It has been almost a year since the whole prophecy thing. Everything is back to normal. But not for long. The history of mermen never died, in fact they've evolved. But so have we. Things are going to get crazier as we meet more mermen, battle criminals syndicates, and there may even be more stuff on Nerissa than we can imagine! (Book 2 of Tails of a Half Blood/Sequel to Birthmark)
"Excellent girls! That's all for today!"

Releasing themselves from the bar on the wall, all girls in our dance class went their separate but close ways. Some girls were drawn to their respective cliques like magnets, some fumbled with their ballet shoes, others started checking their Facebook/Twitter status. But out all the girls, one walked up to the teacher, still in her dance clothes. That was me.

"Hey, Ms. Stacey." I greeted the ballet instructor who was sorting papers.

"Hello Blair—I mean Thalie." The teacher clasped her palm to her forehead at her mistake. "Sorry, I'm still getting used to calling you that."

I laughed a little. "No, it's ok." I replied. "I understand. So why'd you end class early today?"

"Oh, I called in the handyman." She pointed to the bathroom, where just a sliver of water was peeking through.

I rolled my eyes, thinking of only one reason. "The toilets are flooded again?" I could only ask rhetorically.

"The toilets are flooded again." Ms. Stacey replied.

Normally, if this were a non-water scenario, even as Blair I would have offered help. But now that I was a full fledged half blood and adjusted to my tail, I had to work extra hard just to avoid the slightest drop of water so I wouldn't expose my mother's kind to the humans. Two rules that had been drilled into my head whenever I went outside; don't get wet and don't use your powers in open spaces. Thank Helen Carter for her assertiveness.

But I just couldn't help myself. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

"No, but thanks." said Ms. Stacey. "You just go home and enjoy this beautiful day."

I nodded and just as I was close to the door Ms. Stacey said,

"And while you're at it, practice your technique. Your feet look kind of like fins."

I laughed as I walked out into the Australian afternoon heat.

"You have no idea." I muttered. On my way to the Ocean Cafe to meet up with my friends, I checked my phone to see if there were any updates on while I was gone. Not so much to my surprise, I saw a text from my foster mother, Lauren, that she would be out of town tonight and there would be casserole in the fridge in case I wanted to come over to stay with Zac for the night.

It had been almost a year since my tail finally manifested and I had learned my true origins. I never got my memories from the first 4 years of my life but I was cool with the memories I created with my foster family, The Blakeleys. While I had changed my name to Thalassa Isabel Santos, I had also taken to calling Lauren and Rob Blakeley, Mom and Dad, while I called Rita Santos, my birth mother, just Mother. This way, I never lost touch of the family that took me in and the family that helped create me. Zac would always be my brother, that much was crystal clear, but while our
relationship as siblings in all but blood remained adamant, a lot had happened in the past 7 months after the Trident was destroyed.

For instance, while Sirena stayed in town, Lyla and Nixie just couldn't find it in themselves to stay where so much had happened to them. So they set off about a few months ago, out into the world to find their purpose again.

Nixie's reason for leaving was understandable, she was still suffering from the utter heartbreak and betrayal of what had possibly been her first love, and he had never said sorry. The last any of us ever heard of Nixie, she was starting a new life in California. And none of us could be any happier for her.

Lyla's reason though, was vague to some, including Zac, but not to me. As someone who needed to discover who she was, I understood Lyla completely.

3 months ago (April, 2015)...

I had just celebrated my 15th birthday and The Ocean Cafe was as usual, glowing in the night. But the real reason why any night at the cafe was amazing nowadays, was because of Sirena's singing. True to her name, she was a siren, an angel of the sea, and not just because of her voice.

It seemed that everyone who loved a relaxing night out in the town was there, even Lyla. She was at the doorway, looking like she was half sad and half glad at the same time.

It seemed that I was the only one to take notice of the mermaid suddenly vanishing from sight since I got up from my seat to go outside. Zac didn't seem to notice, he was busy talking with his girlfriend Evie. But that was ok, it seemed that Lyla could use at least a friend to talk to and not a burned out crush. Even after all this time, I wasn't sure if Zac was aware even for a second that Lyla was over the moon for him, no pun intended.

Once in the cool night scene, I saw Lyla adjusting the straps of her backpack, and suddenly the reason for Lyla's slight disdain became clear; she was leaving.

"Are you really gonna leave without saying goodbye?" I asked.

Lyla looked up at smiled. "I figured you would see me."

"What's up?" I asked solemnly. "Why are you leaving?"

Lyla sighed, looking at me with tired hazel eyes. "So much has happened. I thought I was doing what was right for the pod, but lately I've realized that the pod was an excuse for trying to make myself feel like I belonged. My mum died when I was 4 of Sun Fever."

"I'm sorry." I immediately blurted out.

"It's ok." said Lyla. "But the point, I'm not a Mako Mermaid anymore. I'm something else, and I need to figure out what that is."

"Lyla-"

"And please don't try to stop me." She said.

"That's not what I was gonna say." I interrupted her. "I hope you find what it is you're looking for."

Lyla looked at me with contempt happiness. "Thank you so much for understanding." I moved into
give her a hug, even as she tried to stop me I embraced her anyway. "I'm not much of a hugger but this can count as an exception."

"If you're gonna leave, could you at least say goodbye to Sirena?" I pleaded. "For her sake?"

"Don't worry." Lyla chuckled. "I already have."

"So..."I fumbled around for a question. "Where you heading off to?"

"Well there's this place in Montana." She said. "Some sort of school for vampires. Oh and Thalie? Just remember you have 3 fantastic friends. Trust me, you're gonna need them, and they're gonna need you."

Back to Present

I wiped away a rouge tear that escaped my eye, silently thanking mermaid biology that body fluids couldn't transform me or any mermaid. We all missed her, no doubt, and I hoped that she and Nixie were doing well in their new lives. Still, I was proud of them for taking a stand in their lives.

"Hey, Thalie." I shook my head clear of my thoughts. Standing in front of me, was one of the nicest guys I had ever known, David Sullivan, owner of the Ocean Cafe and Sirena's boyfriend.

"Hey David." I smiled at him.

"Back from dance class?" He asked, gesturing to my black tanktop, black shorts and flip flops (my ballet shoes were in my bag)

"You know it." I replied. "So how was that date at the movies?"

David smiled. "It was amazing. Overall as a couple we're still going strong."

"No doubt about that." I said. "You two fit the definition of the term 'puppy love"."

"You know it." I nodded and walked inside to find two of my best friends sitting at a table chatting away. Rosalina "Rose" Gomez was on her shift at the Ocean Cafe, starting fresh with her job. After some convincing, thanks the good ol' power of BFF's, Rose put her culinary talents to use and landed a job as one of the cooks. She was doing pretty well actully.

But chatting away were Helen Carter and Kimi Hamasaki, two girls who are polar opposites of each other and still somehow manage to be two peas in a pod.

"Hey." I sat down.

"What's up?" Helen and I fist bumped each other while Kimi gave a curt nod. "Kims, you have to take a break."

"I will Helen." said Kimi, typing furiously at the keyboard, her brown eyes checking and re-checking everything. "I just have to secure the last factor." I got up and looked at Kimi's computer, only to find I couldn't read it because it had equations, lots and lots of equations. But I could see a picture of Mako Island, so it was easy for me to have at least some idea of what Kimi was trying to figure out.

"Are you trying to find out the secret to Mako's magic?" I guessed.

"Close, my friend." Kimi's glasses glowed with curiosity. "I'm trying to piece together how the energy wavelengths become synchronized at the right time, with the moon at the right position."
"Translation: magic is science after all." Helen quipped.

"Accurate translation." Kimi added on, holding up one finger. "Magic is science that is not yet understood."

"Oh, Kimi." I said. It wasn't that Kimi was obsessed with the idea of finding out the scientific secret of anything, it was that she wanted to dive into something she had little to no knowledge of. She was a sweet shy girl but what she lacked in charisma, she made up for in intelligence and perseverance, one of the many reasons why was a great friend.

"Hello?" We heard a peppy voice speak. "These drinks are not gonna enjoy themselves"

It was Rose, wearing her Ocean Cafe apron and holding a tray of drinks.

"No worries." said Helen. "Come on Dr. Nerd, take a small break." Kimi shrugged and placed her laptop away as Rose handed out their drinks.

"One pink lemonade for Kims," Rose handed the beverages out as she listed them. "One Coke for Helen, and one mango smoothie for Thals."

"You know Rose, you should have had your own cooking show." I commented.

"I would but Joe wouldn't like that since he and David have to agree on literally everything," said Rose. "I hate the guy."

"Yeah, he's an asshole." Helen said, ever so bluntly.

Checking her watch, Rose peered around the remodeled cafe to see if David was watching. "I better get back guys. It's my first week of work and I don't want to look bad."

"Rose." I said calmly. "You're gonna be just fine."

The blond Latina gave me a squeezing hug before rushing back to the kitchen, and even she could hear Kimi shout, "Avoid any pesticides!" She was met with our questioning gazes. "What? In a kitchen, anything can be spread, even with disinfectant; bacteria, e-coli, salmonella."

"Ok, ok!" The British teen interrupted her. "She'll be fine Kims. I know you study, but you've got to find a way to relax."

"We all deal with stress in different ways, Helen." I replied.

"By storing away useless information even about the loo?" Helen asked sarcastically, per usual.

"You got a rash from sitting on one of the toilet seats." Kimi whispered.

"Ok, that was an accident." Helen retorted.

"Ok," I chuckled awkwardly. "There's this new ride at the Marine Park if you guys are interested."

"Really?" Helen asked, going along with the topic change. "How tall is it?"

We immediately divulged into a conversation, with Rose stepping in once a while and before we knew it, hours had passed, with Evie and Carly floating by to say hi and to talk for a bit. After a couple of hours of chatting with my friends, I checked my phone and realized it was a quarter to 5.

"Well guys I gotta go." I picked up my bag. "I gotta head home, I promised my Mother I'd help her
clean the grotto."

"Save us some casserole will you?" Rose asked.

"Yeah, if Zac doesn't eat it all." I shot back, prompting laughter. I really was hoping that Zac didn't eat all of the casserole, he could eat anything and burn it. He was almost as worse as Cam, who I don't feel comfortable talking about.

"Oh and Kimi?" I leaned into the raven haired teenager and whispered, "I get you're curious about Mako, I still don't know much about it. If you actually go there, just be careful. I think we both know what happened the last time someone messed with forces they didn't understand."

Kimi nodded, remembering Zac and the trident. I used to have nightmares from being killed by the trident after it was destroyed. Of course I would never tell Zac this, he had already felt enough guilt from what happened to me. That would be an experience I would never forget.

"Thanks." She said. "I'll take it under advisement."

When I was on the boardwalk, I had just opened my full moon calendar app to check for the next full moon when I had accidentally bumped into someone.

"I'm sorry." I blurted out. "I am so sorry!"

"It's no trouble." He spoke. "Are you ok?" I looked up and saw a boy who was about close to Zac's age but taller. He wore a blue shirt, brown cargo pants, sneakers, and had blonde hair, tanned skin and green/blue eyes.

"I'm fine." I said. "I'm really sorry."

"Like I said." He flashed a charming smile. "It's no trouble. I'm Erik."

"Thalie." I waved goodbye, ignoring the feeling that had settled in my gut, a feeling that told me I would be seeing more of this guy later.

Opening the full moon app, I saw the the next full moon would be in August (the last one was a couple of weeks ago) and I saw today's date, which meant Zac's 17th birthday was looming closer and closer; July 26. I still had to get Zac a cake to celebrate his birthday.

Mine was April 15, so I had already celebrated my birthday, as well as my friends on their birthdays, so we were all 15.

Just then, my phone rang and it was Zac. "Hey." I answered.

"Hey sis." He spoke through the phone. "What's up?"

"Nothing much." I said. "Just heading to Mother's."

"Gotta clean out that grotto, hey?" He asked.

"There's a lot of dust in there." I defended. It was true though, I must have sneezed at least 10 times because of the dust. That's the last study session I have in the grotto.

"Hurry up then or else that casserole is mine." He sing-songed.

"You better not." I warned jokingly.
"As the upcoming birthday boy, I'm entitled to a little spillover." said Zac.

"Love you." I sing-songed and hung up, only to get a text from Mother saying,

Had to run out, but will be back shortly. If you're going to go for a swim, don't take too long.

I texted Mother back: Won't be long. See you when you get home :)

When I got home, to the pristine beach house, I noticed that the sun had started to set. Alright, I thought to myself. Maybe I could go for one little swim. So I raced to the door, opened it with my keys and dropped my bag on the couch so I could make a beeline for the grotto. As soon as the door opened I ran to the sea entrance and dove into the ocean. I waited for the long agonizing seconds to pass, so I could feel my legs become jelly and mold together to become one silver fish tail. I could feel my feet stretched into fins and on my torso my clothes melted away into a silver bikini bra.

Wanting to waste no more time, I flipped my fins as hard and fast as I could and soon found myself encased in bubbles swimming like a torpedo.

I wandered past Mako, swimming far to the outskirts of town. From the gossip of the humpback whales, (Mother had been teaching me the basics of whale speak), a pod dolphins would be swimming off the edge of town.

I could swim there, swim with the dolphins, enjoy the sunset and get back. My voice sounded in my head. What's the worst that can happen? Wait, why am I getting deja vu?

Before I knew it, I had reached a part of the reef I had never seen. It was peaceful, filled with with a lot of fish, and the lighting was perfect, all the more reason why I didn't want this perfectly normal day to end. Which was my first mistake.

Looking back I guess I didn't know just how much one of Helen's Laws of Life actually applied that night.

One of the Laws detailed thus:

If it's too perfect, it's crap.

But anyway, I soon found myself swimming with dolphins. I missed Delphin, one of the dolphins who helped me last year but the last time I saw him, he had picked up a female dolphin and they swam to the North Pacific to start a family.

Speaking of family, I realized I had to get back to my mother sooner or later, but I figured 5 more minutes wouldn't kill me. And that was another mistake, along with being distracted by some beautiful multicolored coral that was growing.

But I guess one mistake I didn't make was acknowledging the feeling that someone was watching me. That and my mermaid scales were sensitive to movement in the water, so I definitely felt someone was watching me.

When I turned around to see who it was, the only thing I saw was a bright light in the water shooting at me and before I could react, I doubled over from the feeling of a million heated knives stabbing into my body. I screamed, ignoring the bubbles that escaped my mouth as I tried to get up and fight. But each time I tried to get up, the pain came again, and again, and again.

I tried to summon water to produce a shield, but my strength continued as the mysterious person continued to attack me with lightning. I wasn't sure how he was doing it, but it was as if lightning
were shooting from his hands.

Finally, I was pushed down onto the sandy floor by my attacker. The last thing I saw before passing out from the pain, were the most enchanting violet eyes I had ever seen.

And they belonged to a merman.

RAIDEN

It's Monday in July of 2015, and what do you do when you're in the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia?

Do you,

A), Binge-watch soap operas because you're bored and bitterly single?

B), Stay in your dark room all day and surf the internet because you don't have a life?

or C), Attempt to get a tan but ends up looking like a walking lobster because you're an idiot?

My answer?

D! None the above, because they're all BORING! Those are things a tourist does, and I am nowhere near a tourist, and I've been to at least 15 different countries in 8 years. Ok, maybe I travel a lot but seriously, if you even consider any of those options, you're not worth my time.

I know, I know, this one's trouble. Well ladies, guess what? Trouble is next to my middle name but I'm not gonna tell you what it is.

Still here?

Good. See the kid who just did a backflip off a ledge? The one with the tanned skin, light brown hair and purple eyes? The guy holding a baton? Yeah, that's me.

Before you ask, no, I'm not wearing contacts; my eyes just happened to be that color when I came out of utero. True story.

I decided to take a break, so I walked over to the ice box, kicked it open and grabbed a beer. Before I could let the alcohol in my mouth, I had to get a straw, which sounds kind of stupid, but I have a certain allergy to water; a transformative allergy.

It's sad, right?

I had been training for the past 2 hours in my combat skills, because one, I was bored, two, the Blade Boys were busy with their shit and three, I had already had gone for a swim.

Who are the Blade Boys you ask? They may be a team of misfits, but they're the ultimate brotherhood of misfits. To them, high school is child's play.

The Hispanic kid, the guy the orange cap? That's Diablo Nagual, one of the craftiest pranksters ever. He's also the idiot who came up with the team name. He likes to think he's a Names Keeper or something. But seriously, when it comes to stuff from cotton candy bombs to having your worst fear waiting for you in when you least expect it, this guy could put PUNK'D to shame. He also happens to be a master of disguise, so you never know when he's near. Oh and bit of advice, don't this guy any sugar whatsoever. Unless you want to deal with a teenage boy bouncing off the walls. I'm not
kidding you, that actually happened twice.

Then there's the twins, Xhiva and Xandou (they're pronounced ZHI-VAH and ZHAN-DOUGH) the most polar opposites of people as you can get. Basically if Yin and Yang took a form as two people, it would be the Tiraken Twins.

Xhiva's one of the best techno geeks in the world, there's literally nothing he can't build, hack or fix. He's always in touch with the latest gadgets and fashion, usually wearing something that screams "rich boy". And yet for some reason he can't cook even if his life depended on it. Also for some reason, even though he has perfect eyesight, he still wears glasses as a "fashion statement".

Then there's Xandou, Mr. Tall, Dark, and Brooding in the form of a 15 year old. If you think Diablo's bad, Xandou's worse. He's the Duke of Disorder, the Boss of Badass, and the Daredevil, to end all Daredevils. Trust me, there's nothing he won't try to "feel the heat". Don't believe me? He has a tattoo on his chest that's a giant X, nipples included. On his back is a wave as the line facing down and a dragon across on top of the wave, to make out a T. He's even known to shave his head with a sea urchin to leave a mohawk. He's kind of like an Asian Noah Puckerman. Yeah, that's right, I know Glee, gonna do something about it?

And then there's teen supreme, Raiden Consorzio. Even though he may not be as smart, conniving, or fast as the others, but he is still the most powerful out of all of them and he can kick their ass without so much as blinking. Don't be fooled, cause he may seem like your typical sassy, charming, rebel bad boy, but in reality he is so much more than that.

And I should know, because I am Raiden,

"CONSORZIO!" I stopped dead in my tracks and I heard an electronic ping as the door opened and closed.

Running down the stars into our Den (which to normal people, means our basement) was Xhiva Tiraken, who looked like he was close to pissing his pants. Since he was Mr. Manners, a lot of things scared him, but only two scenarios ran through my head then:

1. The internet had died
2. His brother was going to kill him.


"You got to hide me." His Hindi accent slipped through his pants.

I nodded quickly, setting down my beer far from me so I wouldn't get wet. "What do you want me to do?"

"Since this is a dire situation." said Xhiva. "I'll just put it in your terms: zap me."

"Fine." I said, focusing on my power and letting it rise. It didn't take long for my hand to start glowing with purple electricity.

"Wait. Can't you just cloak yourself?" I asked, holding back my power a little bit.

Xhiva raised an eyebrow at me. "We're twins, Raiden. No matter what I do, he can still sense me unless our link is suspended. You know that."

"I'm just saying." I retorted.
If Xhiva hadn't gone through years of mental and physical training, I would probably be worried for his well-being. Hell, if any of us hadn't gone through our training, we would all be dead by now. But we were Blade Boys, we could handle a small shock, though Xhiva would probably scream like a 6 year old girl, as usual.

"Ok then. And yes, this is gonna hurt." Clamping his hand, I let the lightning inside me loose and it traveled through Xhiva's hand all over his body. He was literally shaking from the shock and he did let out a small girly squeal. It was a good thing he wasn't wearing his glasses or platinum watch, or I could have literally fried him.

"Raiden!" Xandou's angry voice echoed in the thick walls of the Den. Thinking fast, I pushed Xhiva behind the towel shelves just as his other half stormed through the door. Even from the top of the spiral staircase, I could see his green eyes were burning with fury. "Where. Is he?"

"I haven't seen him." I lied rather easily. "Maybe he passed through here, maybe he didn't. Either way, I haven't seen him." I couldn't tell if Kid Goth bought it because he ran downstairs at his supernatural speed and stood inches away from my face.

"Tell the bastard this." He snarled in my face. "If I see him, he's roadkill!" He finished the sentence with a shout.

"And I'll tell you this." I focused the power of sarcasm in my voice. "The next time I see you, eat some breath mints!" I also finished that with raising my voice.

Obviously Xandou didn't like that, when he lunged himself a little to try and intimidate me but I've faced worse guys than him. In fact, I've faced monsters that were probably born in Hell.

Once he raced out of the Den, literally, I went to hang up my half soaked towel and asked in a whispered tone, "What did you do wrong this time?"

"Not me.' Xhiva snapped back irritably. "Our orange cap wearing knucklehead of a friend."

I rolled me eyes, it wasn't a surprise to know Diablo would be behind Xhiva's impending doom. "Get in the water, it'll speed up the healing process."

Just as I headed upstairs, I heard a distinct splash. At least someone listens to me once in a while.

When I stepped outside, I looked out the windows to see that it was still in the afternoon and I was a little hungry. So I went to the kitchen only to find a Hispanic dude about the same age as me munching on food like there was no tomorrow. Usually, he was the one who had a really good nose, but judging from the gnarly reek, either he forgot to take a shower (again) or he fished his clothes from his pile of way overdue laundry.

"What are you doing?" I asked him. He jumped up in surprise and turned to me with stuffed cheeks that looked like a chipmunk's.

"I mot eaiing 'ood." I managed to understand from his mouthful of food.

I chuckled until I noticed the the empty box in his tanned hands. "Are those my clams?"

After downing the food in his mouth with one gulp, he flashed a smile at me. "They were. "He then let out a loud belch that could have broken glass. "Hey, when it comes to food, it's every man for himself."

"Yeah and you still don't qualify as one."
I smiled at my best friend and looked inside the fridge. But it seemed that Diablo didn't want anyone to have any food because there was nothing but some leftover pizza.

Just as I reached for some of the slice, a hand snatched it away and I turned around to see Diablo open his mouth to eat it. But before he could so much as set his teeth on the slice, I shot a bolt of lightning at him, causing him to land on the ground with a loud "oomph!" It was a good thing my combat training enhanced my reflexes because who has two thumbs and caught the slice while it was still spinning in the air?

This guy.

"Really, amigo?" Diablo asked once he got up.

"Sorry, not sorry." I waved my hand and let my powers heat up the slice just a little. "When it comes to food, every man for himself."

"Hey, I need fuel." Diablo got up. "Especially after completing another masterpiece."

"Aka another one of your pranks." I finished heating the Dominos slice.

Being the drama queen he is, Diablo clutched his chest and staggered back as if he couldn't breathe.

