

“Your tranquil vastness, deep and true,
That stains the earth in an aqua hue,
A great beast from an even greater blue
We pay tribute to this infinite view.”

- Poem # 37 of the Sea Witch, Enykt Archives 12220

Nari had never been the type to question things. He preferred to leave that to the older kids, whose endless questions would annoy their teachers.
In simple terms, Nari was a passive child.

Their class had been brought to a museum about the ocean, warning them of the dangers as well as its supposed “evil” properties. Their guide waved a claw and droned on, gliding away on silky feathers.

You may have noticed their guide has claws and feathers.

A long time ago, spaceships had arrived and taken over earth. There were many races: some looked akin to moths, jellyfish, and even blobs of jelly.

Over the course of centuries, they established a system of lab-growing and selling humans as pets, keeping them controlled with fear.

And that fear was the ocean: they erased all previous human research of the waters, instead weaving myths and reports backed with “science”, which all the humans accepted as the truth.

So Nari, like most if not all children of his age, was terrified of the ocean.

Nari’s school was considered a music school. They learned to sing and play instruments from a young age, developing proficiency so they could bring their owner recognition by performing. Nari’s owner, or guardian, had sent him here with high hopes. But even a school built on the performing arts is controlled firmly by the limbs of alien control. To keep this fear inside them, this trip had been planned (especially this class, as many of Nari’s classmates were considered “too nosy” and “problematic”).

Ahead, the guide leading them forwards pressed a button. A melody sounded from the speaker, and the alien switched their voice to begin a story:

“This is the song of the Sea Witch and her lover. Once a young human girl, she grew out of control after her beloved died and blamed it on the aliens. It was in a horrible accident,

where the stage they were performing on burned down.” A holographic picture of two girls appeared: one with black short hair, and the other with long pink hair fading into blue. “She could not understand that it was her fault that she had died. She had wanted the fire for their stage effects, not seeing the dangers. We warned her, but she persisted.” Suddenly, the picture changed to reveal a towering, swirling cone of deep teal, seemingly rising from a stormy ocean. At the top was the pink-haired girl from before. “So she wanted to destroy us. She amassed an army, who used the ocean as their weapons.” A giant, devastating wave was shown destroying cities on the holograph. “We still do not know how many deaths, both human and ours, were taken.” The guide sighed. “Finally, she was caught and executed, but the damage remains. That is why the ocean carries such dark intent- it was the witch’s greatest weapon, and the greatest slayer of our people.”

Hours later, the class stumbled out of the darkness of the museum and back outside. The charged sun shone down upon them as the noise levels picked up again, filled with laughs and talk of the story.

But the melody was engraved in Nari’s mind. The image of the waves and the towering cone made him want to hide, to seek his guardian’s help, to close his eyes and try to forget. And as he did just that, his class began to move away.

After a few minutes, he opened his eyes and panicked. Nari moved in all directions, wondering if he should go back into the museum to seek help. As he debated, a hooded figure began to approach from behind.

Nari turned, a sharp breath escaping him as he backed up. “Um.. hello?” The tall figure pointed in one direction, and Nari noticed the burn scars on their hand. “...They went that way.” The voice was undoubtedly one of a woman, and suddenly, she reached into a pocket and pulled out several small, flat devices. She put one into Nari’s hand.

Before he noticed, she pressed a button on it.

Wondrous, vibrant images filled Nari’s mind, waters with colorful corals, schools of tiny fish, and sunlight atop waves. But one final image of a girl with short black hair smiling as she held up a starfish, caused him to realize.

Nari reeled, breath coming in heavy gasps. The woman gave the rest of the devices to him. “Give these to the ones who ask. And for you... you have also begun to question.”

As she left, Nari caught a glimpse of pink hair.