wanted to observe, though, so she swam around the ship looking for the best angles and devouring everything she saw with her eerie eyes. She saw white and her gaze followed that colour like a moth to a flame. Such was the beauty of that creature that the mermaid felt a little offended when another blocked her view.

"You look beautiful tonight, my bride" said the legged being that dared put himself in-between.

"Thank you, your Highness."

There was beauty in her sadness as the white marvel answered.

And just as the mermaid was wondering what her laugh would sound like,

the storm broke out.

The mermaid went down into the protective embrace of her ocean. She knew that the currents are unpredictable, and the waves could be violent. With a sigh, she considered going home, sure that the white beauty and the other courtiers would also return to their own ocean for protection. How big was her surprise when those same courtiers began to fall into her waters, bringing with them ropes and sails and wood.

The mermaid was excited at first, and then wary. They were not laughing or singing anymore. There stood the confused mermaid, among the drowning sailors too occupied holding onto their lives to pay her any attention. Only when she saw a white shadow did she react. Down went the bride, fighting against the wet weight of her wedding dress. The mermaid swam towards her and caught her in her arms, but the woman kept struggling against death. The mermaid panicked for a second, trying to decide if it was safer for the white creature to remain in her ocean or go back to the storm. But then the woman closed her eyes and fell limp in her arms, and the mermaid understood that her home was mortal for her.

Up she went again until she reached the surface. The storm was still raging, but the mermaid knew something.

I want to save her.

Thus, she swam against the storm.

And she won.

It was dawn when they reached the land. The mermaid swam to the shore and stopped in a rock close to the sand. The white beauty looked at her with big brown eyes and the mermaid found herself at a loss for words. How long had she been awake?

"You rescued me."

It was a language the mermaid did not understand, so she simply flapped her tail and smiled reassuringly.

"Are you... a mermaid?"

The white creature laughed, delighted and incredulous.

The mermaid's smile widened. So that was what her laugh sounded like.

In her excitement, she had gotten dangerously close to the bride. However, her eerie eyes reflected such innocence that the bride could not

help but accept her closeness.

"Thank you, dear mermaid."

The bride closed the distance between them and kissed her. She could not suppress a giggle when their lips parted.

"You taste like salt."