"You call my creations, the evidence to my brilliance, simple pranks? Oh ye of little faith! I'll show you!"

It was a good thing I ate the pizza quickly, otherwise it would have probably dropped to the floor when the resident prankster yanked my arm and dragged me to the garage. Just as we opened the door, Diablo stood in my way.

"Ready to feast your eyes on glorious chaos?" Don't even bother on trying to explain Diablo's apparent insanity. By the time he got hooked to Tom and Jerry, it was too late for us to stop his career of mischief from beginning.

Turning on the light, it became clear what had set Xandou off.

His Jaguar (the car, not the animal, dumbass) looked like a unicorn puked on it. The paint job was literally Think Pink. The tires were covered with smiley face emojis. On the hood was some character from My Little Pony. But the real breadwinner for Xhiva's doom was what was written on the dashboard window in glittering green:

"XHIVA RULES!"

"Oh God." I breathed while trying not to laugh. Putting even a touch of glitter on anything Xandou owned was one thing and it was punishable by wedgie. But signing your name on the prank, was a death sentence. Either way, when Xandou went after you, good luck getting away from him in one piece, mind or body.

"Say it!" We left the garage to find the twins wrestling each other, and it looked like a fight for life. Of course they knocked down some lamps, with Xhiva trying to escape but Xandou was faster than him and he didn't even break a sweat holding his brother in a choke-hold. "Say it."

"Would an apology be sufficient, little brother?" Xhiva wheezed through his brother's pale arms.

"Nope." Xandou tightened his hold. "You mess with my stuff, I mess with you. Now say it!"
"I'm gonna need some Twizzlers." Diablo ran off to the kitchen while I stood there, and enjoyed the show wishing I had some popcorn. Of course Xandou would never hurt his family, at least too much anyway, but it was fun seeing the twins argue. Hey, if you have a sibling, you should understand that annoying them is what we do for a living.

"Say it." Xandou threatened once more, tightening his hold on Xhiva's neck.

"Xandou Tiraken is all wise and powerful." Xhiva rasped out.

"And?" Xandou asked.

"And he's better than me in every single possible way!" Xhiva caught a breath before his other half held him by the collar of his $125 shirt.

"And?"

"And I'm a lowly shrimp who can be crushed at any moment by his shoe because he's so awesome!" Xhiva mouthed, 'Help me!'

'No.' Diablo and I mouthed back, while shaking our heads.

Xandou licked his finger and it hovered just inches away from Xhiva's ear when he asked, "And?"

"And in the history of the universe there's never been anyone as amazing as my twin brother!"

"There you go." Xandou dropped his brother, who after regaining his breath, was helped up by him.

"Ok, it's official" I clapped my hands. "This is getting old. Guys, come on, we've only been here for what, a week? And we've done nothing but shit! Well, I'm bored and I'm pretty sure the feeling is mutual in this room. Who's up for a little early night entertainment?"

The other guys smiled equally mischievously as I did. When normal people went out, they either went to the movies, or on dates, or just out for McDonalds. When the Blade Boys go on a night out in town, we bring the house down! Almost literally anyway.

"Alrighty then." I rubbed my hands together. "What to do, what to do..."

"You know what?" Xandou flashed a rare smile. "I'll be back, guys."

Hopping onto a red motorcycle, he literally kicked it and it rumbled with life. With just a single pump of the gear, he backed out, leaving a size in the garage door that would have made Andre the Giant weep with pride.

About 20 minutes later, and we were all waiting outside, either playing with our phones, looking at the clouds or doing what Diablo was doing, which was trying to keep himself entertained by basically annoying us. He first started with solo karaoke, then he did a few dance moves and then moved to I Spy.

"Ok, I Spy something European and Purple." He smiled. "Remember, it's Purple and European."

"Is it Raiden again?" Xhiva asked rhetorically and completley out of boredom.

"Man, you're good at this!" I rolled my eyes at Diablo's antics.

"What's taking Xandou so long?" I asked to anyone who would listen. "And he's the one with the need for speed."
"You remember we just moved here, right?" Xhiva asked. "Or did a practice dummy knock common sense out of your cranium?"

"Oh, it's about to go down!" Diablo warmed up his hands in glee. "What? If you two are gonna fight, I need to sell tickets!"

Groaning loudly, I fished out my phone and checked that the time was a quarter to 5. "I swear if he doesn't show, I'm gonna-"

SCREECH!

A black shiny Lexus pulled up right in front of us at lightspeed and then spun around to reveal a smug Chinese kid with his signature heavy metal music blasting over the speakers.

He said something but we couldn't hear him so I yelled, "WHAT?!" He spoke again but because the music was so loud, Xhiva walked a little closer to the car, flicked his hand, and the car stopped functioning. It was obvious he had used his powers.

"Are you serious?" asked Xandou.

"I could ask you the same question." Xhiva scolded his brother. "Do you know how bad those high frequencies are for your eardrums?"

"Ah shut up." Xandou peered his head out. "What are you all waiting for? A letter? Get in, motherfuckers!"

"Please your hands and feet inside the vehicle at all times." Diablo chimed in as we all got in our seats. I took the front, and the rest went in the back seats. "Let's blow this town!"

Xhiva flicked his hand and the car burst to life with The Champs' Tequila playing on the radio, making the ride so much more worthwhile, especially when a 15 year old was driving. Yes, all of us were 15 then. Deal with it.

Before we knew it, we were out in the Gold Coast. I had to admit, it was a nice place. I had been to Queensland once before, but it was a pretty sweet town. I still wished we had moved to Brisbane, at least I would get to meet my favorite baseball team, the Brisbane Bandits. Don't tell Diablo by the way.

"Well pinch me, I'm dreaming, here is a first." I spoke up. "Someone's not complaining about how crappy this place looks."

"Oh come on, name one time I talked shit about any place we went to." said Xandou.

"I can list 2,537, especially in Singapore. You hated the food there." Xhiva retorted.

"I told you mi amigo." said Diablo. "Should have gotten the rendang. But no! You had to pick the oyster omelette!"

"Hey guys." They turned their black haired heads to mine. "What color is that light up ahead?"

"That's red." said Xhiva.

"Doesn't red mean stop?" I wondered aloud in a sarcastic tone.

"Not for long." Xhiva twisted his hand and the light changed from a bright red to a color that almost matched Xandou's green eyes. The next few seconds involved a rollarcoaster feeling matched by the
skidding of tires as we ran the light. I heard parts of people arguing about their cars crashing but I was too busy enjoying the ride.

"WHOOO!" Diablo stuck his head out and left his tongue dangling, almost like a dog.

"Hey, Xandou." Xhiva called from the backseat. "You brought the stuff?"

Immediately, Xandou stopped the car, which stopped traffic along the way, reached into his pockets and then looked around in desperation. "Oh shit! I left it at Home Base!"

"Xandou, eres burro!" Diablo swore in Spanish.

"Just screwing with you!" Xandou tossed back three bottles of one hell of a good time, aka pure vodka.

While drinking the drink, we spent the next 15 minutes coasting downtown, driving past buildings, and enjoying the thrill of almost getting run over. Basically we were doing anything just to get a taste of adrenaline. Some people call us adrenaline junkies, some people call us teenage delinquents, I call ourselves adrenaline delinquents. We even went so far as to actually drive over a truck!

Don't ask.

"A toast!" I proclaimed, bringing my bottle up which still had some vodka in it. We had learned the hard way not to down alcohol all at once. "To our first night here! Who rules this city?"

"Us!" Even though Xandou burns through stuff pretty fast, I guess it was a good thing he didn't have some of the stuff, so either way, we had no worry of any accidents that would get us killed.

"Nothing can touch us."

But the nanosecond that sentence went through my lips, the sounds of a police siren overlapped our radio and the air around us was illuminated by red and blue lights. So you can imagine how big the size of our eyes was.

In case some of you are dumb asses and don't know what any of those signs mean, that means the police are right on our tail, which means if we didn't get out of there, we were screwed to oblivion.

"Fuck!" I looked in the rear view mirror. "Oh fuck!" Xandou swore in Marathi while Xhiva swore in Chinese.

"You gotta let me out, you gotta let me out!" Diablo pushed his way to the dashboard.

"THIS IS THE POLICE!" We heard someone speak through some megaphone or something. "PULL OVER SLOWLY AND STEP OUT OF THE VEHICLE!"

"It's the Po-Po!" Diablo was in Drama Queen mode. "It's the Po-Po! We're gonna DIE!"

"No one's gonna die tonight! Hang on!" Xandou stepped on the gas pedal, increasing our speed to try to out drive at least 3 police cars behind us.

While Xandou was driving at 120 miles per hour, Xhiva was hacking into the police network to try to get them off our scent. Even Diablo had transformed into a dog, and was literally barking mad. Even with all that effort, we still weren't losing the do-gooders. I was itching to shoot some lightning at them, but if I did, questions would be asked, and the last thing we needed was to be exposed. Or worse, if we were caught, my brother would still find out. Trust me, if there's one thing that's worse
than the police, it's my big brother.

So I had to think of something, fast. I looked out the window looking for anything that could help us escape, without getting out of the car.

Either I was really lucky, or my dead father was watching over me and had answered my prayer. At the corner of my eye was the start of a railing which continued while we drove past it. But below the railing was the sea and it meant our way out.

Remember what I said about us Blade Boys being the ultimate brotherhood of misfits? You're about to find out why.

"Hey Xan!" I shouted over the ear-splitting police sirens. "Who's car is this?"

"I don't know!" He replied. "I stole it from some idiot's garage!"

I looked at all of my best friends with hope that we would survive what was about to happen next. "Then we are ditching out!" Without thinking, I grabbed the wheel and turned it sharply, breaking through the metal railing.

I could almost feel time slowing down, while we plummeted straight into the ocean, our natural habitat.

Before you start crying and ordering our coffins, no, I'm not dead. None of us are. It's gonna take a lot more than just a fall to take at least one of us down. Yes, I know what you're gonna say; This guy is insane, why the hell would he do something so stupid like driving a car off a cliff?

I'm a teenager, being insane and doing stupid things is kind of what we do.

My friends and I had all done stunts like this before, but I'll never get used to the terror that settles in my gut, especially when we hit the water. The crashing sound rang in my ears and it didn't help that we were all stuck in our seats. To make matters more annoying, water was rapidly filling up the car because the glass had cracked. But even though I was a little disoriented, I could make out the sandy floor below the headlights that were still lit, and by the time we landed on it, I couldn't feel my legs anymore because I didn't have them anymore. Looking behind me, the bubbles surrounding Xhiva and Diablo had dissolved and I could see them break the seatbelt buckles with their bare hands. Lifting my arms, I tugged against my seatbelt until it snapped like a twig.

Superhuman strength is a perk that comes when you're a merman.

I'm not kidding, we're real live mermen, as in The Thirteenth Year and The Little Mermaid kind of mermen.

Don't believe me? If our powers weren't enough, then how do you explain the slimy blue fishtails that just replaced our legs after we hit the water?

So yes, mermaids exist. And no, we don't sing songs for no reason while combing our hair. That's a stereotype.

We were lucky that mermen could breathe and heal in the water, otherwise the cuts from Xandou's forehead would have stopped closing themselves. And we also would have drowned.

*Guys.* I spoke through the magical underwater link. It's a way for all merpeople to communicate. *We meet back at Home Base. But whatever happens, don't do anything stupid-*
While I was talking, Diablo's started transforming. His tan skin became grey rubbery flesh and his blue tail elongated into a long dorsal fin as he completely changed into a humpack whale. It would have been a cool thing to see, if him putting on about 300,000 pounds didn't mean trashing the car and crushing Xhiva in the process.

Like that. I facepalmed myself.

**Diablo.** We all heard Xhiva muffled voice. *Could you please get your incessant weight off me?*

Diablo's amber eyes blinked and he moved off of Xhiva, who flapped his blue tail in annoyance, before nodding at me. Xandou rolled his eyes, obviously bored and swam away at the speed of a torpedo. Diablo changed back into his merman self and then transformed into a swordfish, swimming away from the wreck site.

**Like I said, head back. And don't touch the sand, there's glass everywhere.**

Before I could swim, Xhiva grabbed my arm and asked through the link, **Do you think Erik's back by now?**

**You know the protocol, Xhi.** I spoke back. **If he asks, lie.**

I then swam off, also at torpedo speed, feeling the lightning encase my body as I swam in my path.

You're probably wondering, this hot guy is a creature of the sea, so why is he a living lightbulb? Well I may be a fish dude, but I'm not normal even by fish dude standards. So sit down, relax and let Raiden tell you a story as to why:

There are a few types of merpeople: Alpha, Beta, Omega, and Delta.

Betas are just the regular merpeople who have the basic powers, such as heating, shaping or freezing water, ect. cetera. But we don't usually call them Betas, just merpeople. As an example, my brother is a Beta, but we don't really refer to him as that.

Alphas are probably more rarer than half bloods, but aside from not being able to do anything a merman can typically do, there is one power they have that is super awesome: They can transform into animals, 1,000 species to the max. When I say more rare than a half blood, I'm talking literally one in a million, such as one Diablo Nagual.

But out all the types of merpeople, no one beats the Omega. Also freaking rare but more powerful than any creature in the sea. Basically they wield divine power over an element, and can bend it to their will, such as water, fire, air, ice, magic, ect. Cetera. There's only two ways to become an Omega, either you're born one, or you get affected by a Moon Pool. I was born The Omega Merman of Lightning. It's also why I was born with my eye color, that's how you can tell an Omega. According to some boring lecture by Xhiva, 1 in 10,000 merpeople are born Omegas.

And last but sort of least, Deltas. Deltas are the kids of Betas and Omegas, who are just a tad more powerful than Betas because of their Omega parent. Take the Tiraken Twins for example, their mother was an Omega and their father is a Beta. Basically, they have the regular powers of Beta merpeople, with a special feature, something called a Primary Power. It can be any supernatural ability based on their personality. But it comes with a very major Kryptonite; Xhiva is able to manipulate technology with his mind but he needs his vision to be able to even unlock an electronic door. Xandou is literally the fastest boy alive, but without heat, he can't move, even in the water.

Omegas don't generally have a weakness. Really, we don't. Well, except for the fact that our powers
are tied to our emotions. When I get angry, lightning actually strikes, from my hands. Aside from that, there's one more massive downside to being an Omega; whatever element you get, you're stuck with and you only get one. I can control lightning but I can't do anything else. In other words, if I want to open a locked door or summon a TV remote, I would have to burn down the door with my lightning and get up get the remote myself. Yet for some reason natural Omegas can turn invisible just like natural Deltas and Betas can. Except my invisibility has been known to give off static electricity and the smell of ozone, so not so camouflaging.

No one knows how Omegas, Deltas and Alphas are "chosen" as they put it, but my grandma was convinced it has something to do with mermaid evolution, which probably started a bazillion years ago.

ZOOM!

I stopped in the big blue, waving my arms to tread the water and to catch myself from spinning. Something had swum past me and at the speed it was going, it was either a marlin or a merperson. Maybe it was one of the guys messing around, but a feeling in my gut told me it was someone else. So I hit the gas and swam behind the mystery seaperson.

I followed it in the ocean for some 15-20 miles until we came to a part of the reef, where the figure had stopped and I had quickly hidden in a kelp bush. But when I peered through the bush, my jaw dropped when I saw that the person I had been following, was a mermaid. And not just any mermaid, a half blood!

I had heard thousands of stories about them as a kid, which were mostly something about half bloods once being the bridges between humans and merpeople. They had apparently gone extinct a long time ago, but us merfolk haven't forgotten what their tails looked like; a merman's was green and a mermaid's was silver-the exact silver that was shining in my eyes.

Her back was turned to me so I couldn't really see her face, but I could see her hair which looked like a red velvet fluffy cloud, it was kind of cute to be honest. What was on her finger was without a doubt, a moon ring.

Hmm. I thought. She's probably 20 or something.

I was about to turn back so I could meet with my friends when I realized, this was a half blood, probably the only one in the world, which meant she had to be worth a lot.

Letting the lightning in me surface in my hands, I swam closer to the mermaid. It was obvious she could sense me behind her, but I didn't give a damn what she could do. That money was as good as mine.

Without a second thought, I thrust my hand and unleashed my lightning on the bitch. The second she was hit, she fell to the sandy floor, screaming in pain from my attack. She started to get up, and was already summoning magic in her moon ring. Before she could use her power against me, I shot another stream of lightning and it knocked her straight back down. But she wasn't giving up anytime soon, because every time I shot more lightning at her, she just got up and fought, or at least tried to. Water, invisibility, levitation, and she even tried to form a shield from the surrounding water, just to stay alive. She was brave and talented, but I was better. After striking her down a couple more times, I grabbed her by the throat and pushed her in the sand.

Was I feeling like the world's biggest dick when I took her down? Of course not. I had done this before on other targets I was assigned. But this one was on the house. Don't worry, I never killed anyone. None of us have.
I smiled at my victory, another one in a long line, not to brag. It seemed that me and my friends would become legends for finding the last half blood and killing it. But when I took a look at her face, I felt my heart stop beating. I couldn't hear anything except the blood pumping in my head, and my panicked breathing, even though we were underwater. I didn't even care that I took my hands off her throat and checked to see if she had a pulse (which she did, thank God)

I didn't know why, but I just didn't give a fuck about the money anymore. The only thing that really mattered then, was making sure she was alive.

This half blood, no, this mermaid, she wasn't an adult, she was a kid, just like me! I thought she may have been in her early 20's but she looked around 14-15, and I was 15 for sobbing out loud! I had never attacked kids before, it went against the code of the Blade Boys, but somehow knowing that she was as young as I was, made my gut feel as if it was rotting.

But how the hell did she get a moon ring? I wondered. No, it doesn't matter, this is for your survival. But...is it worth it if it means I kill another kid?

I held her in my arms, probably to make sure no one hurt her more than I did. She was already losing consciousness, but I could make out her eyes. They were the most beautiful blue I had ever see. My mother had gorgeous eyes, but these were something else. I could see a tiny bit of grey around her pupil, and I saw in my mind, an ocean under a full moon. She had ivory skin, which almost glowed in the in the last bits of daylight and it seemed to compliment her hair, along with her silver tail/top. I had seen mermaids who were hot, but she was a true pearl of the sea.

She didn't do anything wrong. My voice whispered in the back of my head. She's an innocent, unlike me. Oh God, what did I do?

I shook my head, there was no time for self pity. I could see blood starting to pour out of her mouth, which meant she needed medical attention and she needed it now. But there was a few problems standing in the way; I couldn't go back to Home Base because the other guys may not have shown her the same mercy as I did, and I couldn't heal her since it was literally beyond my power. My brother could heal her probably but I didn't know if he would be back and I couldn't take any chances. I also couldn't take her to a pod since no pod would ever allow someone with human blood in their veins or a nearby moon pool since I had no idea where exactly it was. But she was badly injured and I had to act fast. Even if I left her there to be healed by the ocean, sharks would literally be on her tail in minutes.

Holding onto her as tight as I could, so she wouldn't slip, I started swimming at my top speed all over the reef, looking for anything or anyone that could help her. It was either that, or leave her to die and there was no way in hell I was gonna let that happen.

I swam around every barnacle, piece of coral and swam through some kelp forests but it seemed like I would have to smuggle her into Home Base somehow. But even if I went on land and got my legs back, I couldn't take her anywhere. Unless either of us wanted to find ourselves in a fish tank being studied by scientists, a trip to the hospital was out of the question. Besides I didn't know who this girl was so I couldn't go to the police and say I just found her like that.

It seemed completely hopeless that I would find at least a miracle until I surfaced to take a look at my surroundings and I heard a woman's voice not too far from me, shouting,

"Thalassa? Thalassa! Where are you? Thalassa!" The mermaid was a red head, just like the half blood I was carrying in my arms.

Wait a minute. I thought to myself. Her name is Thalassa. Isn't it?
The two mermaids looked like mother and daughter, which I had really hoped they were. Not wanting to waste any chances, I let her go and shot a bolt of lightning into the sky several times, to send a flare. As soon as I shot the last bolt, I dove back into the water and swam back a few feet before hiding myself with my invisibility. As the woman picked up the girl in her arm, I saw her look in my direction, but I guess she was more concerned with keeping her daughter safe. She examined Thalassa and carried her as she swam at her top speed back to wherever she came from.

I had no idea who Thalassa was or what the hell she was doing in that part of the reef, but at least she was in safe hands. And that's all that mattered.

Before I knew it, I had stopped in front of a rock wall. Pushing some floating seaweed away I pressed my hand against the wall and it disappeared, displaying a dark tunnel ahead of me.

Like the security spell? It belonged to my family. Sure the house has passcodes and fingerprint scanners, but to get in through the sea entrance, the magic works like this; whoever lives in there, gets in there.

Swimming inside, I heard the rock wall close behind me, cutting off the last bit of sunlight from outside. It was a good thing merpeople have night vision, even if it only works in the water, because I had no light source until I reached the actual pool.

We didn't have a skylight since the Den was underground, so a ceiling lamp was a compensation enough. When I pushed myself up, I was about to use my powers to dry my tail when I felt something fluffy on my fin.

"Care to for a towel, Master Raiden?"

I looked up to see our butler leaning over me. Yep, I said it, our freaking butler. George Nguoi Ban. Well, technically he's the Tiraken Family's butler but he still treats me, my brother and Diablo as part of the family.

"Thanks, man." I grabbed the towel and started dabbing my tail, trying to get it dry.

We call him Lee for short, but don't be fooled just because he's a human. He also happens to be a retired veteran who served in the Vietnam War. He may be an old man, but he makes a mean hot cocoa. We call him Lee for short, but if you call him my babysitter or nanny, I'll fry your face.

"I see you have returned from another one of your escapades." Lee drawled in his Vietnamese accent while dusting the shelf. "The towel is for Master Xhiva's sake. He nearly blew a fuse from having to fix the power grid the last time you used your powers."

"Oh come on." I continued rubbing my blue scales with the purple towel. "Like I said before, somebody left a spilled bottle of squid ink and you know I'm allergic to the smell."

"The other masters have already returned." Lee said. "Although Erik called, he should be returning soon."

"Thanks." I stood up, now perfectly dry.

"And one more thing." Lee drawled. "The AC is broken. Rest assured, the problem is being fixed, but Master Erik wanted me to make this clear: There will be zero tolerance, of any snow shenanigans. To quote the merman himself, 'We're not gonna have a repeat of last time'."

I groaned. "It was one time!"
Right after I shut the door, I grabbed a glass of water, while being careful not to get wet of course, and sat down with a copy of a News Weekly magazine in my other hand.

I had just started reading about some surfer dude in Jefferys Bay escaping a shark attack, when I heard the front door close and a familiar voice saying,

"Guys I'm home!" I also heard the sound of car keys being jingled.

"No one cares!" Xandou's voice yells from upstairs.

"Nice to see you're still alive Xan!" Erik replied as he was making his way to the kitchen. "Well, well, well. Look who it is. Australia's resident teenage rebel."

"Well, well, well." I didn't even look up from my magazine to see who was talking to me. "If it isn't the South Pacific's resident stiff."

"Delinquent." Erik said to me as he was heating up some food in the microwave.

"Bossy pants." I shot back.

"Fry fin." Erik replied.

"Muscle head." I said to him.

"So you do admit I'm stronger than you?" Erik asked cunningly.

I took a look at the light blonde merman who had just eating his sandwich. "Shut up." I could practically hear him roll his eyes. "So did you find a job?"

"Yeah." said Erik. "It's this place called the Ocean Cafe. The manager Daivd, he's a really nice guy. Probably too nice."

"Eh sounds boring. Both the place and the boss." I turned a page in my magazine.

"At least I'm not the couch potato in the room." Erik sat next to me, almost finished with his sandwich.

"You have to watch TV to actually be a couch potato." I said nonchalantly, keeping my eyes glued to the pages.

Once Erik was finished with his snack, he stood up and said, "Ok, that's it. I haven't seen you all day, and I'm not gonna let you be bored for the rest of the day."

I snapped the magazine shut and looked up to Erik's blue-green eyes and said, "Listen here Erik. I make my own rules. Which means I'm not getting up from this sofa and there's no way you're gonna make me."

Erik chuckled darkly and whispered, "Watch me."

Before I knew it, my vision consisted of the floor and Erik's backside as he carried me out of the house and down the hill. Hey, I'm 5'5 and he's 6'1. Of course he can carry me. I could hear the waves of the ocean grow louder as we got closer and every Blade Boy knew what this meant.

"Put me down!" I pounded his back even though my effort was useless. "Put me down!"

"No can do, fratellino." Erik said once we were near the shore. The house rested on top of a small
hill that was right over the ocean. It was how the sea entrance tunnel could be fitted for a merman's convenience.

"Put me down!" I yelled one last time, already inhaling the scent of salt water.

"As you wish." Just as I was beginning to feel slight victory, I felt myself being thrown into the water and felt the water splash around me as I made contact with it. Within seconds, my clothes melted away and my legs glued themselves together so my tail could be formed.

In case some of you don't speak Italian (our mother tongue), *fratellino*, means "little brother." Yes, the asshole that just threw me into the water, is my big brother, Erik Consorzio.

"You utter-" I felt a tap on my shoulder and I turned around to see my brother smirking like an idiot.

"Catch me if you can." Erik said in an teasing tone before diving into the water with his blue tail following him.

I admit, I am many things but a coward is not one of them. Of course I would never back out of a challenge to see who is the strongest, fastest, otherwise the best merman. Especially when it comes to my brother.

We raced each other for a few yards until we had reached a part of the reef that had a lot of sand beneath us. It was then that we surfaced to talk to each other face to face. Don't get me wrong, being able to communicate telepathically underwater is pretty cool but it's kind of more easier for me to use our actual voices.

"What?" I surfaced to a smirking Erik. "Oh, come on! I'm the Omega of freaking lightning here! How come you're faster?"

"Well you know what they say." My brother retorted. "Practice makes perfect."

"Ah shut up." I splashed water in Erik's eyes. "I can beat you easily in a rematch."

"You've never even won a single game of chess against me." Erik boasted, prompting me to stick out my tongue at him. "Now aside from that, word on the street is 4 teenagers were driving a stolen car and even jumping over a truck." His tone had turned from playful big brother Erik, to serious big brother Erik.

But at least he wasn't parent Erik. Trust me, you don't want to meet Parent Erik. 

"You have no proof." It was all I could say at the time. I knew of course Erik would find out of another adventure gone wrong of the Blade Boys, but I never thought he'd find out this soon. 

Erik raised an eyebrow. "And the car happened to steer off a railing?"

"I didn't do nothing." I knew I was an idiot for stalling but I had to try anyway. 

"Straight into the ocean?" Erik continued.

"Circumstantial evidence." I continued.

"Raiden, I know it was you." said Erik. "I was there when you were born."

I scrunched up my nose in disgust. "When you were three?" Erik wasn't fazed so I knew my cards against my brother were running out. "Look, it was supposed to be a night out on the town. We didn't know the cops were gonna be behind us. Or I didn't think they would be."
Erik slapped his hand to his forehead in complete irritation. "Raiden, what do I always say?" Just as I opened my mouth to speak, Erik cleared his throat and asked again, "Raiden, cosa dico sempre?"

I nodded, understanding full well of how serious Erik was being. We mostly speak English and sometimes either Portuguese, French, or Greek, but when it came to our first language, there was no joking around with what we said.

"Essere consapevole del possibilità, buono e cattiva." (Be aware of the possibilities, good and bad.)

Erik smiled at me. "See? You do listen to me."

"I'm sorry." I put my hand close to my ear. "Were you saying something? I didn't quite get the sound of your boring voice."

"Well I'm not the one who almost risked jail time, again." said Erik. "You're lucky I know how to tell the cops a convincing lie."

"Oh give it a rest, blondie." I retorted.

"Ok, that's it." Erik cracked his knuckles. "Come here, you!" Before I could fight back, I was behind held in my brother's arms, totally unable to do anything as he gave me a pretty hard noogie. Until I pushed him off and swam down, trying to swim away from my pursuing brother.

Erik and I played our little game of tag until we both got a little hungry and headed for the sea entrance. After we got in, Erik made a head start and went upstairs to give Lee the night off so we could make dinner ourselves. (In other words, Erik would do the cooking and I would be the supervisor/assistant.)

While we were setting the table, I couldn't stop myself from asking, "Why did we move here?"

Erik became motionless, holding a knife over a plate. I was worried that he was actually frozen until he set it back down and looked at me.

"Raiden, we talked about this." Erik said to me with an edge to his voice. "I can't go into detail but,"

"Yeah, yeah." I set down some glasses for water with straws in them. "Your boss has some interest in Mako-"

"Raiden!" Erik almost shouted and for a moment, I was terrified of my brother. But the moment was short lived when he gave me a hug. "I'm so sorry fratellino. But like I said, we talked about this. I can't go into full detail but from where you stand, you and your 'Blade Boys' are the help. But trust me when I say, I will be handling the hard stuff, so you leave everything to me. When I need you to come help me, I will ask you. But for now, I swear to God, I will do everything in my power to make sure you, Xhiva, Xandou, especially Diablo don't have to go through shit in this whole thing. I promise you, I will sort this out on my own as best as I possibly can."

I took Erik's arm in my hand and replied to him, "I don't understand what happened to you when you were gone, but for the past 8 years, we were put through hell and we've come out tough as steel. But we did it together. Sure we found Diablo and the Twins along the way, but we still did it together. So whatever's going on, I'll be here because we're family."

Erik smiled solemnly at me and patted my shoulder. "Go get the others. I think the cod's almost done."

I nodded before making a run upstairs. As soon as I reached the upstairs corridor, I hollered at the top
of my lungs, "HEY, FISH BOYS! DINNER'S ALMOST READY!"

"Cut it out!" Xhiva yelled from behind his door. "I'm trying to read!"

"Sounds boring!" Diablo's voice sounded in the hallway.

"It's bad enough your voice is!" Xandou retorted, causing me to roll my eyes at the other mermen's antics. I swear in all the years I had known them, they probably will never change. Who would want the embodiments of awesomeness to even think of such a thing?

I walked into my room and started untying my sneakers when I bumped my dresser causing my cologne bottle to fall and knock me on the head.

"Ah!" I hissed, grabbing the nonexistent bump on my head. "Son of a bitch!"

But when I looked up, I looked straight into the ocean. The view of it happened to be outside my window that was over my bed. When I listened closely to the seagull's annoying song and the waves crashing against each other, I saw a flash of red hair in my vision along with a silver tail and blue eyes.

I shook my head, cursing at myself for thinking of the half blood who was probably ok by then. I really had hoped she was ok then. If it wasn't for me, she would have found some pretty shell for her collection or something.

But why am I thinking about this? I asked myself silently while running my fingers through my hair. Why am I thinking about her?

Does it matter? My own voice whispered in my ear. You endangered the life of an innocent girl. A girl who never did anything wrong. And you attacked her for lousy cash!

"Except...I saved her." I said, looking at my hands. I imagined blood dripping off them, and I would never be able to wash it off.

It could have happened when I was close to actually defeating her. One more blow to the face and she would have been out like a light. One more blow to the face and I could have taken her to the black market and traded her in for a millions of dollars. I could have become a legend. The Blade Boys could have become a legend and then no one would have thought to ever cross us.

So why didn't I? I wondered. Why did I let her live? We don't even know each other and I had never met her before. So when I saw an chance to save her, why did I take it? Erik once said as I grow older, I'll learn that there's a lot of ways to do the right thing. But does saving the life you almost took count as that?

"Boys!" Erik shouted from downstairs. "Dinner's ready!"

"Coming!"

I looked out into the ocean one more time and I looked as hard as I could into the early night sky for even the smallest sign of my mother and father watching over me.

"Please make sure she's not too hurt." I whispered before heading downstairs.

No matter how hard I tried, and no matter how many conversations I held that night, even as I slept, I couldn't stop seeing those beautiful oceanic eyes.
The New (Fish) Girls in Town

When Thalie Santos-Blakely woke up, she was met with blinding sunlight pouring in through her window. Groaning softly, she rubbed her eyes and couldn't ignore the tremendous fatigue that bristled inside her body.

"Ugh." She muttered tiredly. "Where am I?" She glanced around, taking note that she was in the comfort of her bedroom. She grabbed her iPhone that was charging on her nightstand. When she turned it on, she discovered to her shock, that it was 8:30 am on Monday, July 27, 2015. She had been unconscious for an entire week.

"I know I couldn't have slept that long." She said to herself. Once she stood up, she hissed in pain and sat down on her bed, clutching her legs. But as soon as she did, she noticed a bruise the size of a grapefruit on her arm. The second she did, bits and pieces of what had happened before started to fill her mind.

"Thalassa!" Rita Santos rushed in and helped her get back under the covers. "I didn't know when you had awoken. You shouldn't be out of bed."

"Mother, I'm awake and I'm fi-ow!" Thalie clutched her hip from the jolt of pain she felt.

"Let me see." The 37 year old mermaid/school principal gestured for her to lay down, with her belly facing up to the ceiling. Tenderly, she lifted her tanktop over and saw that her entire torso was in covered bandages. Rita lifted her bandages and Thalie gasped at the sight of black and blue bruises that were starting to fade.

"Tell me if this hurts." Rita pressed into Thalie's side lightly and Thalie bit back her lip to keep from fussing at the pain.

"Not so bad." She said through clenched teeth.

"Well nothing seems to bad and your injuries are looking much better." Rita stroked her daughter's curls. "But you still need some time to recuperate. Because you're half mermaid, we're not too sure of how fast you can heal compared to a natural mermaid. I had to schedule times for you to be either in the water or in bed. So for a while, we'll be walking on eggshells, ok?"

"Ok." The 15 year girl nodded. "But what happened? How did I sleep through an entire week?"

"You never came back to the grotto, and I got worried." Rita explained. "I swam all over the reef, trying to find you and you were floating a little far outside of the eastern edge. I don't know how sharks hadn't found you because of the bleeding from your mouth, but thank goodness I got to you first. I gave you a powerful pain relieving potion that put you to sleep. How you got those injuries however, I was hoping you could tell me."

Thalie furrowed her eyebrows, trying to remember anything besides the lightning, the excruciating pain that followed and trying to fight back against something she didn't stand a chance against. But
when she remembered the pair of vibrant purple eyes, she realized that it wasn't a something she was fighting—it was someone. But who?

"I don't know. I was swimming, I noticed some nice looking coral, and then out of nowhere I felt this stabbing pain. I remember trying to defend myself, and that's it. I don't know who attacked me or why."

"Are you sure?" Rita asked her daughter. "It's important that you tell me everything you know so we can be certain there's not a dangerous character lurking in the waters. So tell me, are you certain you don't know what or who attacked you?"

"I know it was a merman." Thalie admitted. "But apart from that, I don't know who he is or why he attacked me."

"That's alright." Rita hugged her daughter tightly and she returned the gesture. "I wanted to be sure. I sent Zac and Sirena on swims while you were out cold to scour the reef for any hostile merpeople to try to find out who was responsible. Sirena's downstairs making tea and your brother is getting some cake."

Thalie laughed a little. "I'm flattered that you guys are helping me get back on my feet but I think cake is going over the top."

"You might want to take a look at the date again." Rita pointed to her daughter's phone.

Thalie's blue eyes widened at the date once she checked her phone. If today's the 27th, that means that...oh no!

Zac's 17th birthday was yesterday.

"It's ok." Zac appeared at the doorway, carrying a box of strawberry ice cream cake with buttercream frosting and blue plates. "That's why I brought cake. So we could celebrate together."

"Zac!" The merman sat the cake down on the nightstand and rushed to embrace his little sister in a hug. He was careful enough not to squeeze her too tight so as to not risk causing more damage to her ribs.

"I'm just happy that you're awake and ok." Zac whispered in her ear. "Now come on. Let's see if you still have your sweet tooth."

"I would never back out on ice cream cake." Both Thalie and Rita grabbed a plate for themselves and waited for Zac to cut a piece of cake for each. After Zac had finished serving himself some cake, Sirena joined them in their impromptu party. Thalie was safe and sound and that was all that mattered in the Santos household while they celebrated together, as a family.

Three weeks had passed and by then, Thalie had made a full recovery. Soon after that, she had found herself swimming as fast as she could in the competition she was in. It was all or nothing, winner take all. Sure, she had some physical therapy but it seemed her adversaries had been training for this moment; the moment where they would defeat a half blood.

She swam past an underwater rock ledge, but then she felt something brush past her. Not taking any chances of being surprised, she kicked her fin and swum out into the great big blue.
Oh, she would not lose. Not against her brother. She could handle Sirena, but to have her big brother brag about his winning of their little race? That was unacceptable!

Not wanting to surrender so easily, she swam all the way into the finish line, the sacred Moon Pool of Mako Island. She was completely alone, or so she thought.

"Look who it is." Zac's disembodied voice startled her. "What kept you, slowpoke?"

"What the?" Thalie looked around and out of a shimmering light, Zac unclenched his fist and he was completely visible. Sirena was not there, as she had yet to arrive.

"I cut you off at that trench!" Thalie accused.

Zac raised an eyebrow. "Did you really?" He raised his arm and a stream of bubbles formed under the moon pool and when Zac shot his hand at the wall behind him, the water followed suit. "It's called a mirage. Guess I win this one, little sis."

"Cheater." Thalie stuck her tongue at him just as Sirena made her entrance with a cross look on her face.

"Who was it this time? Who created the bubble storm that threw me off course?"

In pure sibling fashion, Zac and Thalie pointed fingers at each other at exactly the same time.

"You were behind her!" Zac tried to pin the blame on his little sister. "You must have set the temperature too high!"

"You said the same thing when it came to the brownie mix!" Thalie retorted. "Now who's playing the blame game?"

"Wait, what?" Now Sirena was holding her hand over mouth to keep from laughing too hard at what she was seeing. "What's this about brownie mix?"

"Oh it's uh..." Zac laughed sheepishly and blushed a beet red. "It's a bit of an inside joke, concerning a bit of a bake sale incident."

"It's a bit of a funny story actually." Thalie was also giggling. "One we sort of don't speak of to this day.

"So do I even want to know what happened?" Sirena rhetorically.

"Let's just say we did not think things through then." Zac replied, blushing a beet red. "Or actually read the recipe."

"Why is that not a surprise?" Sirena smiled. "You two always seem to find yourselves in some trouble."

"It's not really trouble." said Thalie. "It's just a coincidence that these things happen!"

"There are hardly such things as coincidences." a new voice spoke in the moon pool. All of the merpeople turned their heads and treading the water, near the ledge, was Kailani, Leader of the Mako Pod, Rita Santos' sister and Thalie's biological aunt. "It is only fate that determines where we are and where we go."

"Aunt Kailani!" Thalie swam up and gave her a giant hug.
"Hello my dear niece." The middle aged mermaid embraced her niece. "Sirena, it's good to see you!" She hugged the 17 year old mermaid.

"It's so good to see you Kailani." said Sirena. "How's Aquata doing?"

"She misses you and still teaches the little ones all the songs." said Kailani. "Your friends all miss you since the last time you spoke to the pod." When she turned her head to look around the moon pool, she saw Zac, the last creature of the ocean she wanted to see.

"Why is that here?" Kailani spat with a cold indifference.

"Kailani, we discussed this." Sirena pleaded her former pod leader. "Zac is a friend of ours. Although he made some pretty big mistakes, he still redeemed himself, and Mako wouldn't be safe if he hadn't helped destroy the Trident. Remember when Nixie got bit by that shark? It was Zac who healed her fin and helped her swim again."

"That's because he probably caused the incident." Kailani sneered. "So he can try to steal our secrets."

"For the last time, Kailani." Zac was still avoiding eye contact with her. "I don't want any trouble." His fist was tight but he kept his cool.

"Then do not be here." Kailani snapped vehemently. "Not in our sacred pool."

"Ok, enough!" Thalie shouted. "Aunt Kailani, I will take my brother home so you can Sirena can have the moon pool to yourselves to catch up. Does that sound fair?"

"Alright." Zac turned to look at the older redhead. "Guess I won't be seeing you around then."

"I look forward to having a new home without the likes of your people." Kailani sneered just as Zac flapped his tail and splashed the Mako Pod Leader, by "accident" of course.

Over the months that had passed, he had sometimes swum beyond Mako and found some mermaids that didn't give him the warm reception he received from the mermaids in the Gold Coast. He had tried to make peace with some of the mermaids that treated him with hostility but it was all in vain. Because of that, he tried to avoid any pod mermaids as best as possible.

"I'll meet you at Mother's." Thalie hugged her aunt before diving down the tunnel, past some stingrays and following the trail of bubbles that her brother left behind.

The two merteens swum in the coast near the city until he took a detour into a canal that had his neighborhood in it. Behind where the tinny was floating near the wooden boardwalk, was his house, with his bungalow near it.

"It's strange." Thalie thought aloud once she and Zac breached the surface.

"What?" Zac asked curiously.

"Just almost a year ago, you were getting off this tinny," said Thalie. "Then about half an hour later you would become a merman. Now look at you." She beamed with pride, even when Zac conjured a water sphere, turned it into ice and heated it up to literal boiling point. "Show off."

"I still can't believe almost a year ago, you were on the same tinny and I never thought to ask you why you were covered head to toe in sleeping bags even though you had sweatpants." said Zac astoundingly.
"To be fair Zac," said Thalie. "You did spend half an hour waking up on a beach and trying to convince us that there was a glowing tunnel."

"Oh that's right." Zac laughed. "I was so frustrated at that stupid tunnel. I guess a lot has happened. There's the whole Trident debacle, changing your name, moving to Rita's, Evie finding about my powers, and Cam." He uttered his former best friend's name with the softest bit of anger. "But still, who knew a camping trip would give us these?" He gestured to his blue scales that were glittering like sapphires, even under the shadow.

"I think mine was gonna come sooner or later," said Thalie. "I was lucky that my aunt was literally right around the corner to help me out when it came."

"Yeah, you said it." said Zac. "Imagine if she saw me in the moon pool that night." He scowled bitterly. "But I appreciate you trying to make me talk about my deal with her."

"How did you know?" Thalie asked.

Zac ruffled Thalie's wet hair while smiling. "It's cause I'm your big brother. I know these things. You may call me a bad liar but even I know when you're trying to get me to open up."

"I could say the same for you." Zac gave his adoptive sister a look. "Come on Zac, we've talked about this. There are some mermaids still wary of mermen."

"I still don't see why I even had to have that conversation." said Zac. "I mean, it didn't help much did it?"

"Zac..."

Zac scoffed and made his way over to one of the wooden pillars. As he leaned on it, he replied in a hushed voice, "I'm just saying. I don't need another mermaid to rub it in my face-that I'm a merman which means as long as I have this tail, I'm a threat to the ocean and nothing more."

"I'm sorry they haven't treated you with respect Zac." said Thalie. "I've tried explaining it to Aunt Kaliani but-"

"I know, Thalie." Zac retorted irritably. "But mermaids like Kailani and mermaids from the pod can stand to look at you because at least you're a girl. Me? It doesn't matter where I'm from. They take one look at my color (Zac gestured to his colbalt tail) and decide that I'm a bad guy in less than two seconds."

"Believe me, I know how that feels." said Thalie. "You're talking to a the offspring of a human and a mermaid. Not supposed to exist, remember? Does the word, Pigblood ring a bell?"

There was a pause that crushed the atmosphere until Zac asked "How do you do it?" Zac asked. "How do you put up with people who treat you badly just because you're different?"

Thalie held Zac's hand and never let go, no matter how tightly she squeezed it. "The world we live in, it's complicated to say the least. Yes, there will be people that hate you for what you are. But there are people here, who love you for who you are. You've grown a lot and you've held your head up high against the prejudice out there. But if you let that get to your head, then who are you really?"

Zac smiled, hugging his sister close to him as they saw the water shine as bright as a thousand diamonds. "Thanks, sis."

The adoptive siblings floated in the water under the warmth of the sunny afternoon. It didn't matter how many times they evaded land people spotting them, they stayed put in that very spot under the boardwalk. At that moment, they had each other and that was all that mattered.

At Rita's house however, trouble had clouded Sirena's mind. She was having trouble concentrating on her powers but no matter how much she tried, she couldn't relax her mind enough. So it was evident enough that she was stuck in her tail.

Who could blame her though? One would have trouble concentrating from the especially grim news of their former pod leader."

"Veridia has sent two mermaids to the Gold Coast to take Mako back." Kailani had warned Sirena. "I don't know who they are since they are not of this pod or any pod. But I do know this. These girls are intelligent, powerful and they will do anything to get their mission completed. Do not be fooled by whatever demeanor they give off."

Sirena had heard rumors of Veridia having two mermaids to be her weapons. The problem was, the jobs were so seclusive, even her sister Aquata had never known what they looked like or what their names actually were. According to her, Veridia had chosen two mermaids of exceptional talent to do her dirty work for a steep price each. One was an orphan from the Northern waters of Canada and the other's origins were as enigmatic as you could imagine-although rumors speculated that she had a life on land which made her all the more less admired.

But it didn't matter who they were or what they were capable of, Sirena knew there would be a heated confrontation following the past year. Therefore it was up to her to try to maintain the peace she had forged with Zac, who was a creature of the sea mermaids always feared. But he was a merman, who was also a part of the ocean, which meant feud or not, they already shared the sea as their home. Why couldn't they understand that?

"Need some help?" A girl asked above her. Judging from the bell-like accent she had, Sirena guessed this was one of Veridia's special mermaids. Sirena looked up to see a brunette wearing a pink dress and sandals. She looked to be about Sirena's age and had grey eyes that stood out from her tanned complexion. Aside from that, she had a warmth that made Sirena feel safe around her.

"Don't worry, I'm a mermaid too." she said. To prove her point, she curled her fingers over Sirena's golden tail and steam rose from her damp scales in seconds.

Sirena couldn't help but notice that she sounded a bit different than Thalie's permanent American accent however.

"There." the girl gestured to her perfectly dry legs. "All done."

Sirena smiled at the girl as she stood up. But before she could thank her, an annoyed Australian accented voice echoed in the grotto,

"Have you finished yet?"

"I'm coming Ondina!" The brunette hollered back before turning her attention back to Sirena. "Sorry about her, Ondina can be a pain but she means well. I'm Mimmi."

"Sirena." She shook the Canadian's hand. "Are you both really from the pod?"

"Yes we are." said Mimmi sweetly. "Come, let me introduce you to Ondina."

The two mermaids made their way into the grotto, where a blonde 17 year old girl was blatantly
flipping through the pages of a magazine. She had on pink sneakers, blue jean shorts, and was wearing a pink tanktop under a short jean vest. The blonde looked up and Sirena could see that she had hair that was a lot more curlier and frizzier than Thalie's. She also had a round face and had eyes the color of the oceans you saw at the beach.

"So this is Sirena?" Ondina shut the magazine close with a snap. "I'd be more convinced if she had a moon ring she earned herself. Yeah, your sister told me about you. She told me about the boy too."

"Ondina." Mimmi warned sternly. "Don't make another scene."

"I'm not making a scene." Ondina protested, putting down the magazine. "I just want to get the job done and find the boy already"

"The boy? Oh, you're here for Zac aren't you?" Sirena asked curiously. "I'm guessing the plan is to take away his powers so the pod can come back?"

"Brilliant deduction, Sherlock." Ondina muttered sarcastically.

"You'll have to excuse Ondina." Mimmi quickly. "She takes some time to get used to."

"Clearly." said Sirena. "But girls, I understand you want the pod to come back to Mako, but me, Lyla, and Nixie, we tried everything we could to make that happen. He was even in the moon pool during the full moon and he didn't lose his powers."

"That's because most pods don't know about a little secret between the moon pool and the full moon." said Mimmi. "The only way a Turned merperson can lose their powers, is if they're exposed to a full moon bestowed with the power of all of the planets aligning. It comes every fifty years."

"Then why didn't-"

"It doesn't affect natural mermaids so that's why even the mermaid council doesn't know about it." said Ondina. "Bottom line is, you may have tried but Mimmi and I haven't. But enough of the magic lesson, where's the boy? We need to let him know we mean business."

Suspicion jolted through Sirena when Ondina hesitated on her friend's name. "You do realize land people are different?" asked Sirena. "Look, I can take you to Zac as long as you follow my lead and try not to do anything to stand out."

Mimmi looked at her friend expectantly and Ondina replied with, "Sure, we'll fit in just fine."

Sirena fished out her iPhone and dialed Zac's number. "Zac?" She waited for a bit before Zac answered,

"Sirena?"

"Yeah, it's me." said Sirena. "Where are you?"

"I'm at the cafe." Zac answered through the phone. "Why? I had a lesson with Rita yesterday."

"I have some friends who want to meet you." Sirena said awkwardly.

"Fine, I guess." said Zac. "See you then."

Once Sirena put her phone away, she looked at Ondina and Mimmi, who didn't looked fazed by the slightest bit by a phone.
"Can we go?" Ondina asked. "Please?"

Sirena nodded but then smiled at a white cat trekking through the grotto. "Hey Poseidon." She walked over to the cat and stroked his white fur. She looked over and saw Mimmi smile at the cat while Ondina was holding a pillow in front of her. She curled her body up behind the pillow as much as she could.

"Get. That thing. Away from me!" Ondina nearly shouted.

Mimmi was giggling a little at Ondina's frightened face. Poseidon the Cat, didn't seem to care as he crept closer. The closer he got to her, the further she tried to creep away from him.

"Poseidon, come here." Sirena beckoned for the cat to come to her and he did, but Ondina didn't move a muscle. "What's wrong?"

"Aw." Mimmi teased at her best friend. "Don't tell me the ever charming Ondina is afraid of small kitties."

Ondina gave the Canadian mermaid a heated glare. "One tried to eat me when I was little!"

When Sirena led the girls out of the house, they found themselves walking in the park. Mimmi was taking in the sights and had never been more glad to have worn open toe shoes on such a nice day. But for Ondina, downtown was the bitter reminder of the life she had lost. The mission to obtain the merman's powers, was her last chance of gaining her freedom and going back home to her family, back to her life before she met Derek. Usually for Ondina, it was winner take all. But now getting Mako back for the Pod, it was all or nothing.

On the other hand, while Mako would always hold a special place in her heart, Sirena was comfortable with the life she was leading on land. After Cam had failed to take over Mako in December, Sirena along with Lyla, Nixie, Zac, and the new Santos' had celebrated their first Christmas. Although it was full of hope and joy, the banished mermaids (excluding Thalie) could not shake the sting of failing to get their home back. They had tried numerous attempts on Zac to remove his powers, but they either didn't work or he ended up seriously ill because of a spell or a potion. It took a while and a several attempts to try get the Pod and the Mermaid Council to listen, but it was all in vain. Merpeople were stubborn creatures and their sexism feud was root deep. Soon, the mermaids realized that as long as Zac was their ally and there were rumors of a half blood that existed, the Mako Pod would never come home. So when Lyla and Nixie started considering a new life away from Mako, Sirena forged a new life on land. Some would say almost literally.

It was a good thing Rita had an old friend who knew how to forge a birth certificate, social security number, and all the things needed to make the young mermaid, Sirena Chanter- a girl who had moved from Noosa, a nearby town in Queensland. She stayed as the "niece" of Rita Santos, which made Thalie her "cousin" (and kind of Zac's surrogate cousin too). While Thalie and Zac went to regular school, Rita kept true to the cover story and began homeschooling Sirena. It was Evie who bought her a cell phone for her 17th birthday, but the two were friends nonetheless.

"Be careful of the moving pieces of metal on the road." Sirena was warning Ondina and Mimmi once they got to a stoplight.

Ondina rolled her eyes. "You mean the cars?" She quipped sarcastically. Sirena frowned at the stubborn mermaid. "I'm not an idiot. I've been on land before."
"Come on." Mimmi crossed the street with the other mermaids once the light turned green. They made their way across the boardwalk, passing by couples, kids on bikes, and even a teenage boy rolling the wheelchair his grandfather was sitting in.

"This city looks nice." said Mimmi.

"It's a great place to live." said Sirena.

"Can we stop delaying and find the boy?" Ondina asked impatiently.

"We don't need to start a fuss." said Sirena. She held her hand out to the other mermaids, silently telling them to stop as she pointed to a tall boy who was sitting at a table at the Ocean Cafe ahead. There was no doubt whether he was the same age as the mermaids and he was also quite handsome. He had wavy dark hair that was still growing, a tanned complexion bright brown eyes that seemed full of hope and innocence. He also looked like an athlete, a swimmer at least and he was looking through a menu, trying to find the fish of the day.

"That's Zac." Sirena said.

"That's him?" Mimmi asked skeptically.

"He's not going to be a problem." Ondina flexed her fingers. Sirena motioned for the other mermaids to walk with her to Zac's table. The minute the girls sat down Zac looked up from his menu.

"Hey." He greeted, with Mimmi and Ondina watching his every move with calculating eyes. "So, I'm guessing these are the 'friends' you told me about?"

"Yes." said Sirena. "Zac, this is Mimmi and this is Ondina. They're here for business."

"Yeah." said Ondina. "You could say that."

"Listen Zac, I've got to go rehearse with David." said Sirena. "In the meantime, get to know them. I'm sure they mean no harm. And please don't make a scene."

"We'll keep ourselves in check." Ondina replied snappily.

When Sirena left, Zac turned his attention to the mermaids. "So you've come to fix me?" He put air quotations around the words, "Fix me".

"That's the general idea." said Ondina. "But don't worry, as long as you cooperate, you'll still get to call yourself a man at least."

"Something tells me you're all talk and no proof." Zac countered.

"Oh she doesn't need proof." said Mimmi. "Trust me."

"Here's how it's gonna go," said Ondina. "You go back to being a land boy, the pod returns to Mako, and everybody's happy."

"Except I'm happy the way I am." said Zac.

Before Ondina could open her mouth to say something else, a waiter came by the table, holding an iPad to take orders.

"Hi, what can I get you?" asked Erik.
"Fish burger, thanks Erik. " Zac replied. He had already met the tall waiter a couple weeks before.

"Ladies?" The handsome waiter turned his attention to the two women sitting across from Zac at the table.

"No, we're good." Mimmi said sweetly. "Thanks though."

"You sure about that?" asked Erik. "We have terrific specials, all made right here."

"No, we're good." Mimmi repeated herself. Erik shrugged and headed back inside the cafe. But for some reason he couldn't shake that sense of familiarity when he saw Ondina, even though he didn't know it was her. He once had a friend who looked almost like the girl. He knew that she was a mermaid though—they do love their jewelry.

While Erik was taking someone else's order, Zac had left just to get away from the mermaids. After what happened last year with Sirena, her friends and the trident, the last thing he needed was another Mako Mermaid drama.

But when he almost walked in, he bumped into the last person he wanted to see: His ex best friend, Cameron "Cam" Mitchell.

"Watch it fish face." Cam hissed at Zac.

"Keep talking asshole." Zac muttered once he was out of sight.

But watching his every move, even the brief conversation at the door with the blonde land boy, was Ondina and Mimmi.

"Those two know each other." said Ondina. "Obviously they had some sort of falling out, which means Cam probably knows what Zac is, which means we can pry some information from him."

That was the special thing about Ondina. As prideful and stubborn as she was, she was also extremely observant and not afraid to go for any risk. Her ability to read people, coupled with Mimmi's high intelligence, made these two mermaids the perfect partners in crime.

"Alright Ondina." Mimmi rubbed her hands. "I'll go inside, see what I can pick up. I may get a juice if you want your usual-watermelon juice with a dash of ginger."

"Maybe." said Ondina. "Except you lost your cash back in the Philippines. So how are you gonna—"

To answer her question, Mimmi reached into her pink dress pocket and pulled out a bright lavender wallet-Sirena Chanter's wallet. "Really? We're not gonna get what we want if you're lifting wallets."

"Do you have any idea how easy pick from a dress' pocket?" She took some bills out and thrust the wallet in Ondina's hands. "Hold this for me, genius."

Mimmi winked at Ondina and strutted inside the cafe. She didn't see Zac because he had already anticipated their next move and had gone into the changing rooms to try on a new shirt Evie had gotten for him.

If she hadn't spent half of her life on land, Mimmi would have gone into the changing rooms, regardless of whether they were properly dressed or not.

So she went up to the counter and said in a flirtatious voice, "It's Erik, right?"

He turned around and smiled at the Canadian brunette. "Guilty as charged. If you're coming here about the coconut smoothies, they're on their way."
"Actually, about those drinks," said Mimmi. "Can I actually take those to go?"

"Coming right up." Erik nodded at Mimmi who laid down the $10 bill and headed to the cool room to grab the plastic cups. But suddenly, he stopped to the sound of furious yelling behind the white door.

"No, no, no!" It was Joe Sullivan, David's brother (David was Erik's boss). "I know what my insurance covers and I don't care if it's at the bottom of the ocean!" True to his character, the curious merman pressed his head against the door, but turned invisible in case someone decided to walk by. "My car is a Silver Lexus, do you know how much that costs me? I don't care if it was stolen! Fish it out of the water and then my insurance can pay for it!" There was a bit of silence before, "Listen mate, I don't give a fuck if some punk kids stole it, took it for a joyride and drove it into the sea. It's my car and I'm getting it back! And there's no way I am paying for something that wasn't my fault!"

Erik couldn't believe his ears. The Silver Lexus in which Raiden and his Blade Boys almost got arrested for, belonged to one of the owners of the Ocean Cafe? To one of his boss'?

_Oh, Xandou's gonna love this._ While smiling, Erik dug his nails into his palms just to stop himself from bursting in laughter.

While Erik was out of sight, Zac was chatting with his girlfriend, Evangeline "Evie" McLaren. Even though mermaids didn't have superhuman hearing, Mimmi had some idea of what they were talking about and how much the brunette girl meant to Zac. But Mimmi wasn't there for Zac's female partner. She and Ondina had spent a week planning their mission and nothing was gonna get in the way of it.

But there was already someone watching her leave."I don't like this." said Evie, clutching her boyfriend close to her. "I saw the way that girl was looking at us."

"Mimmi?" asked Zac. "She's just from the pod. Apparently she and her friend are here to 'solve my problem'. Sirena's the one who introduced me to them."

"Still Zac," Evie clutched his arm. "I don't want you near her. There's something not right about her."

"Don't worry, Evie." Zac kissed her on the cheek. "I'm a big boy, I can take care of myself. Besides, she's gone now. What can she do after just meeting me?"

As passionate and caring she could be, Evie also was extremely stubborn. She possessed a journalist's instinct (she was a writer for the school newspaper) and knew right then, that "Mimmi" was not who she said she was.

"Ondina." Mimmi handed her friend one of the smoothies. "Were you waiting long?"

"I'm not that impatient." Ondina took a sip of her smoothie. Mimmi rolled her eyes, as if to say, 'Yeah, right.'

"Now back to business," said Mimmi. "What'd you find out?"

"For a start," said Ondina as they started walking down the boardwalk. "I know where the boy lives, I know who he's related to and I think I know how we can lure him out tonight."

Mimmi's eyebrows spiked up to her hairline and she gave a Cheshire Cat-like smile. "I'm listening."
At Casa de Gomez, there was a flurry of blonde hair accompanied by the sound of rambunctious laughter. Chasing her, was a woman on a mission, driven by an insatiable lust for chocolate. She was trying to reach for the box of sugary goodness in the Latina's hands.

"Rosie, if that box of biscuits is not in my arms in 2 seconds, I will personally pound you to the floor!" The wrath of Helen Carter was not to be taken for granted. Especially when it came to chocolate.

"Bu' fere fo goo'!" Rosie's mouth was filled to the brim with chocolate chip cookies, or biscuits as the Brits like to say.

"Ok, what is this?" Thalie had stepped into the kitchen with her hands on her hips. "I leave to go to the bathroom and it's chaos out here!"

"You've been stuck with us for years, fish femme." Helen was trying to wrestle the box of cookies out of Rose's hands (with her yelling, 'No!' repeatedly) but she was as fast as the wind. "You should know by now that nobody steals my chocolate and gets away with it. And I mean, nobody."

"Ok, guys, come on." Thalie was laughing but trying to make sure the box didn't rip open and the cookies would come falling onto the floor. "Girls, that's enough." When they wouldn't stop wrestling each other, Thalie took a breath and in a hypnotic voice, she spoke, "Both of you, stop!"

Literally captivated by her magic, both Helen and Rose froze in place, obeying her voice. Satisfied that the mock fight had stopped, Thalie walked over to Rose and snatched the box out of her hand.

"Thalie." Helen spoke through clenched teeth (literally). "Can you please unfreeze us?"

When Thalie he turned around and saw that her friends were still frozen, she said, "My bad. Unfreeze."

Dropping to the floor, Rose let out a gasp. "Oh gosh. Oh my. Breathing first, talking second." She gulped in a bucket's worth of oxygen. "Thank you, so very much!"

Rolling her eyes, Helen grabbed Rose's arms with the force of a tanker. "Get up."

The girls headed upstairs to Rose's coastal style, pink theme bedroom, where they found Kimi with a telescope observing the pink and orange sky. She had a notepad next to her full of mathematical equations that none of the girls understood, mostly because they weren't taking 12th grade AP Calculus.

"Wait." Helen whispered to her friends. She crept up to the Japanese girl, careful enough not to make a even the softest creak on the wooden floor.

"BOO!"

Kimi screamed, falling down to the floor. "Tawagoto!" (Shit!) She adjusted her glasses after she fell down to the floor. "Oh, Helen! You could not have warned me beforehand? I should bill you for the hearing aid I might need."

"You're rich, Kims." Helen pointed out. "I'm pretty sure you can afford a medical bill."

"What's that you're looking at, Kimi?" Thalie asked, hoping to get her friend back in spirits.
"Just the sunset." said Kimi. "And the star patterns soon to arrive on the sky."

"In other words, you're bored to death." Rose held open her palm. "Want a cookie?"

Kimi sighed and laughed a little. "Thank you. I don't know girls, but today has been rather bothersome and tiring. I see a possibility of doing more this summer. How about we go out tonight? Maybe somewhere fun?"

"We already did this summer, remember?" Thalie retorted. "Marine Park, 4th of July?"

"We had to wait in line for at least 2 hours for everything!" Rose exclaimed.

"That's the last time we ever go to a public place during tourist season." Helen added on before shuddering at the memory of the frenzy that took place.

"Then why don't we take a nighttime swim at Mako?" Kimi suggested quietly.

"Finally the first idea you've had all week!" Helen shook her arms in exasperation. "At least now my hair won't get ruined again like the last spa day we had."

"I told you before, Helen." Kimi smiled. "That incident regarding your hair was because you used too much of the bleach."

"Sure thing, Dr. Nerd." Helen clapped her hands and rubbed them together, making her way towards the closet. "Now, come on. We got stuff to fish out. No pun intended." She looked at Thalie, who shrugged her shoulders in reply.

Just as Rose was giggling at Helen's joke, Thalie's head whipped back at her. "Don't. Even. Start."

Nighttime had soon fallen onto Queensland before anyone could wish for the ink blue sky to come. The vivacious city of The Gold Coast was just as lively as it was during the day. Lights danced on the roads as cars sped across the highway, people were pouring in and out of the streets on their way to a dinner or a party. It was just another summer's night.

But tonight, for a select few, that serenity would never be the same again.

Ondina and Mimmi had risen from the waters in the canal as they peered at the house that was 34 Meadow Road. That address was important for them to obtain because it was Zac Blakely's address, giving them the perfect opportunity to strike the first phase of their plan.

"You went over the plan?" Ondina asked.

"Yeah, twice." Mimmi replied.

"Alright then." Ondina's stormy blue eyes met Mimmi's grey ones. "This is it." She grasped Mimmi's hand. "Tonight is the night. Our own independence day."

Mimmi nodded at her friend then lifted herself up far enough so her only her head was above the wood and triple checked for any unwanted witnesses to a mermaid sighting.

Using her natural strength, she lifted her tail up and began drying herself until she was able to stand on two human legs.
Ondina left with a splash. In every step she took, Mimmi remained cautious as she advanced towards Zac's bungalow.

However, it seemed that despite Ondina's desperate planning, there was one thing that was unaccounted for: someone who was already inside the house and had no idea of the new mermaids in town.

"Goggles, goggles." Thalie was searching the guest bedroom (it had once been her room when she used to live with Zac). "Where are the goggles? I know they were here somewhere."

The goggles weren't for her, as being part mermaid, Thalie could see underwater perfectly. They were for Rose, who had accidentally broken them a few hours earlier by sitting on them. Since Thalie insisted that she had a backup pair of goggles somewhere around the Blakely house, it was her mission to find the pair so Rose's contacts wouldn't fall out in the middle of the reef.

When Thalie couldn't find what she was looking for, she swiped out her phone and typed in her brother's number.

"Hey Zac." said Thalie.

"What's up?" Her adoptive brother answered on the phone

"Do you still have a pair of goggles somewhere around the house?" Thalie asked. "From when you used to be on the swim team?"

"Yeah, there should still be some in my shed." said Zac. "But what do you need them for? You're part mermaid."

Thalie chuckled a little. "They're not for me, silly. They're for one of my friends."

"Well have fun doing...whatever it is you girls do." Zac hung up the phone. Thalie rolled her eyes and headed downstairs to Zac's bungalow in the backyard near the canal.

She opened the door and stepped inside, to find no one in the shed. It was expected to be so, since she was the only person in the Blakeley Residence. Or so she thought.

Her eyes finally spotting the aquatic ocular devices, she snatched up the pair and adjusted the strapping for her friend.

But literally invisible to her, was Mimmi, who was creeping up behind her like the shadows cast in the shed. When Thalie was about to head out, she noticed a picture on the coffee table and it was the entire family with her foster parents circled in red and a large red X was drawn on each of their faces

Immediately taken by surprise and fear, Thalie got out her phone and started typing her foster mother's number when she felt her throat start to close up and breathing became a challenge for her. Her phone hit the floor with a clatter as slowly and painfully, her breathing pattern became smaller and smaller. Thalie dropped to her knees, trying to get a breath.

Looking up, the young half blood saw a figure shimmering in and out of her invisibility.

"Wh-Who?" She tried to speak but could only get so much out because of her weakening oxygen.

Mimmi raised her fist and struck her in the head, knocking the younger teen out cold.

"Sorry, kiddo." said Mimmi, her visibility restored. "Nothing personal. It's just business."
Not even casting a glance or feeling an ounce of pity for the unconscious redhead, Mimmi grabbed the photo and headed outside, running on the jetty and diving to the designated spot she and her partner agreed to meet at: The local marina port.

They didn't need to worry about breaking into the grotto because they already had gotten the ingredients for the Potion of 50 Moons prior to arriving to the Eastern Australian Current. This plan would work. It had to. After all, Zac was human before he fell into the moon pool, so what were the odds of him retaining his powers after that night?

"I was worried you were gonna be late." Ondina said coyly once Mimmi surfaced near the boardwalk where Ondina was. Once the coast was clear, the Brazilian-Australian mermaid moved out of the way so Mimmi could lift herself up and start drying her tail.

"You should know by now, a wizard never shows up late, or early." Mimmi retorted. "He arrives exactly on time."

Ondina tilted her head. "You like Lord of the Rings?"

"What's wrong with that?" Mimmi asked curiously.

"First, we can't get distracted." Ondina started walking in the direction of the Ocean Cafe. "And second, that movie is beyond cheesy and predictable."

"You have bad taste, my friend." Mimmi shook her head, looking at her dress. "God, do you have any idea how much I despise pink?"

"Then why did you wear it?" Ondina asked pointedly.

"Because it's called making a first impression, smartass." Mimmi snapped back. She leaned over to look at at the water that was lit up by the full moon. She sneered at her reflection, disgusted by what she saw.

"Ok, that's it." Mimmi held out her palm and Ondina put into it, a tube of lipstick. Smiling, Mimmi unscrewed the cap of the small tube and painted her lips a color identical to the darkened sky above.

"There." She looked at her reflection in the water. "Much better."

Ondina scoffed and Mimmi snapped her head to her friend. "Is there something on my face?"

"No." Ondina shook her head. "I just never thought you were one for theatrics, Zoe."

"Come on Ondina." Zoe chuckled darkly. "You know black is my color."

Away from the mermaids, lying on the floor of her brother's bungalow, Thalie woke up."Who did this to you?" She heard a distinct British accent echo in her ear. Thalie slowly opened her eyes to find 3 shapes hovering over her.

Her vision clearing, Thalie saw Kimi flashing a light in her eyes. "There's a 40% chance she may have a head injury. Pupils are equally dilated though so that's good."

"Correction." Rose popped into the scene and Thalie felt a small bit of pain on her fin. She looked down and saw that her legs were replaced by her glittering silver fish tail. "She's a mermaid who may
have a head injury, which makes it our civic duty to help her out."

"I told you we should have dumped her in the ocean." Helen piped up.

"The only thing I need," Thalie wheezed out. "Is for you to take your elbow off my chest."

"Oh, right." Helen took her arm off. "Sorry about that."

Rose did a double take at the fact she heard her best friend speak. "Oh, Dios Mio! You're ok!"
Before Thalie could ask her friends what had happened, she was attacked by the blonde hugging her.

"Rose, step away from her." Kimi scolded her friend. "You're asphyxiating her! More than Helen if I might add."

"You may add, since you did already." Helen said to her.

"Kimi." Thalie got up, brushing her legs. "I'm ok. I'm fine. But what are you guys doing here?"

"You weren't answering your phone." Helen replied.

"What happened?" Thalie asked aloud. But as soon as the questioned slipped out of her mouth, memories of the brunette girl poured into her eye. Including the photo of her foster parents.

"We were hoping you could tell us." Kimi replied.

"Wait." Thalie stiffened. "That girl, she's the one who knocked me out."

"Who?" Helen asked, a rage threatening to take control of her voice. "Cause I want names."

"She used magic to choke me." said Thalie. "But she had a photo of Mom and Dad. I think she's after them, I think she's a mermaid!"

"What if she isn't?" Kimi asked. "What if it could have been something else entirely? Drugging you is a possible hypothesis."

Thalie gave the scientist a look. "Kim, I saw a moon ring on her finger. Who else do you know has a moon ring?"

"Ok, I rescind my hypothesis." said Kimi.

"Wait." said Helen. "What the hell would two mermaids want with two humans? Something don't smell right."

"I don't care about their plan." Thalie's voice was flooded with determination. "The only thing that matters is getting my parents back. Looks like we're gonna get that nighttime swim at Mako after all."

At the cafe, an entirely different scene was taking place. All eyes were on Sirena as her enchanting voice wavered in the local hangout, but his eyes were on Evie. They had just resumed their relationship after taking a break from each other. After the Trident debacle, there was a period when he and Evie did split up, because Cam had tried to take over Mako again. Of course it was all a ploy to mess with Zac’s head but he had confronted him on his own anyway. Unfortunately, he had also gotten seriously hurt because of a potion Cam had stolen. Of course Evie was concerned, but she
couldn't stand the thought of her boyfriend being in danger and Zac did not want his girlfriend to be too worried about him. So they split up for about 3 months (in their words they were "taking a break"), before reconciling and finally accepting that times may be rough and crazy but as long as they had each other, they would both be ok.

Yep, a lot could happen in almost a year. Including built up self control on the night of the full moon, which is why Ondina and Mimmi decided to come after Zac that specific night, when he was already so accustomed to the moon's power and completely unsuspecting to any suspicious activity by any mermaid.

Especially when one of said mermaids came in and whispered in Zac's ear, "Meet me outside."

Zac turned around and saw Ondina leaving the cafe and was about to follow her when Evie grabbed his arm.

"No." She said. "Absolutely not."

"It's just for a chat, Evie." He kissed her on the cheek. "I'll be fine, I promise."

Evie held his hand and looked at him with concern in her bright green eyes. "You're coming back."

Casting one last look at his girlfriend, he ran outside to find Mimmi sitting at one of the tables. But there was no sign of Ondina anywhere. When he approached the brunette however, he couldn't help but feel a creeping awareness that he was in danger. Looking into her eyes, he saw ice behind her steel grey orbs. As if that weren't enough, the black lipstick she wore made her look like a completely different person.

"I would take you out for a drink, but unfortunately I've got a job to do." Mimmi spoke nonchalantly before flashing an alluring smile. "Don't worry, not too many men can keep up with me."

"What's going on?" Zac asked, now worried of what this mermaid might do. "Where's Ondina?"

"She's waiting for me." Mimmi started walking towards him. "Actually, waiting for us. I need you to come with me and you're gonna do exactly as we say."

Zac scoffed. "Now why would I do that?" Mimmi smiled, handing the 17 year old merman the photo of his parents under a big red X. He took one look at it, and his normally warm brown eyes became hot with boiling anger. "What have you done?"

"It doesn't matter what I do, Zac." Mimmi stood up. "What matters is what you do."

Not wanting to hear any more excuses from the mermaid, Zac stretched his hand and used his telekinesis to freeze Mimmi on the spot.

"I'm gonna ask again." Zac hissed through clenched teeth. "Where. Are. My. Parents?"

"They're in our care." said Mimmi. "But you're a smart guy. You know how to save them."

Zac loosened his telekinetic grip on her and looked at the photo of his parents. Zac had already painted a picture of what they would do to him. More specifically, his fish tail that he had come to accept as part of him. But his parents' lives were on the line and Zac knew almost didn't have a choice in the matter. He could always call the police and report them missing but there was no way anyone would buy into that mermaids existed without exposing himself.

Zac had sacrificed a great power to save his family before. He could do it again.
"Fine." He sighed in defeat, crumpling the photo with his hands and putting it in his pocket. "But please, don't involve anyone else."

"As long as you show up to the Moon Pool, we won't have to bring anyone else in." said Mimmi. She jumped over the railing into the ocean and disappeared among the shadows.

Before Zac made his next move, he pulled out his phone and sent a quick text to his girlfriend, reassuring her that everything would be ok and that he had to take care of something. Once he was in the water, as soon as his legs merged into his tail, he swam as fast as he had ever swum in his life to Mako Island.

The four girls were on their way to Mako, with Thalie pulling the boat with her and leading the way. They had been to Mako "Girl, this is ridiculous." Helen spoke up just before being soaked by a small wave. Helen whipped her head to find Rose whistling to the air with an innocent grin plastered on her face. "Rose, I would appreciate the effort if we were having a sleepover."

"I didn't do it." Rose smiled.

"Helen makes a concise point." said Kimi as she checked her waterproof tablet for misdirection on the GPS. "Theoretically, the boat shouldn't be going at this velocity considering-"

"Oh, shut it!" Helen snapped as Mako started looming in the distance. "I meant it's ridiculous that two mermaids from the pod would snatch two humans. Why not take Thals?"

"How would they even find them?" Rose asked. "I mean no offense but these are mermaids and Dr. and Mrs. Blakely are in Sydney watching a theatre show. Unless these friends have an inside source, there's no way that they could even know what Sydney is.

"I can hypothesize one." said Kimi as they got closer to Mako Island. "Sirena. It adds up. They're mermaids from the pod and Sirena was born in that pod."

"Yeah but something tells me these aren't just your regular run-of-the-mill mermaids from the pod." said Helen.

"How so?" asked Rose curiously.

"Well from what Thals told us," said Helen. "She wasn't looking at Zac's rubbish as if it was the most amazing thing she had ever seen."

Just then, they pulled up to shore and the girls looked out to the shore, awaiting their marine friend to appear. And she did, right on cue, pushing herself up the sandy shore to get closer to Kimi, Rose, and Helen.

"Alright." She breathed out. "We don't know why the mermaids have my parents or what they want with them, but we're gonna find them."

"What if they're not here?" Helen asked. "What if these bitches are screwing with your head?"

"She's right." said Kimi. "What if they're after Zac?"

"Either way girls." Thalie replied. "No one kidnaps my family. Everyone clear on the plan?"

"Search around Mako Island." said Rose. "And find Dr. and Mrs. Blakely."
"We have our flashlights." said Kimi. "But the math doesn't add up, Thalie. Why search here? How are we certain that they haven't gone to the other islands?"

"Because this is the only island on the Eastern Australian Coast with a moon pool and tonight is a full moon." said Thalie. "It's also why the pod lived here and only here."

"Talk about setting your priorities straight." said Rose. "You gonna be ok Thals?"

"There's no time for worrying about me." said Thalie. "You and Kimi, go ahead and find any sign of them. But Helen, stay here for a sec."

While the other girls went into the darkening woods, Helen leaned in closer to Thalie. "What happens if you don't come back?"

"That's what I was gonna tell you Helen." said Thalie. "I'm gonna search around the island, see if I can find them. But if I don't come back in 10 minutes, I want you to get the others and get back to the city."

"No way in hell." Helen declared. "I am not leaving you here! What if they try something again, what if this is all just a big ruse?"

"I can't take that chance, Helen you know that." said Thalie. "Especially if they're after Zac. Set your watch, 10 minutes."

Helen nodded, pressing a few buttons on her wristwatch. "You're coming back. That's a promise."

Thalie nodded at her before pushing herself back into the water and swimming as fast as she could around the island, looking in every corner she could find, asking every dolphin who was around if they had seen two humans. Sadly, there was no sight of them from anywhere, even when she surfaced to call for them.

But just as she began to lose hope, a new idea dawned upon Thalie. If there was a virtual prison that a mermaid could hold a human, and could cast any kind of magic, what better place than the moon pool?

Without a doubt to cloud her hope, Thalie pushed herself down into the sea, straight for the sacred pool.

Completely unaware of his sister's presence at the island, Zac surfaced in the magical pool. He inhaled deeply, almost literally breathing in the surging power of the full moon. He relished in it, enjoying the feeling of his nerves being ignited with power.

Suddenly, he realized two important things: One, he had his parents to find and two, he couldn't let himself be addicted to the energy. Not after what happened with the Trident.

"I never thought you would show." Ondina spoke from behind him.

Zac whipped his head around and asked in a dark tone, "Where are they?"

"Not here, obviously." said Ondina. Just as Zac was about to protest, he was flung back to the rock wall behind him by an unseen force. Zac ignored the sharp pain that had struck the back of his head, and tried to move his hands that had already been frozen in a block of ice. He couldn't even move his
pinky even if he wanted to.

"Does the word 'setup' mean anything to you?" Mimmi appeared out of thin air next to Ondina. "We had to find some way to draw you out."

"I swear if you touch even their nose-"

"Were you not listening?" Ondina asked as Mimmi unscrewed a cap off a bottle with green liquid in its contents. "We don't have your parents, we just needed you."

Mimmi poured the bottle in the air and the green liquid started becoming lifelike as it moved in the air like buzzing flies. Mimmi extended her arm and the flies swarmed around Zac. He tried to move his fin in hopes of squirming out of his confinement, but the green potion had become a large dome, trapping him and sapping him of his energy.

But suddenly, a red mass burst out of the water and cast one horrified look at her beloved brother, who was under the glowing green dome and becoming weaker by the minute.

"What are you doing to him?!" She flung herself at Mimmi who used her powers to push her back. "Get away from my brother!"

"Take care of her." Ondina grabbed control of the dome with her magic. "I've got Zac."

Nodding at her friend, Mimmi kept her magical grip on Thalie as she tried to push her out but Thalie resisted, using her telekinesis to push back the mermaid.

"You're messing with things you don't understand!" Mimmi yelled at Thalie.

"Gee, where have I heard that before?" Thalie retorted as she continued to push back with her power. Both mermaids were talented and powerful and it was a tremendous struggle between them. But after several long minutes Thalie's magical grip began to weaken and Mimmi took this opportunity to blind her with her moon ring before punching her on the head.

"What do you want me to do with her?" Mimmi asked Ondina.

"Use your imagination." She replied immediately.

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On Mako Island, after Helen's watch signaled the end of the fateful 10 minutes, she pulled the other girls from the forest. Once they were all on their boat, sailing just a few feet away from the island, there was almost a silent explosion. Immediately, Kimi stopped the boat to see a bright green light filled the air. It was coming straight from the volcano, right under the moon's position.

"Whoa." Rose breathed. "That's a lot of magic, isn't it?"

"Kim, pull up to the east side of the island." Helen gripped the edge of the tinny. The young scientist nodded, directing the tinny to move exactly where Helen wanted it to go.

Once they stopped a few meters away from the moon pool entrance, Helen was shouting, "Thalie! You alright in there? Where are you?"

"Thalie, get out of there!" Rose shouted into the summer's night.

"Come on Thalie!" Kimi exclaimed. "Come on Zac!"
The girls were trapped in state of fear and confusion. They had faith in their friend and Zac. But from their position, it seemed that the chances of them escaping without a scratch were slim to none.

So for Helen, it was up to her to do something about it.

"What are you doing?" Rose asked Helen who was tying her hair in a bun.

"I'm going after her." She replied with conviction in her voice. I don't know what's going on in there and I don't give a shit. If anyone from the Coast Guard shows up, just say something."

Before she jumped into the water, Rose stood up and grabbed her arm. "I'm coming with you."

"Wait!" Kimi exclaimed, stopping the both of them in their tracks. "It's a full moon, tonight. You know what will happen to you."

The other girls took a glance at each other before Helen replied with, "Like I said; I don't give a shit."

Helen and Rose dove into the tide, into the dark sea. It was thanks to their many aquatic travels with Thalie that they knew exactly where to go, even under pale moonlight.

But it wasn't long before Kimi realized, that Thalie was her best friend too and that she couldn't lose one of the few people who appreciated her as a person and not because she was a science prodigy. Thalie was her tomodachi and tomodachi stuck with one another.

Lowering her feet into the water, Kimi cast a glance down at them, looking at her feet in the water, for one last time.

"Sayonara, watashi no ashi." (Goodbye, my feet) said Kimi as she pushed herself into the ocean, following the girls with the waterproof headlight she had strapped to her forehead. In her own words, "It's important to be prepared."

But in the moon pool, things weren't looking too well for both Zac and Thalie.


But it was hopeless. No matter how hard she willed herself, no matter what memory she used to give herself motivation, Thalie laid on outside of the moon pool, bearing witness to the downfall of Zac's powers. Thanks to a trick up Mimmi's sleeve (or in this case, her moon ring), Thalie was in a state of paralysis. The only saving grace that the 15 year old had, was the ability to inhale and exhale oxygen. But other than that, she couldn't even blink, let alone curl her fingers.

But the one who was really in danger, was Zac. He was still stuck in the buzzing dome of green energy, and strapped to the wall. It was too bright to peer inside, but Zac had become extremely weak due to the energy sapping away his magic and his life. One minute after another trickled away and Zac's breathing had become shallower and shallower as he fought to keep his eyes open. The potion that had become the dome, was essentially killing him. But the mermaids didn't know it and they kept using their magic to fuel the domes power.

Concentrating with all her might, Thalie's moon ring flickered. She tried focusing on her body, but the spell was too powerful for her to counteract. After all, she had never been under a spell such as this.
Suddenly, she saw someone look upon her and it didn't take long for Thalie to realize that the person who was trying to save her, was Rose.

"Don't worry." She said. "I'm gonna get you out."

*Rose, behind you!* She wanted to yell. But the spell Thalie was under prevented her from speaking.

"Hey, what are yo-" Mimmi was knocked down by a right cross from Helen before turning to Ondina and knocking her out as well by literally butting heads with her. Right on cue, the energy dome around Zac faltered and he dropped his head down, very weak, but very much alive.

But as soon as Rose pushed Thalie into the water and jumped in, the magical water around Helen, Rose and Kimi started to glow in different colors. Once a bright circle of scarlet formed around Helen, she grinded her teeth to keep from screaming at the pain of being burned alive. Oddly enough, there was no fire.

"Damn it!" Helen growled. She swam in the water, fighting the pain, making her way to Thalie.

"H-Helen?" The water around Kimi was glowing cyan. Her hair had bits of frost dangling from the strands, her skin and lips were blue. It was as if she was being frozen solid. "It's s-so c-c-cold."

Thalie could do nothing but just float in the moon pool and watch as her friends suffered great pain.

"I can't breathe" Rose clenched her throat, gasping for air. She was about to pass out but grasped Thalie's hand to literally keep herself afloat. The pain she felt was similar to an iron trap encasing her lungs.

But just when it seemed like the pain would never end, the moon finally completed it's magic over the water, ending the magic in the moon pool. At least until the next moon cycle.

"Guys." Zac's tired voice rang through the cave. "What's going on?"

"Save it, fish boy." Helen swam to Kimi who had stopped shivering and was looking less frozen. "We're here to save both of your asses."

"Wait." said Rose. "Where are the mermaids?"

"Ondina and Mimmi must have left already." Zac answered. "Are you guys ok? You shouldn't be here."

"Don't stress about us, Zac." Helen said to him. "Rose, help him get out of there. Kimi and I will get Thalie out to the tinny."

The blonde girl nodded and swam to the ledge near the merman. She grabbed a rock, treaded a little closer to Zac and started pounding on the ice cuffs.

"Are you ok?" She asked, pausing between her pounding. "You look really pale, like close to death pale."

"I was just gonna say the same thing," said Zac. "What happened? Is Thalie ok? Are you guys-"

"I think we'll be needing some counselling for that painful experience, but I think we'll be good to go!" Rose said chipperly, breaking the second ice cuff and Zac came tumbling on her. He was already healing since he was in the water but he would need time to get back to his full strength before he could swim properly. But he had enough strength to lift Rose out of the water and place
"I saw that big glowy thing around you." Rose rubbed some of the salty water out of her eyes. "What were they doing to you?"

Zac sighed, looking back to where Ondina and Mimmi were before. "Whatever it was, they blew it." He swam to Thalie. He looked at her and embraced her in a big hug. "Thals, are you ok?"

"She's in a state of total body paralysis and she can't speak." said Kimi. "But other than that, she is breathing normally, her senses aren't impaired and she has a steady pulse, so she will be fine. Although I recommend that we take her to Rita's, can you tell me how this happened?"

Zac rubbed the back of his head. "Mimmi got into a fight with her." He explained. "She tried to hold her off but Mimmi snuck that spell in. Look, you guys went through a lot of trouble to get in here but how did you know she would be in here?"

"One, we're her friends, smartass." Helen retorted. "And two, we were actually here for you." said Helen. "We thought Mr. and Mrs. Blakely were taken by those two mermaids."

"Oh no." Zac dragged his hand down his face. He leaned over and held Thalie's hand. "Thals, Mom and Dad weren't kidnapped. It was all a trap just to get to me."

"We have to take her back to Ms. Santos'." said Kimi. "I'm not sure if this spell is temporary or not so we need to get her home as soon as we can."

"Sure, I'll take her there." Zac lifted Thalie in his arms, but he struggled to keep a hold onto her since he was still recovering. A human he could lift up for sure, but the average merperson weighs about 234 pounds (the tail adds extra mass).

"Are you crazy?" Rose asked. "Did you hear what I said? You almost died!"

Zac chuckled lightly. "That's a likely possibility."

"We're serious, Zac." said Kimi. "Both you and Thalie need medical attention and you're in no shape to swim all the way back for 50 miles while carrying a mermaid."

"But I can carry her for a few feet to your tinny." said Zac. "Then I'll swim to Rita's by myself. Does that sound fair?"

Kimi and Helen looked at each other for a second before nodding to each other. "Fine." said Helen. "But the second you let go of her fin, go back to the moon pool, rest up until you're ready to come back. Then swim back to Rita's so you can get yourself checked up by her. Got it?"

"Got it." Zac parroted, scooping up his sister in his arms.

"Go slow, man." Helen cautioned her friend.

Zac nodded at the girls before pumping his tail and swimming out of the moon pool into the sea. With the moonlight still shining from the sky, he was able to find the metal boat in record time. Using his renewing strength, he gently let down Thalie into the boat. Before he swam back to the moon pool, he gave his sister a kiss on the forehead.

"When I get back, I better have the 411." Zac told Kimi.

"Of course." Kimi replied before starting up the motor and letting Helen take control of the boat so
An hour passed but the silence seemed eternal in the grotto. While Rita was healing her daughter, Helen and Rose sat quietly, both contemplating on what they would tell Thalie, who was worried enough for one night. In her own lab space, Kimi was running tests on her blood as well as the other girls' to detect any anomalies.

Since their exposure to the moon pool water, Kimi was curious as to how soon the first change would occur. For her, it was better to be prepared than surprised.

"Hey." Zac came in, looking less pale than he did before. But he still had some bags under his eyes.

Immediately, Helen marched up to him and proceeded to jab her finger in his chest.

"How come you're not in the Moon Pool, getting your strength back?" She scolded him thoroughly.

"Easy Helen." Zac pushed her finger away. "I'm fine."

"Do you own a mirror, because you're not looking fine!" Helen snapped back.

"I said I'm fine, Helen." Zac said to her calmly. "But what about you guys? Where's Thalie? Are you all ok?"

"Rita's healing her." Rose stood up, wiping off some dust from her hand. "Zac, even though you're a merman, you should see a doctor."

Zac chuckled a little, wiping some sweat from his forehead. "Thanks Rose. Though I think I have enough strength to walk as you can see."

"Well if you would like, I could give you an examination once I'm done with these tests." said Kimi, writing down something in her notepad.

Zac rubbed the back of his head. "I don't think I transformed for the first time until the morning after I was in the moon pool."

"It's not only that, Zac." Kimi looked up from her microscope. "When you were in the moon pool, did you experience pain like the three of us?"

"I don't remember much of that night." Zac replied honestly. "Just a glowing cave and the feeling of something heavy being lifted off my body."

Footsteps started echoing in the grotto and Rita Santos appeared next to Zac.

"Rose is right." She said. "At the very least you should sit down and get some rest."

"But Rita, I-" He was cut off by the scornful gaze of the school principal. Shuffling his feet, Zac begrudgingly sat down next to Rose, who gave him a comforting rub on his shoulder.

"How is she?" Kimi asked, running from her workspace, her lab coat flying behind her.

"I managed to remove the spell so she's able to move again." Rita announced to everybody. "But she will need to spend the night in the sea entrance, at least to get her strength back. In short, she's going
to be just fine. But she's asleep now so it'll be awhile before you can see her."

"Thank you!' Rose ran up to her and gave her a bear hug. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"Ok, Rose. I appreciate it." Rita laughed while the teenager let go. "As for you girls, Thalassa has
told me what had happened and based on your accounts of your time in the moon pool, so this is also
cause for concern. Girls, whatever powers you get tomorrow, you keep an open mind and know to
come to me at once."

"Why?" asked Zac. "What could happen?"

"When a human is transformed into a merperson, it's very uncommon for them to experience the pain
you three described." said Rita.

"So you're saying we're not going to be normal even by mermaid standards?" asked Helen.

"Yes but understand what being a mermaid means for you girls," Rita said worriedly. "Aside from
your powers, you won't be able to go to pool parties again nor will you be able to try out for the
swim team. One drop is enough to transform each of you. I don't want this to be a burden on any of
you, even Zac. But you must understand the responsibility that comes with it."

"Rita," Helen crossed her hands. "We went into the moon pool to save our best friend who tried to
save her brother Full moon or not, that's exactly what we did."

"I'm glad you are all taking this well," said Rita. "As for you, Zac, you were lucky to make it out
alive. You should head home for at least a few hours of rest. You should also call Evie, to let her
know you're alright."

Zac's brown eyes widened to the size of plates. "Oh crap. Evie!" He pulled out his phone and saw at
least 15 messages from his girlfriend.

Rita seemed to know what Zac was thinking, because a knowing grin started to make itself known
on her lips.

"You'll have to face her sooner or later, so I suggest you get it over with."

A pink tinge colored Zac's cheeks as he got up and told them, "Tell my sister that I want to see her
first thing in the morning."

"Of course," Rita smiled at her student.

But just as he was about to leave, Zac turned around, facing the girls.

"Rita's right though," he said. "Take it from a guy who was there-getting your tail for the first time
can be a shock. It's also scary and confusing but it's not completely bad. Are you guys sure you're
ready for this?"

Helen, Rose and Kimi looked at each other thoughtfully, each of them knowing what the other was
thinking after all the years of their friendship. Surprisingly, it was Kimi who got up and gave Zac
their answer.

"Fins or feet, we're willing to try anything."
Power Problems

It was Day 2 of the girls having powers. And to say that the day started out in a disaster, was the understatement of the year.

Helen was doing her summer homework and when she was stuck on a math problem, she groaned in exasperation, causing her summer homework to burst in flames. Luckily she put it out, but most of it was destroyed.

Kimi walked to her bathroom to brush her teeth. Unfortunately, she forgot what water could do to her now. As soon as she finished washing her hands, she fell on the floor, her tail slapping as a reminder of what she had become.

"Oh this can't get any worse." Kimi muttered in annoyance, she hand pounding the floor, resulting a massive wave of icy energy to spread all over the bathroom. In just seconds, it became Jack Frost's ideal bathroom. "And, it just did get worse."

Rose tossing and turning a lot in her sleep because she was having a nightmare about a horror movie, Unfriended she had stayed up watching all night. Just as her breathing grew heavier, a bunch of mini tornados circled in her room. With a gasp, Rose woke up, forever dissipating the storm in her room. Taking a look around, Rose was relieved to find that she was alive, but she also saw that her room was a field of disaster.

Meanwhile, Thalie had arrived back to the grotto sea entrance after my morning swim. As she lifted herself out of the water, I managed to dry myself. To test if she had any control of her powers, she lifted a ball of water and so far, it looked pretty good.

"Thalassa?" Her mother surprising the 15 year old mermaid, caused her to yelp in shock, accidentally causing a massive tidal wave to splash on her, which resulted in her being stuck in her silver tail.

"Mom!" Thalie exclaimed. "Seriously? Must you always make an entrance?"

"Well you should try to relax a little more." Her mother retorted. "From the looks of it, you've been stressing."

"You think?" Thalie snapped back. "With 5 normal girls turned into mermaids, I just can't think of anything else. They turned because of me, so I have to do something. I'm just...I'm just worried Mom." Mom rushed to her side and began drying her tail. "Mom, I can dry my own tail you know."

"And risk splashing yourself again when you can't get a hold of your new powers?" Her mother asked with her signature eyebrow raise. "I don't think so."

"Ok you have a point." The teenager sighed. Finished with the drying process, Rita stretched her hand out to help her daughter up.

"Thalassa, you have a right to be concerned about the girls' new abilities." Mom said assuredly, placing her hand on her daughter's shoulder. "But there is a bright side to this. Out of every situation, there is a good outcome, just as much as the bad."

"The only bright side I see is Rose accepting this already." Thalie muttered.

Her mother just simply chuckled. "No, that's not what I meant." She said. "I meant now your best friends have more ways to connect with you. And it means I have more students to teach."
"Why don't I teach them?" Thalie asked. "I know how they feel, I'm their friend, and I have enough years of experience. It's the least I can do after all they've done for me."

"I understand completely." said Rita. "But I just think it's best that you understand your own abilities before you help your friends. I don't think you're quite ready."

"I could help them." Thalie said, remembering my own transformations. "I went through what they're going through right now. They're probably scared, confused and hurt, because they will probably never be normal kids again. They're probably looking for a way out. But I'm not gonna let that happen to them. They helped me, so I wanna help them."

"Thalassa." said Rita. "Your need to help is complementary to people. You have a generous heart. But I know from past mistakes that a good heart can also blind you from reality. Your magic has just completed it's transformation, which means you cannot help others unless you help yourself."

"But Mom!" Thalie exclaimed.

"No Thalassa." said Her. "I'm serious."

"But-"

"And that is final."

In the Moon Pool...

Zoe, Sirena, and Ondina were all in the moon pool, discussing their situation with their failure to remove Zac's powers.

"So what's the plan?" Sirena asked.

"Plan for what?" Zoe asked. "We already failed to remove the boy's powers."

"I meant to change Evie, Kimi, Helen and Rose back." said Sirena. "You can't leave them a mermaid."

"They're not mermaids and they never will be." said Ondina.

"They still have tails." Sirena reminded the Portuguese-Australian mermaid.

"That's not our problem." said Ondina.

"We need to stay focused on what we came here to do." Zoe reminded Sirena.

"But can't you two see how hard this is for them?" Sirena pleaded. "I don't know how much you both know about land but if I must remind you that land people are around water all the time. They drink it, they wash their clothes in it."

"Yes we know." said Ondina.

"My point is, is that wherever Evie, Rose, Helen or Kimi go, they're all at risk now."

"Everytime one touches water, she'll transform." Zoe added.

"It's hard enough for Zac to keep his tail a secret, or even Thalie." said Sirena. "You both lived on
land for several years right? Imagine, in fact, remember how hard it was to keep your tails a secret, wherever you went. The beach, restaurants, even when you went to school."

"We were home schooled." Ondina piped up.

"Ondina." Zoe chastised. "Sirena's right. We should help them. Let's start with Evie first, since she's the easiest."

"If we couldn't remove Zac's tail on a full moon, how the hell are we supposed to turn Evie back?" Ondina asked. "Anyway, like Zoe said, Zac is the focus. Evie is low priority."

Sirena gave Ondina a questioning look. "Do you think she'd be a high priority if the mermaid council found out what you'd done? Or worse, your mother?"

Ondina frowned. "There is no need for my mother or the council to know."

"You were the ones that changed them, now you have to change them back." said Sirena.

Ondina was about to say something, when Zoe took her place. "Actually, there is something that we can try."

Interested, Ondina and Sirena leaned in to listen what Zoe had to say.


After a heartfelt breakfast, Thalie welcomed her friends in the house and they all went to the roof to hang out. None of the girls had gone swimming like Thalie had, even Rose, who was cool with having powers but she was getting used to the idea of having a fish tail instead of legs.

"This tail thing is a major catastrophe." Kimi complained, pushing her head deeper into her hands as she leaned near the grill.

"I'm with Big Brain here." Helen piped up. "I don't think I can touch anything anymore without setting it on fire."

"Guys, I know it's weird at first but I'm sure we'll get used to it." Rose said cheerfully trying to make the mood feel lighter.

"Rose is right." said Thalie. "Let's all just try to get accustomed to our new lives. It's not gonna be easy-"

"Damn straight it ain't gonna be easy!" Helen cried. "I can't even do homework without smelling smoke!"

"Guys." Kimi straightened up. "I had a 4 year plan. Get high honors in high school, go to a good college, and get my PHD. Nowhere on my agenda does it say, 'turn into an Asian version of a mermaid Elsa.'"

"Guys." Thalie said finally. "I know that things are hectic now but I understand-"

"No." Helen rose, literally fuming with smoke rising from her shoulders. "None of you understand, what it's like, to be, a walking, MATCHSTICK!" As the last word was yelled, Helen's hands and wrists burst into illuminating golden flames. If one were to be looking at her closely, they would have noticed that her eyes turned a color that was red and orange for a second before reverting back to brown. All of the girls gawked at her because normally when people would catch fire, they would
scream in pain and head for the hills. But Helen didn't. She was still breathing heavily, the flames rising with each breath. It was as if she didn't feel the fire licking her skin.

"Uh Helen?" Rose asked quietly.

"What?!" Helen snapped, the flames spreading to her shoulders. It was a good thing she wore a tank top.

"Your hands are on fire." Rose answered quickly. Sighing, Helen crossed her arms in annoyance.

"Ha ha." Helen said with enough sarcasm to knock a person off their feet.

"No seriously." said Thalie, approaching the flaming girl and pointing at her illuminated hands. "Your hands… are on fire."

Rolling her eyes, Helen brought her hands to her face, her eyes widening to the size of dinner plates.

"This is preposterous!" said Kimi. "You should be in pain, there's no way your neural receptors don't detect even the slightest heat."

"But it… it… it doesn't hurt." Helen said simply. Calming down, Helen's body flames died down. Kimi however was struggling to comprehend the events beforehand.

"This… this is ridiculous!" Kimi exclaimed, flailing her hands to some sort of scientific explanation. "The human anatomy cannot work like this! I mean, the body doesn't just generate fire when it is 75% made of water! I mean, your hands should be marred with second degree burns!"

"Oh get it through that thick head of yours!" Helen exclaimed. "Let me spell this out for you; None of us are human anymore! Ok? We're mermaids!" She froze at her words. "Oh my God, I'm a mermaid. I'm a freaking mermaid."

"Come on, let's hug this out." said Rose, hugging her best friend. "And let the healing begin."

"I guess you're right." said Kimi. "I mean, I've spent the last 9 years studying Thalie, er when she was Blair." I snorted at the mention of my old name. "I guess I spent some chunk of my life studying the impossible, never imagining, that we all would become the impossible. Different anatomy, different biophysics."

"What are we gonna do?" Rose asked.

"I tell you what we're gonna do." Kimi stood up. "We need to do some tests."


"I need to see how much fire power each of you have." Kimi said. "And what we all can do. It could help us control our powers."

"What's to know?" Helen asked. "Thals is practically water, you probably have Arctic breath, and I'm a walking fireplace."

"What I think Kimi is trying to say is that we should know just what we're capable of so we can avoid any accidents or mishaps." said Thalie.

"You're the one to talk when you can pop a tail at any minute now." said Helen.

"Ignoring that." said Thalie. "Kimi, you're the scientist, your tests. We'll follow your lead, as long as
"Relax," said Kimi. "I am a glad scientist, not a mad scientist."

We went to Kimi's house, where she had her own lab in her basement, after an incident with some chemicals she was experimenting that caused some of the walls in her room to disintegrate. Of course, her parents grounded her for a month and she eventually set up her own lab in the basement.

The first of the girls to be tested was Rosalina. She was instructed to go in a glass box that she gotten as a birthday present one time. When Kimi gave the signal, Rose began generating wind, starting from her hand. She flicked it and her entire body was consumed in mist, endowing herself with the appearance of a ghost with mist wisps emitting from her body.

"This is amazing!" Rose exclaimed. Rose felt like she was floating, like she could stay in the air for a while, even though a large part of her wanted to go in the water, to go in the ocean forever, and never leave.

Outside, the rest of the girls were busy being shell shocked.

"She's generating wind from her core," Kimi analyzed, checking the screen displaying Rose's vitals. "And her vitals are completely normal, even for being made of air."

"If we didn't feel the agonizing pain in the moon pool that night, I'd say this is the impossible." Thalie commented. Helen made a noise in agreement.

"I think that I'm living in one of those comic books." Helen muttered. Suddenly the monitors beeped loudly, indicating that the air turret was increasing.

"The wind is increasing faster than I anticipated," Kimi muttered. Putting the microphone on, Kimi said out loud, "Ok Rose, back it down."

But Rose was too fascinated by the wind she was creating to listen. "I can create more!" She exclaimed.

"Rosie just back it down." Helen said to her. But inside the box, Rose concentrated more, creating a great force of wind from her body. As the wind continued to howl, Rose started to levitate. But the force of the wind grew to strong as the wind started to break the glass walls.

"Rose, back it down right now!" Kimi yelled.

"Just in case we really have to," Helen said quietly before screeching, "DUCK AND COVER!"

"Thalie!" Kimi yelled. "There's a hose near the box! Use it!"

"But.." The red haired mermaid said, already fearing the consequences.

"JUST DO IT, GODDAMMIT!" Helen exclaimed.

With no second thoughts, the Australian-American half-blood ran over near the hose, dodging the first piece of glass that broke, grabbed the hose and sprayed inside the hole. But the problem was, there was so much wind, that the newly developed Omega was forced to use her powers, which to her, was a mistake because she had accidentally created a wave of water instead of a jet like she wanted to. The water ended up filling the tank a little but it was a good thing mermaids could swim well and breathe underwater. Thalie stopped the water flow to see Rose in her bronze mermaid tail, with pink highlights in her naturally brown hair (She consistently dyes it) with bright pink eyes,
emphasizing to the world about her new abilities.

"Buzz kill!" Rose said, laughing a little, poking out of the hole. "You guys… (giggle)… you guys are cramping my style!"

"Rose, you were at 190 miles per hour." Kimi snapped irritably. "Any faster and you're approaching 260."

"Sweet!" Rose exclaimed not seeing the point.

"No, not sweet!" Kimi exclaimed. "That's how deadly the force of the strongest hurricane recorded! So not only could you possibly suck the air out of yourself, but you could destroy everything within your reach."

"Got it." Rose confirmed with a grin. "Super wind: Bad." She finished with a double thumbs down.

"Alright Helen," Kimi announced. "You're next." The girls made their way to a table that had been stocked with equipment behind cabinets. Despite being friends for nearly a decade, most of the girls didn't have a clue of what was in some of the cabinets. Helen once joked that one of the pieces of mystery equipment was a death ray.

"If we're going to identify the exact effects of the mutation," said Kimi. "We need to isolate the recombinant DNA so we can activate the positional genomes."

"Come again?" Helen asked. "And this time, sprechen ze English?"

"We have to do a physical in order to see what got zapped." Thalie translated to her. She had decent grades, especially in biology so she could understand some of what Kimi said.

"Why don't ya say so?" Helen snapped back. Kimi rolled her eyes smiling at her friend, and took a flashlight, shining a light in her eyes.

"How bad is it?" Helen asked. "You know I used to be anorexic."

Nothing out of the ordinary appeared. Then Kimi tried what she dubbed, "Plan B." She took a feather and tickled it under her nose. Which proved to be a mistake as Helen sneezed, a burst of fire erupting for a short time before extinguishing.

"I guess we know not to have wool around you." Rose said, referencing to Helen's allergy.

"Noted." Thalie said with Helen agreeing.

Kimi hesitantly opened a cabinet and retrieved from it, a small blowtorch. She had almost dropped it because her hands were shaking.

"Why are you shaking?" Thalie asked.

"Because what I'm about to do is completely insane." said Kimi. "What if Helen isn't fireproof? What if I hurt her?"

"Oh to hell with the what ifs!" Helen exclaimed, grabbing the blowtorch from Kimi's hands and was about to light it on her fire when Thalie took it from her.

"Are you sure you wanna do this?" She asked her.

"Yeah." She replied. "Don't worry girls, I'll be fine." Thalie who was still unsure about her best
friend's safety, gave her the blowtorch and Helen lit it on her skin. The rest of the girls all yelped out of their instinct for caution, but Helen seemed unfazed. In fact, it was if she didn't feel anything.

"Do you feel anything?" Rose asked her. "Does it hurt?"

When she stopped, the fire stayed on her skin a few seconds before dissolving."

"It's incredible." Kimi said, taking notes. "Not a single part of her body is blistering. I mean she should be suffering from 3rd degree burns."

"The only burns I'll be suffering from are the ones from teachers." said Helen.

"How's the fire dying out so quickly?" Thalie asked in confusion. "It's almost as if her skin is absorbing the flames."

"That's exactly right." Kimi said. "When we were all in the moon pool, our bodies adapted to fit our newfound powers. I guess it makes sense that Helen's body is now fireproof since she had recently become pyrokinetic."

"Yeah pretty much what you said." Helen said quietly. Thalie was next, so the scientist hooked her up to a machine with the plastic sensors one sees at a hospital. In front of her was Kimi taking notes. Helen was at the bathroom while Rose was sketching, a hobby of hers.

"Thalie, since water has always been your thing, the way your power works is that you should be able to bend water vapor around objects, even people." Kimi theorized. "If you could control your emotional state better."

The 15 year old half blood frowned. "Excuse me?"

"I'm saying since water is a constantly radiating element, always taking shape, it could be linked to your emotions somehow." Kimi said. "Can you remember your exact emotions when you got splashed 30 times yesterday?"


"Ok is there any way to duplicate that?" Kimi asked, filling a large beaker of water. "Some memory or...?"

"I'm sure I can think of something." She said with a smirk.

"Want Helen to help?" Rose asked. "Since we all know anger is her specialty."

"I heard that!" A gruff voice sounded.

"Busted!" Kimi said sing-like.

Thalie concentrated hard on a memory, one in particular came to memory; when Nixie called her a Pigblood. That name was the most foul thing anyone could say to a halfblood, it made a mermaid like Nixie feel good, because children of mermaids and humans were considered toxic abominations, thus being the reason why Veridia, the mermaid who murdered Thalassa's biological father, tried to kill her when she was just 4 years old.

Unfortunately, Thalie overdid her anger and caused the water in the beaker to rise and splash the Japanese teenager.

"Kim you ok?" Helen cried out, rushing to the mermaid.
"Kimi, I'm so sorry!" Thalie pleaded. "I didn't mean to."

"It's ok." said Yukimi, drying her tail with a towel Rose got.

The scientist who tested all of them, was the last to be tested. She managed to freeze a sign but when she started to overanalyze and panic about her own bodily functions with these new powers, the room started to freeze all over. Fortunately, the girls managed to stop her from freezing anyone within the room.


**At the Ocean Cafe boardwalk….**

Zoe and Ondina walked down the boardwalk, on their way to talk to Evie. It had taken Sirena an intense amount of pleading to Ondina, but for Zoe, she agreed after hearing Sirena out. By letting out her old, she had allowed herself to feel a pang of sympathy for the land girl. Because Zoe (Khatha) Durant-Marino knew what it was like to feel that the world was against you. She knew what it was like to be Mimmi, helpless, subordinate and naive. But she did miss being kind, sweet, and overly curious.

"I hope that the girl will be more sensible than the boy." Ondina thought out loud.

"You do know that they have names right?" Zoe asked. "You know, Evie and Zac. And you call me somewhat antisocial."

"Oh and speaking of social." said Ondina, walking in front of her best friend and adoptive sister. "Maybe it's best if I went in."

"Why?" The Canadian 17 year old asked.

"Well considering that you managed to cause a scene yesterday," said Ondina. "And what Evie's going through, maybe it's best if someone...less sardonic steps in."

Zoe raised her eyebrows at this. "Sardonic?"

Ondina just raised her hands. "I'm just saying." She went inside the cafe, to talk with Evie.

While Zoe stayed outside, the 17 year old Portuguese-Australian mermaid went inside, to find Evie contemplating over a spilled cup.

"Evie?" She asked softly.

"Yes?" Evie replied.

"We met last night." said Ondina, walking towards her. "My name is Ondina Durant-Marino." But unbeknownst to her, a pair of ears perked up at this name, ears belonging to an 18 year old Italian/French-Canadian merman, Erik Consorzio. He listened by the counter, while he was making something.

"You're one of them?" Evie asked, now panicking. "Stay away from me!"

"I'm a mermaid." said Ondina. "Not a zombie. Don't worry, I'm not here to hurt you."

"Do you two have any idea what you've done?" Evie hissed. "You've ruined my life!"

"First of all," said Ondina, not noticing that Erik had walked outside. "We're technically not
responsible for...your outcome. You are the one who decided to swim into a moon pool under a full moon. But, we're all works in progress. Second of all, I'm here because me and my sister want to help you. We think we can reverse your transformation."

"Ok." said Evie. "Go ahead."

"It doesn't work like that." Ondina said exasperated. "We need a bit of time."

"Well hurry up." said Evie. "I can't even drink a juice without it wobbling and spilling."

"What?" Ondina asked. "Stay right here." She ran outside and grabbed Zoe to bring her back.

"What's the big rush?" The brunette asked.

"She's already developing powers." said Ondina.

"Really?" Zoe asked, curiosity dripping in her voice. "That's more than I expected. Evie, have you tried boiling liquid or shaping it?"

"I haven't tried anything ok?" Evie asked, growing impatient. "I just want you to make me normal again."

"Guys, this is a disaster." Helen complained, once the group got out and went into the kitchen to have some food. "We're like violent storm staking out in a human body." Just then, Rose came from the bathroom and swiped the toast from the toaster.

"Alright guys." Rose announced. "Let's go, I've got lots to do with my powers. Oh wait, I can't do anything."

"And I thought sarcasm was my thing." Helen muttered.

"Rose, it's imperative that we don't use our powers for the time being." Thalie said, before taking a bite out of her salad.

"I know. I know." Rose replied. "When you said that last time, my brain hurt an hour."

"I'm not even sure you have a brain." Helen said to Rose.

"You've been saying that for years." Rose muttered.

"What worries me is that our powers are evolving by the hour." Kimi said out loud.

"I know. I know!" Rose was bouncing with excitement. "I can already see myself flying."

But the girls didn't take her seriously as they all all stiffened a giggle.

"Rose you've had your powers for what, 24 hours, and already you're thinking of flying?" Thalie asked her with an eyebrow raised.

"Who wouldn't?" She asked, shrugging.

"Rose, the last time I check my biology textbook, humans or mermaids do not have a trace of avian characteristics in their DNA." Kimi explained annoyed. "In Layman's term's: You. Can't. Fly!"
"Yet." Rose said, pointing at Kimi, and then herself. "That's why I'm gonna be the first."

"Keep dreaming airhead." Helen muttered. "Keep dreaming. Hey Nerdbrain, what happens when our powers supercharge themselves?"

"If they continue to evolve, there's a chance we could be consumed by them." Kimi answered.

"Now, dying." Rose said. "That's bad right? I say we just let sleeping dogs lie."

"What is it Thalie?" Rose asked, the redhaired girl who was contemplating on her friend's situation, including Evie's.

"This is all my fault." Thalie whispered.

"No." Kimi said. "You can't blame yourself for what happened to us."

"It's not just you 3." She said. "It's Evie as well. Because of me, I ruined the lives of 4 people. I should have been more attentive, I should have done something! Evie may never be human because of me. I can't imagine what she's going through right now. She's probably scared and confused, wanting a way out."

"I'm gonna stop you there." said Helen. "This. Was. Not. Your. Fault. Things happen the way they happen. You can't stop bad things from happening even if you want to."

"You need to give yourself a break." Rose said softly.

"I just want to fix my this." Thalie said quietly.

"You can't fix this or change the past." Kimi said. "We can only change the future."

"So what are we gonna do?" Rose asked. "If we can't get ourselves fixed, what can we do?"

"Wait." said Thalie. "What if we went to Mako? Learn about ourselves there?"

"You want to go to the place that gave us fishtails?" Helen asked.

"Helen has a point." said Kimi. "It would be extremely risky since Mako is known to be unpredictable. Considering we've had our powers for 24 hours, we're looking at about a 70% chance of catastrophic failure."

"Which leaves a 30% chance of catastrophic success." said Rose in her optimistic tone.

"If we're gonna get some control over our powers, we might as well do it there." Thalie reasoned. "I mean we did get our powers there, and yes, the island is totally wild with magic. But think about it. We've all tested each other and we've got powers that are out of control."

"I still think this is a bad idea." said Kimi.

"Well at least things can't get any worse." said Helen. "I mean, we're all a bunch of freaks anyway." Thalie gave her a pointed look. "No offense."

"Alright." said Rose, putting away her dishes in the sink, carefully avoiding water. "Let's roll."


At the cafe...
At that point, at the Ocean Cafe, the Durant-Marino Duo had already left and Zac was comforting his girlfriend. Outside the cafe, a young Indian teenager was sitting at a cafe table, looking at his computer and typing away some work. His best friends, Raiden and Diablo were out swimming, though he warned them with the mermaid activity in place to be careful.

Even though the 15 year old merman never grew tired of the comfort of his technology, he wished he could have a friend, someone new to hang out with and play lacrosse, his favorite sport, well besides swimming. But unlike his friends and brother, he was too shy, whereas Xandou was more reserved to threatening silence, emphasis on the word threatening.

"Xhiva?" A voice broke him out of his thoughts. He looked up to see his guardian, 18 year old Erik Consorzio place down a plate of salad.

"One wakame salad." He said. "With a dash of lemon."

"Thanks man." said Xhiva, pushing back his glasses and starting to dig in his lunch.

"Where's your other half?" Erik asked the teenager.

"He's at Home Base." He replied. "Fixing the toilets."

"What happened?" Erik asked.

"Apparently somebody," said Xhiva irritably. "Whose name rhymes with Miablo, decided to clog up the pipes and make an explosion of water that drenched us all."

"That was him?" Erik asked. "That doesn't surprise me." He then went back inside, Erik didn't want to get in trouble with David, not after the first few days.

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In the ocean…

Amongst the radiant oceanic waves and vibrant aquatic life, 4 mermaids swam. One experienced and three in complete awe of their new perspective of the ocean in their very first swim as mermaids.

Thalie always looked over her shoulder, past the coral boulders that popped up from time to time, to make sure that her friends were there, and no one got lost.

Of course, Helen was there to pull everyone together. Rose had a short attention span so she tended to get distracted, sometimes easily, but each time she did, Helen would always pull her aside. As for having a tail, of course it felt strange to her. Sure, she was a diver, which mean using a monofin but the feeling of having her thighs and knees fused together, felt strange to her. Once a while she would forget that she had one limb from her waist and would try to move her tail apart before remembering that she didn't have legs.

Kimi was in deep fascination. Even with her best friend being part mermaid, Kimi wasn't that strong of a swimmer. It felt completely strange to be able to swim naturally. And what was more fluxing for her was that she could breathe underwater.

*But human beings can't do this.* Kimi said to herself. *We can't!*

**Remember Kims.** Rose's voice spoke out in an echo. *We're mermaids now.*

**What was that?** Kimi spluttered out bubbles in shock. She searched for the voice, but it seemed to
What the? Helen asked.

Wait. Kimi said. *Helen, I knew you ate my pizza!*

*How do you know about that?* Helen asked.

*I can hear your thoughts about it.* Kimi replied.

*Get out of my head then!* Helen yelled.

*Calm down guys.* Thalie said, pointing up to the surface. The girls surfaced, three of them still reeling in shock of their recent experience.

"Can someone tell me what in God's green name was that?" Helen asked. "ESP?"

"Sort of." said Thalie.

"So you're telling me we can read minds?" Rose asked. "Either that's kinda cool or it's an invasion of privacy."

"Like you shouldn't be the one to talk." said Kimi.

"Well I was the one who heard you talk. Not my fault your voice went in my head." said Rose.

"Well it's not really talking." said Thalie. "And as for reading minds, it doesn't exactly work like that. It's more like a way to communicate underwater for merpeople since we can't exactly move our mouths." She laughed a little at this.

"Well maybe we shouldn't 'talk' with each other until we can control our powers?" Helen suggested. "I don't want anyone getting into my head for now."

"Good plan." said Thalie. "Come on girls, we're almost there."

When the girls arrived on Mako, they had to roll in the sand to get their tails dry since Helen, Rose and Thalie couldn't risk anyone getting singed, have sand blown in their eyes or get splashed again.

"Alright. It's clear what we need to do next." said Thalie, watching Rose help Kimi up. "Everyone should go to separate places of the island so we don't get hurt by each other. While we're there, we're gonna try to learn about ourselves and our powers. Remember, don't get too stressed. Today is just one day."

"That sounds like a plan." Kimi agreed with me.

"Kimi will go north of here." Thalie pointed to said direction. "Helen will stay with me on the beach, and Rose will go that way, since that space has a lot of clearing." She pointed northeast.

"Who put you in charge?" Helen asked. "Oh yeah, no one!"

"You're right Helen." Thalie snapped. "Let's follow the other kid who's had powers almost her entire life and has a mermaid guru for a mom!"

Helen looked downward in defeat but still gave me a glare, saying, "you win this round."

"Anyone else?" asked Thalie. No one answered. "Alright, we'll have our walkie talkies. Let's go and
good luck."

Nodding, the girls all stepped off and walked towards their destinations. The girls on the beach maintained about a 50 feet distance from each other and 5 feet away from the ocean waves lapping at the sandy shore.

Kimi went in a small patch, the sunlight peering through the trees gave Kimi some visibility in the forest.

Rose went into the clearing, breathing in the lively daytime. She was ready but couldn't help but feel nervous. From being a regular teenager living with a minor case of ADHD to a powerful mermaid was a big step for her. But she knew she had to be ready.

"Everyone in place?" Thalie's voice spoke over the walkie talkies.

"Roger." said Rose.

"Right on." said Helen.

"I'm good." said Kimi.

"Alright guys." said Thalie. "The first step is to for now, let it go."

"And don't get any ideas Rosie." Helen snapped just as Rose opened her mouth to sing. "It's bad enough we had to listen to you go on and on singing that bloody ass catchy song."

"What our good friend is trying to say is that although we appreciate your enthusiastic singing, it does get irritating after hearing it numerous times."

"Anyway guys," said Thalie. "Good luck."

It seemed that letting it go was easier said than done. As soon the girls unleashed a small portion of their abilities, they instantly regretted it.

Rose got confused and disoriented by the mist storm she had created.

Kimi got trapped in the icy forest she created, her arms being caught in the shards of ice trapping her. She wanted to break free but was worried at the high calculated risk that she would make it worse.

Helen was at first trapped in the fire prison she had gotten herself into. She couldn't see or smell anything but the smoke and the flames. She ran out but had to stop because each step she took created more fire, then tripped on the glass she created and slid into the water by accident.

Thalie had gotten splashed with a mini watersprout circling around her. No matter what each of the girls tried, they made their messes well, messier.

"No!" She heard Rose through the walkie talkies.

"It's too strong!" Helen exclaimed, trying to calm down the flames.

"There's way out of here!" Kimi cried.

As the 15 year old Australian-American listened to her friends calling for help, she was distracted by the water's movements. And at that moment she remembered what her mother said from the other day.
“Water is the element of intuition and change. It’s a constant moving source, never maintaining one shape. To control the tide, you don’t just flow with the change. You must accept it.”

Hesitating just a little bit, she reached out and closed her eyes, allowing her mind, heart and soul to become one with the flow of energy around her. Sure enough, she felt something inside of her settle, like a storm was calming down. It was then Thalie realized that she and the other girls had a long way to go. She opened her eyes and saw that the watersprout was gone, but her tail wasn’t.

"That's it!" She exclaimed grabbing her walkie talkie. "I know how we can do this! Listen up, I think the reason why we haven't been able to control our powers is because we haven't accepted them. I'm sorry guys for what you have become, I wish we could turn back time but we can't change the past. This is who we are now, maybe this is who we're meant to be. We may not have had a choice in what happened to us but you all have a choice now. You can either let the power consume you or you can rise and take control. And the first step is by accepting that you are a mermaid."

Following her words, Kimi began to realize that this was the cold hard truth, that this was what she was and that she would be the unscientific.

Then again. Kimi thought. This might not be so bad. Or maybe it doesn't have to be inconclusive data.

Finally thinking with a clear head, Kimi focused on the ice surrounding her and thought of the science of ice. It was structured, it was sufficient and it only took a simple mathematical equation to figure out how she was going to get out.

The icy blocks trapping her began to shift down as did the ice cage she created. Soon enough, Yukimi Hamasaki, the newly developed Omega of Winter was free.

Helen took note of the fire surrounding her and began to let it in herself. Fire was fierce, aggressive, and passionate, just like Helen. Finally absorbing the hot element in her, Helen used her ability to heat things to heat her tail and sure enough she stood up, careful to avoid the glass ridges she created along the way.

Rose was having the most trouble. She struggled to control her power. No matter what she tried, the mist grew worse and worse and this time, winds started hitting her from every corner.

She reached for her walkie talkie and said, "Guys, I might need a little help."

"Hang on chica." said Helen. "We're on our way."

While the 15 year old Latina struggled to keep the air in, the rest of the girls searched for their best friend.

"Where is she?" Kimi asked.

"Gee, let's follow the mist trail." said Helen sarcastically, pointing to said mist.

"Thanks Helen." said Thalie. "And that was not sarcasm."

Helen just laughed. "Sure it wasn't mate."

As the girls approached, they were nearly thrown back by the sheer force of the wind.

"Let me try!" Kimi yelled.
"What?!" Thalie yelled.

"I SAID LET ME TRY!" Kimi shouted. She went in and said, "ROSE! TRY! TO! BREATHE!"

Said mermaid luckily heard it and sat in a lotus position, breathing in and out. Sure enough, the mist dissipated and the girls stopped holding onto trees for life support.

"Hey guys." said Rose. "Thanks for having my back."

"No problem." said Thalie. "So girls, what do you think?"

"Well this may not have been what we expected to become." said Kimi. "But I guess I can cooperate with it."

"Believe it or not that's progress with the big brain here." said Helen.

"How'd you do that Thalie?" Rose asked.

"I don't know." said Thalie. "I guess you just gotta know the thing to say."

"Which kind of brings up a question that's been bugging me." Helen said. "If we're Omegas, then what's to say of Evie?"

"I kind of doubt she is one." Rose spoke up.

"How do you declare so?" Kimi asked.

"Well for one, she didn't go through the excruciating pain we did." Rose answered.

"That's a valid point." said Thalie "Speaking of Evie, weren't you supposed to be at the café?"

"Don't worry." Rose answered. "I called saying I had to take care of one of my dad who came down with a bad case of the flu."

"Nice!" Helen piped up.

"So if we continue practicing, we'll be good?" Kimi asked.

"Exactly." said Thalie optimistically. "We don't have to be the best today but it's definitely a start."

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In the grotto…

While the Omega girls were trying to control their powers, Sirena, Ondina and Zoe were in the grotto, performing quite a risky remote spell to try to turn Evie back into a normal girl. But what they didn't realize was that the pink goop in the water filled jar was exactly the thing that was covering Evie, shoulder to fin.

Until Sirena began to feel that their spell wasn't suiting to their intent.

"What is this spell doing to Evie?" She asked.

"Restoring her to normal." Ondina said, exasperated.

"Then why would Zac try to block it?" Sirena asked Zoe, who was the mermaid performing the spell.
"Do you want your friend restored or not?" Ondina snapped.

"There's something wrong." said Sirena, running out of the grotto.

Ondina, dreading that Sirena might be right asked her best friend/adoptive sister, "You have tried this one something other than fruit, right?"

"Uh…" Zoe twisted her fingers while scrambling her brain for a legitimate excuse. "Funny story." She even chuckled a little but Ondina wasn't buying it.

"Mimmi." She warned.

"I asked you not to call me that." The Canadian mermaid groaned.

"Well I'm calling you that now because I'm still expecting a straight answer." said Ondina irritably.

"I'll only tell you if you promise not to get angry." said Zoe.

Ondina pursed her lips. "Alright. I won't get mad."

"No, I've never performed this spell on anything that has a pulse." She said.

Ondina didn't look mad. She looked like she was gonna burst a vein. She struggled to get words out so she settled for a string of vehement cursing in Portuguese. Being fluent in the language, Zoe knew exactly what Ondina was saying and it stung bad.

"I'm sorry ok?!" Zoe exclaimed. "Not my fault I didn't know I was gonna have to use this on a person!"

"Still you could have at least practiced." Ondina said. "People say 'practice makes perfect' for a reason!"

On the Ocean Cafe boardwalk…

"Alright fish niña!" Rose announced as the girls started walking on the Gold Coast boardwalk, returning from their training session at Mako. "Let's speed up those hungry stomachs! Back to the café! Lunch is on me!"

"Well nothing is better than free food." said Helen. "Unless it's moldy."

"Thanks Helen." said Kimi bitterly. "You may have just increased any possibility of me not standing dumpsters."

"Guys come on!" Thalie said clapping Kimi's back. "We survived our first day! And Rose is right, we deserve to celebrate coming over the first step."

But just when the girls went to sit down at the table nearest to the, the 15 year old Latina stopped as if something was worrying her. She could hear someone panicking and hyperventilating. But it was faint because of the people near her chatting.

"Do you hear that?" Rose asked the girls.

"Hear what?" Helen asked back.
"I don't hear anything." said Thalie looking around.

"Maybe it's your imagination." Kimi hypothesized.

"Maybe and maybe not." said Rose, getting up to walk inside the cafe and closing her eyes trying to concentrate. To her shock, not only did she find the source of the noise, she heard who was making that noise. "It's Evie!" She cried to the others. "She's in trouble."

"How do you know?" Kimi asked following her best friend to the cool room with the other girls

"Sorry, we don't have time." Rose said running to the cool room where Cam was standing in front of the door.

"What are you lot doing here?" He asked. "And by the way, this room is off limits."

"One, that's none of your business." Helen snapped standing in front of the girls. "Second, if you don't step out of the way, this whole café is gonna smell like barbecue."

"And what are you gonna do Carter?" Cam challenged. "Insult me like you always do?"

Immediately, Kimi, Rose and Thalie took a couple of steps back.

"This is not gonna be good." Kimi said, voicing everyone's thoughts. When Helen Carter was challenged, the results usually lead to certain death. And now that she was the Omega of Fire, things were bound to heat up. Literally.

"No Cam." She said, showing quite an evil smirk which sent shivers up Cam's spine, making him start to regret his risky comeback. "I'll just do this." She snapped her fingers and a flame instantly appeared on her thumb. Cam's jaw dropped to the floor.

"How...how the hell are you doing this?" Cam asked.

"I'm a human torch, that's how." Helen retorted. "Well." She lowered her voice. "I think the more appropriate term now is mermaid torch. So what's it gonna be?"

Cam, instantly giving in, stepped out of the way, and the girls went past the door the cool Evie trapped in her tail and covered in some sort of pink goo. Zac was apparently watching her.

"Wow Evie." Rose joked. "And I thought pink didn't look good on you."

"Not now Rose!" We all yelled.

"Did any of you do this?" Zac asked us.

"No." said Kimi. "We've been at Mako the whole time."

"Why would you be at Mako?" Evie asked.

"Long story short, we're mermaids now." Thalie said simply.

"Wait what?" Sirena asked coming inside.

"Sirena do you know what's going on?" Kimi asked.

"Fortunately yes." Sirena replied. "Zoe is in Rita's grotto casting a spell. It's supposed to turn Evie back."
"Well it's… not working." Zac gestured to Evie "I'm going over there to stop them." With that, Zac left the cool room.

"I'll stay outside." Helen spoke up with Rose humming in agreement as the girls went outside to help Cam stall.

"How are you mermaids?" Sirena asked curiously.

"There was this big fiasco in the moon pool." said Thalie. "And it gave my friends powers as well as awaken a power within me. But right now, what matters is Evie. Kimi, can you try freezing it off?"

Kimi gave her a heated look. "I appreciate the faith you put in me, but seriously? I acquired these cryonic powers more than 24 hours ago! This whole thing is still a dark area for me. If I try freezing this sticky substance off of Evie, I could freeze her in the process."

"Yeah, I would not like to be frozen please." Evie said.

"Hey Thalie, I think this is made of liquid." said Kimi. "Can you lift it?"

"I can try." said Thalie. She twisted her hand and tried to lift the goop but no luck happened.

"What if I'm stuck like this forever?" Evie asked, clearly panicking. "What if someone sees me?"

"Evie." said Thalie, silencing her. "Keep focusing on the negative and it'll come true."

"She's right." Sirena agreed. "We'll get you out of this."

"Not to sound like a Janice Raincloud but we need to be quiet." said Kimi. "Cam, Helen and Rose are stalling Carly and Erik."

"She's right." said Sirena. "We need to make it sound like none of us are in here."

Suddenly, the door bulged, with probably Carly struggling to get in. Luckily Sirena used her powers to hold the door. Yet as if by magic, which it probably was, the pink goop disappeared in a flash of light, along with her tail, restoring Evie back to human form just as the door opened, revealing Erik and Carly. After going with the story that Evie and Zac had a fight, the Omegas left the cool room to go back outside and try to give everyone space.

Unfortunately, the mental relief from the goo fiasco was short lived when Zac, Evie and Sirena came outside, with Cam secretly listening to them.

"Evie are you ok?" Kimi asked concerned.

"I'm ok." said Evie. "It's you four we're confused. How do you have powers? And why didn't you tell us?"

"Calm down Evie." said Thalie. "We were gonna tell you but since we saw you obviously freaking out, we thought we'd wait till you accepted your new life. But during our research trip to the moon pool on that night, we were exposed to some sort of energy surge from the moon."

"And we're a new type of merpeople." said Rose. "We're Omegas. Well, three of us became them and Thalie's Omeganess awakened when she was in the moon pool."

"You're Omegas?" Sirena gasped. "Four in one place! They're really rare, and clearly powerful."

"Hold up Sirena." said Zac. "Someone wanna explain to me what the hell are Omegas?"
"Omega merpeople are these special mermaids that can control an element, only one." said Sirena. "I've never seen one before."

"That's because we still don't know as much as you at this point." Helen said. "But as Kimi would put it, we will still be continuing to diagnose our symptoms."

"Symptoms?" Evie asked. "Hey, is this a disease I'm gonna catch?"

"Well if you would call having special powers is a disease then yeah, we got it bad and there's a chance ya might." Helen sassed back.

"Helen." said Kimi through gritted teeth and ice threatening to come out of her palms. "Not. Helping."

"What Helen means to say is that this isn't a disease but kind of a rather cool thing." said Rose. "Evie, you're already the coolest." She finished with a smile.

"I can control water." said Thalie pointing to herself. "Kimi can control ice, Rose air, and Helen fire."

"But why those elements?" Zac asked.

"Look guys." Kimi said finally calming down. "We went to the moon pool, to find a way to understand DNA, cure disease, and save lives. Well now it's our DNA. Our 'disease'. Our lives on the line. Thank you, no more questions."

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Later on the roof of Thalie's house…

"This has to be one of the craziest days of our lives." Rose proclaimed eating some pizza. The girls had called it a day and were eating pizza on the roof, one of their new favorite places to hang out since Thalie moved into the Santos Household.

"We've all been there." Helen said. "At least we're still alive."

"The question still is, why is Evie not an Omega?" Kimi asked.

"I think the better question is 'Rose, how could you hear Evie panicking?'" Thalie said.

"I don't know." said Rose. "I just heard her. And her breathing was in panic mode."

"Wait." said Kimi. "Her breathing. Guys, is it possible, that Rose's newfound powers have increased her senses?"

"Are you saying what I think you're saying?" Rose asked.

"Yeah." said Helen. "She's saying you've got wicked ears. Try and keep up."

"A new era is dawning girls." Rose said in her adventurous tone. "An era of our new adventures."

"You're already thinking of adventures?" Kimi asked sipping her tea.

"I think you've been watching too much TV." Thalie agreed chuckling.

"I'm just saying." Rose began. "With Thalie's tactics, your brains Kimi, Helen's fierceness, and my
new hearing, we could be… UNSTOPPABLE!

"Still we have to be careful." said Thalie. "We're still learning so much about ourselves with these new powers. We're still going through changes and there's so much we don't yet know. While I am glad that you've all accepted your newfound mermaidness, we have to exercise restraint.

"Relax Thals," said Helen, eating her pizza with victory relishing in her. "It's only the second day of us being fish femmes. I mean really, what's the worst that can happen on the second day?"

Mumbai, India…

Mumbai, a coastal city of India, one of the most popular countries around the globe. The Gateway to India. The Financial Center of the country's home to more than 12 million people.

But it is also the home of an fortune 500 company that worked into technology, chemical engineering, technology, and marine life. To the outside world, it was a cooperation sworn to help the people of the city with it's good grace and money. But in cold reality, it was home to one of the most notorious criminal empires known to all supernatural races, operating all around Asia, ran by an equally notorious figure.

Sitting in a very modern, very large, glass paneled building on the top floor, was a man about in his mid 40s typing away on his computer in his state-of-the-art office. Just like the empire he ran, he wore a mask as the CEO of Vyapara Industries.

But in truth, he was Agni Tiraken, one of the most feared mermen to ever live and was the crime lord or Godfather of the Kanhoji Cult.

Agni was a very handsome merman with hair neatly cut, tanned skin and dark brown eyes that were filled with authority.

Suddenly, the phone rang on Agni's desk. Sighing in annoyance, the merman pressed the receiver button.

"Sir." The receptionist said. "Someone is to see you with an urgent message."

"Send him in." Agni replied, shutting down the phone. He then got up to greet his guest. The door burst open, and a young man was thrown into the office by the guards outside. Doing as anyone would do in the Cult, he did a bow on his knee as a sign of respect for the ruthless Godfather.

"Ahavāla." (Report) Agni ordered in Marathi, the language of Mumbai, deathly quiet enough to send quite a chill up the poor man's spine.

"Ēma - , mājhīyā svāmī," (M-my lord.) The young merman trembled a little, but got ahold of himself in respect for his boss as he stood up. "Mako mišana vara ējaṇṭa ēka gōldā kōṣṭha Omegas cyā sighting dilī āhē." (One of the agents on the Mako mission has confirmed the sighting of Omegas in the Gold Coast.)

That took Agni by surprise, but it did not break his stone face. Not one little bit. "Kitū?" (How many?) He asked.

"Cāra, Consorzio mulagā vagalūna, mājhē svāmī" (Four, excluding the Consorzio boy, my lord.) The man threw 4 photos containing 4 girls, one Caucasian, one black, one Japanese, one Latina.
Agni took them and examined them with great interest.

*Why does this one look so familiar?* Agni thought. He was closely examining a photo of the young Caucasian girl with dark red hair and blue eyes. Yet she looked so familiar, he had seen so long ago.

"Adhika āhē." *(There's more).* The young man said. "Tē ēka kanēksāna āhē āṇi Riṭā Santos saha aquatinted āhēta." *(They have a connection and are acquainted with Rita Santos. One of them, the redhaired one, she was just discovered to be her biological daughter.)*

Rita Santos. *That bitch who had me rot in jail for 4 years because of her cowardice.* Agni thought. *And now after all these years you've finally met someone else and had a child.*

Taking the photo of the girl, Agni walked to the window pane of his office where he stood in deep thought.

"So." Agni began. "My old enemy is in the Gold Coast and training her own army. And now apparently her daughter. At last I can finish what I started so long ago." The merman let a smirk creep on his face. "Mājhē naukā tayāra." *(Prepare my flight.)*

"Hōya, mājhyā svāmī." *(Yes, my lord)* The young man complied, taking a final bow and exiting the room to fuel the boat.

Agni looked out into the city, back at the photo and then walked to his desk to retrieve from one of his drawers, a photo of Rita Santos, of 12 years old.

"I'm going to visit an old friend."
Discovery

Deep in the waters of the Eastern Australian Reef, the marine life was buzzing with its daily energy. The kelp forests were swaying in the sea and the manta rays at their usual busy swim, Zac had noticed, when he was swimming on that beautiful afternoon.

To Zac Blakely, even though summer was usually lovely in the Gold Coast, today had been exceptionally radiant. Not just in temperature and the ambient sunlit sky, but he felt like something big was going to happen today. Would it be a big date with Evie? Would it be Sirena's biggest song? He just didn't know.

But what he also didn't know, was that he was being carefully stalked by someone who was brooding about the merman. 17 year old, Ondina Durant-Marino.

Ondina knew she had a task; find the threat, and eliminate it. And she would never stop until the task was completed, not unlike any other task she had put her mind to. Even back in the Mediterranean, Ondina was known to be the most stubborn hatchling, always trying to be the best, always fighting to the very end. Not unlike Helen, she didn't realize this.

But for now, she was following the merman, named Zac, with calculating observations, trying to pinpoint his weakness.

She may have been the more calm and collected side of her friendship with Zoe, but even with or without her friend, she could be compared to a Great White Shark.

When she came around a slab of coral, she noticed the merman she was observing was nowhere to be found. Annoyed, she looked around her surroundings only to be surprised by a tapping of her shoulder. When she turned around to see the person who had tapped her, she wasn't too surprised to see it was Zac.

He just gave her a sarcastic wave while she just gave her infamous Durant Glare.

Zac shivered at the glare for a bit and then regained focus when he pointed a certain direction and the two started swimming off.


Thalie was reading a good book at the Ocean Café, letting herself enjoy the beautiful day as it came pouring down on her in its radiant sunlight. She put her book down when she heard someone coming toward her table.

"Hello." said Erik. "It's Thalie right?"

"Yeah." replied the 15 year old girl, pushing some of her hair back. "I'll just have a cheeseburger and a choc shake."

"What?" asked Erik. "No fishburger?" At the mention of the dish, the halfblood had to put her hand over her mouth just to keep from vomiting. "I take it you don't like seafood?"

"Uh, you could say that, yes." said Thalie.

He took a quick glance at her moon ring and left, muttering to himself, "Ironic coming from you,
Once Erik was out of sight, Thalie went back to reading her book. But as she started, she looked out into the sea over the railing, which always looked so beautiful in the daytime. So she got up and took a deep breath, embracing the salty hair and closing her eyes, wondering when she should go for a swim. Which was always a little hard for her to self control as she was part mermaid and the sea always called her.

And then it came—a burning pain starting to form in her palms. Thinking quickly, she removed them, which to her relief weren't burned. She looked for the source of the pain only to find a hand facing towards her direction—a hand crackling with electricity, that was attached to a boy unlike any she had seen before.

The boy was a tad bit skinny and he was wearing a short sleeved purple plaid shirt over a white one, dark skinny jeans, and athletic white sneakers. He looked about Thalie's age, and height. But it wasn't his clothes that got her attention. It was the bad-boy aura that seemed to radiate off him as well as the power that seemed to ooze off of him. Complimenting that beauty, were sharp cheekbones and jawline, a golden tan that matched the sunlight, and light brown hair with gold streaks. His confident smirk plastered on his face screamed, 'Keep an eye on this one. He's trouble.'

But the most striking thing about this boy, were his bright purple eyes. If you looked closely, you could see tiny sparks of electricity in them.

_Those eyes seem familiar._ Thalie wondered. _I'm sure I've seen them somewhere before, but from where?

"Are you serious?" The words slipped out of her mouth. "Slightly burning my hands?"

The boy in return just chuckled. "Well, how else was I supposed to get your attention?" He replied, his voice carrying a rebellious tone. "You were just ogling into the sea."

"You couldn't have just tapped my shoulder?" Thalie asked with an eyebrow raised.

"I did." Raiden replied with a sly smirk. "You were just mentally drooling of the ocean. Thinking of making out with it?"

"Aside from that," Thalie sat back down at her table with Raiden following suit. "Who are you, and why are you using your powers like that?" She lowered her voice to a whisper at the end of her question.

Raiden leaned closer and whispered to her, "About a couple of weeks ago, do you remember swimming out beyond the Eastern Australian Current and got the living crap beaten out of you?"

"Of course," said Thalie. "I have a-wait a second. How do you know about that?"

Raiden smirked, and opened his palm to reveal small sparks of lightning dancing on his fingertips, creating for Thalie, a series of flashbacks of that day. Which prompted her eyes to glow a bright blue and quickly grabbing the teenager by his shirt and bring him close to her, glowing blue eyes meeting bright purple.

"Um, sweetheart." said Raiden, noticing the bewildered stares they were getting. "You might not wanna do that here. Land people are present."

"First, don't call me sweetheart." said Thalie, setting him down, with her eyes fading in their glow. "Second, are you here just to gloat?"
"I can think of a few reasons why I'm here." Raiden retorted back, raising his hands in surrender. "One of them being, you've got a certain *qualunque*. And I like that in a fish girl." It didn't take a genius to guess that she wasn't impressed by his flirting. "Look," there's a lot of reasons for what happened that night, and to be honest, it's a little complicated. So I can't discuss it here."

"And this is you asking me for my forgiveness?" Thalie scoffed. "How charming."

"It's more like asking for a chance to chat." said Raiden. "Come on, give a merboy a chance? You do wanna know what happened do ya?"

The last sentence left Thalie in a stupor. This was the boy who put her in serious harm, mostly because he was the serious harm, but she couldn't help but see a chance for redemption. Perhaps that was because she found him to be quite handsome?

After a few minutes of heavy silence, she said to him, "Alright. Meet me at the park at 3. And I better not be set up for some trap."

"It's a date then." Raiden said with a cocky smile and getting up from the table. "Nice."

"Hold on here." The American-Australian 15 year old said to him. "I never said this was a date."

"No, but you never said it wasn't." Raiden said smugly. "I win, you lose. Simple"

As Raiden turned to leave, she tapped his shoulder. "What should I call you?"

The purple clad teenage merman just laughed in response. "Oh forgive me. Where are my manners?" He put his hand out in a shaking gesture and said with an accent, "Consorzio. Raiden Consorzio."

Raiden. That name alone was unusual but it seemed to command power. "Santos. Thalassa Santos." She shook his hand in a return gesture.

The boy gaped at her. "Wasn't that my greeting motif?" He put his hands over his chest. "You wound me!"

"And we're just getting started." said Thalie, walking Raiden to the railing. "So now, I win, while, you lose. And you're about to lose again." I led Raiden to the railing, where he leaned against.

"Is this the part where I'm supposed to be intimidated?" He asked, not breaking his tough facade for a second.

"No," She said. "This is."

**WHAM!**

Raiden went flying over the railing into the sea. Thalie figured he would feel her punch for quite a while if she sent him flying into the sea. *It was completely immature and childish*. She thought. *And yet worth it when it comes to payback. Especially if the person you're giving payback to is the guy who almost killed you.*

Then, she went back to her table and resumed reading her book, as if nothing happened, right when Erik came out with her order.

"Here you go." He said, setting down her plate.

"Thanks." said Thalie.
Just as Erik was about to leave, his trained eyes picked up some redness on Thalie's knuckles that was beginning to blossom. "What happened?"

Thalie looked at him confused until she checked out her hands. "Nothing, I hit my hands on the table. By accident of course."

"Right." Erik said in false agreement. He was no fool. He could spot a fight scene from a mile away.

Meanwhile, at the grotto…

When Zac had gotten dry in the grotto cave, he wasn't surprised to see Ondina literally almost on top of his tail.

"Jesus," Zac muttered. "Do you ever take a break?"

"No, I don't." said Ondina. "I never give up."

The 17 year old merman just rolled his eyes and trotted his way into the actual grotto, where he found a familiar mermaid wearing black leather boots, jean shorts and a grey crop top shirt. She was looking at some potion ingredients with keen interest. Sirena was standing behind her.

"Are you two gonna keep stalking me until I get a restraining order or what?" Zac asked.

"You mi compadre," said Zoe sarcastically. "Might call it stalking. Me and Ondina?" She looked at him with a smirk. "We call it getting the job done." Sirena shook her head at the Canadian mermaid in disappointment.

"Well watching over my shoulder for you two is really getting old." Zac complained. "What are we gonna do about it?"

"We came here to deal with a threat." Ondina argued. "Namely, voce. What do you expect us to do? Sit around plaiting seaweed?"

"If there's anything I've never seen you do Onda," said Zoe. "It's plaiting seaweed."

"Only Mai can call me Onda!" Ondina said annoyed.

"But Zac hasn't done anything-" Sirena was cut off by a woman coming in.

"Hello." said Rita. "You must be the new mermaids Sirena told me about."

"I'm Ondina." The blonde mermaid said. "This is Zoe. I assume you're Rita?"

"Yes." said Ms. Santos. "Welcome to my home. Which I'm happy for you to visit, so long as you respect my property." She took the box Zoe was inspecting from her hands. "How long are you two here for?"

"Until we deal with this merman." said Ondina. "Then I can go back to my suburban life in the pod."

"I've told them Zac's a friend." Sirena said to Rita who nodded back.

"The 13th cycle of the moon is underway." said Ondina. "The boy's powers will grow."

"She's right." a Japanese girl wearing a lab coat walked to a table on the far left and snatched a
"Theoretically, the moon's immense astronomical power has increased your connection to Mako. So, if my calculations are right, given the time until the next full moon, your next reaction to the cycle's power could be quite unpredictable." She looked up from her research to be met with faces of confusion.

Usually when Kimi got worked up over something that would involve an investigation, she would slip into something Helen liked to call, "Nerdese" and she would get so excited that unless had a PhD in biochemistry, no one could understand a word that left the girl's mouth.

"I was doing it again, wasn't I?" Kimi asked awkwardly, with the rest of the merpeople in the room nodding. "I'm sorry, you must be the new mermaids, we've never...officially met." She shook Ondina and Zoe's hands with nervosa. "I'm Kimi Hamasaki."

"Zoe Khatha." the brunette mermaid shook her hand. "This is Ondina DM."

"Pleasure to meet you." Kimi shook Ondina's hand.

"Wait." Rita who had gone pale, pulled Zoe aside and asked her quietly "Did you say Khatha? As in..."

"Those Khathas?" Zoe asked. "Yeah."

"That's not possible" Rita lowered her voice more so no one could hear her. "That can't be your name."

"I get that a lot." Zoe replied in the same tone.

"Zoe?" Ondina asked, getting the mermaids' attention. "Are you even listening?"

"Sorry." She apologized.

"As I was saying," Ondina continued, gesturing to Zac. "With this significant moon cycle in progress, the boy will get stronger. There's no telling what he'll be like during the next full moon and we can't take any chances of testing his power."

"Well if not an experiment," said Zac looking at Sirena's moon ring. "How about a preview instead?"

"Of course!" Zoe exclaimed. "We can create the effect of a full moon with a moon ring."

"You can't be serious right now." Ondina snapped bitterly. "What part of not taking any chances do you not understand?"

"Or we can wait until the real full moon." Sirena said "How many days away is that exactly? 2 days? Weeks even? You'll be so attached to your legs by then you won't wanna get rid of them."

Everyone except Ondina snorted at Sirena's comment. Even Zoe was impressed. "Sirena 1, Ondina, Zip."

Said mermaid was gaping at Zoe in utter disbelief. "What happened to Best Fish Friends For Life?"

"Oh that still stands." said Zoe. "But for now, do you want some ice for that burn?"

"Was that a pun intended?" Kimi asked.

Zoe just tilted her head and shrugged back at the girl. "Maybe."
"Now the way we're gonna do this-wait a minute!" The Winter Omega ran back to her table, and coming back with a silver briefcase. She opened said suitcase, and what was inside, was revealed to be a stethoscope, a syringe, an Ipad, high tech bands and headphones, a black light flashlight and several chemicals.

"Ok, I know you're rich, but how much allowance do you get?" Zac asked the 15 year old teenager.

Kimi gave the merman a pointed look and said, "Just get ready to experience the full moon. Sirena, might be prepared."

"For, what-oh!" Sirena took a deep breath readying her moon ring.

"Can I have some knowledge as to why you're putting these things on me?" Zac asked slightly annoyed that Kimi was putting on a heart monitor and several pieces of tape with microchips attached to them.

"It's your neural and cardiac impulses I want to investigate." said Kimi, attaching the electronics onto Zac's head, chest and neck.

"It's the what now?" He asked confused and slightly on edge.

"I'm gonna examine your pulse and brain waves when you're in exposure to the moon's power." Kimi translated as she was tapping her IPad to set up the experiment.

"You know what you're doing, right?" Ondina asked.

"Ondina does have a point." said Rita. "Yukimi, you have an extraordinary gift for science, but are you certain you have everything under control?"

"Well..." Kimi gave a nervous chuckle while setting up a camera on the table, facing all of the merpeople., turning to Zac. "I haven't really done this before so theoretically if this goes wrong, Zac, you may be either in an induced coma or have a grand mal seizure."

Zac felt his throat close up. "What?" His voice went a few octaves higher.

"I said theoretically." said Kimi. "You're gonna be fine. Trust me."

"Zac are you sure, you want to do this?" asked Rita.

"I need to know what's going to happen on the next full moon." said Zac. "I don't care how it gets done. I just wanna know if it makes me a danger to you all."

"What if the moon ring makes you a danger right now?" Ondina asked fretfully.

"One, that's what I'm here for." said Zoe. "And two, we can stop. That's the beauty of using a moon ring."

Zac nodded in agreement while Kimi got near the light switch. "Is everyone ready?"

"Ready." said Sirena. "Zac, are you?"

Zac sighed, brushing his hands on his arms. "Do it."

Kimi dimmed the lights while Sirena summoned the power of the moon ring to make it glow and immediately, Zac's breath was taken away by the little ring's power. But unbeknownst to Kimi, who was taking notes of Zac's increased blood pressure and heart rate, Zoe was showing the exact same
reaction Zac was having. But that shouldn't have been happening should it? Zac was the only one exposed to the moonlight and after all, she was past dealing with the moon spell.

"Zac, are you ok?" Sirena asked the teenage merman.

"It's ok." He said. "I can see Mako. I can feel it." Zoe's eyes widened as she realized that what Zac was describing was exactly what she was seeing, and that unnerved her greatly since she never had seen anything like this before, let alone have a vision. "It's, it's dark." Kimi took some more notes down her IPad. "I'm in a dark place, maybe a cave, there's a tunnel and I'm seeing rocks with carvings and symbols. One of them looks like a trident."

That set Rita on edge at the mention of the deadly weapon she remembered too well. Ondina however, decided to voice her thoughts. "The trident is a merman weapon."

"It was destroyed and with Zac helping tremendously." said Kimi scribbling down notes. Ondina kept silent while Zoe continued to experience the rollercoaster of visions and mixed emotions of fear and shock. Without even realizing it, she let out a loud gasp as she saw Mako during The Mer Wars as the mermen and mermaids fought each other.

"Zoe?" Kimi asked concerned. "Are you ok?"

"Zac, what's happening, talk to me." Sirena pleaded.

"There's something there." said Zac. "There's….something." His breath quickened and his heart rate increased on Kimi's IPad and in the midst of the whole thing, Zoe could feel her eyes begin to burn slightly as they started to glow a deep royal blue.

"What is it?" Ondina demanded. "Tell me!"

"Powerful…" Zac trailed off.

"Enough!" Ondina exclaimed, using her powers to turn the lights back on and using her arm to push down Sirena's, ending the simulation, and bringing Zac out of his moonstruck stupor. If you looked close enough, you could see that at the first 3 seconds Zac first opened his eyes, they were also glowing a royal blue but he shut them quickly just to get the sudden burning sensation out of his eyes.

"You ok?" Kimi took off the wireless sensors and shut down the equipment.

"I'm fine." He replied. "Thanks Kim."

"Why the hell did you do that?" Sirena asked a fuming Ondina.

"We're supposed to be stopping his connection to Mako." She retorted. "Not making it stronger!"

"Do you understand what Zac was seeing?" Zoe asked Rita, already curious about the whole thing.

Rita in return, just shrugged. "There are more mysteries on that island than even my friends or the wisest philosopher knows."

"I'm going over there. I need to see what's up." Zac declared, running up his way to the sea entrance.

"Not without us." Ondina butted in.

"Did you hear an invitation?" Zac asked coolly.
"We're not letting you loose on Mako by yourself." Ondina said firmly. "Deal with it."

"Nothing personal." Zoe said at Zac's annoyed expression. "We're just doing our jobs."

Kimi took off her labcoat, to reveal a teal v neck t shirt, jeans and sneakers. "I'm coming too."

Zoe looked at the 15 year old girl. "It's not exactly the place for a kid like yourself."

"I'm not a kid." said Kimi irritably. "I'm coming because it would be egregious to not bring someone with medical and scientific expertise."

"Besides," said Sirena. "Even without a tail, she's really gifted."

Zoe gave a scoff and said, "Ok, your funeral."

As the merteens left, Rita stayed behind wondering, if Zoe was who she thought she was. If she did, did she know about her family? If that were to be the case, then Zac looking almost exactly like her friend wasn't a mere coincidence.


On the shores of Mako…

Within the hour, all the mermaids/merman arrived on the beach and soon everyone was drying off.

"Uh guys?" Kimi asked, flapping her gold tail effortlessly. "A little help?"

Being the kind and sweet mermaid she was, Sirena immediately came to the Winter Omega's aid. "What's wrong?"

"It's my powers." said Kimi. "I can't seem to evaporate the water particles off my new...feature. Could one of you help me?"

"Like you have to ask." said Sirena.

"Alright." Zoe said loud enough for everyone to hear her. "Once we start walking in the forest, we'll have Zac to lead the way. But I'm warning you fishboy, don't try anything unusually stupid."

"Thanks Zoe." said Zac bitterly. "That was a really inspiring pep talk."

"So what are we waiting for?" asked Zoe. "Let's go."

"What about Kimi?" Sirena asked, still drying off her tail.

Zoe looked taken aback. "What about her?"

"We're not leaving without her." said Zac. "We don't leave anyone behind."

Zoe was completely perplexed. She had learned to survive on the streets so of course she was confused at having to wait for someone who in her eyes couldn't help themselves. "Why not?"

Only Ondina understood what was going on in Zoe's head, having witnessed her transformation from sweet and compassionate Mimmi, to cold and harsh Zoe. "Because we don't leave people. We talked about this, even if they're a liability. Remember? Rules of the streets, don't apply in the ocean."
"Is that what you would do if you were in a city?" Kimi asked, now completely dry and standing on two legs. "Leave me for dead?"

"If you were weak and injured, yeah." Zoe replied immediately. "If you had money on you and I was starving I would mug you. Then I'd leave." She turned around and walked in the forest, pulling on her trail a shocked Zac and a concerned Sirena.

"You know, you two remind me of Helen." Kimi said to Ondina. "Well, you more, but Zoe is like an ice queen version of her."

"She's been through a rough time," Ondina only answered. "So, she's...making progress."

With the sun continuing to beat down its warm glow on the Eastern Coast, the Mako gang continued to explore the terrain of the Mako Island forest.

"Merfolk aren't supposed to walk on sacred islands," Ondina whispered to Zoe. "Especially Mako."

"It was your idea to come here." Zoe reminded her best friend. "You were right."

"I was?" Ondina asked.

"If we're gonna break the kid's connection to the island," Zoe said, her watch on Zac akin to a fisherman on his bait. "First, we need to understand how it works."


"I think it's this way." Zac pointed northeast.

"How do you know?" Kimi asked.

"I can feel it." said Zac.

"You can feel it?" Ondina repeated skeptically.

Zac turned to face her, as did Sirena and Kimi. "Yes, Ondina, I can feel it."

When they turned to walk again, Kimi started walking with Zac. "Hey. So I guess it's not everyday you try to find some mystical energy source on an enigmatic place such as this."

Zac gave a soft chuckle. "I guess it's not every month, you become a fish girl. How is that going with you by the way?"

The teenager pursed her lips. "Honestly, I'm still coming to terms with it. I spent the past 9 years researching and experimenting the impossible, never imagining that I would...become the impossible. I mean, mermaids I used to read about in fairytales but then Blair came along and then turned into Thalie, the mermaid/human hybrid, and then I explored and researched every possible detail and story I could find on her people. Now, I've got ice powers and... I find myself in a conundrum."

"It does get weird doesn't it?" asked Zac. "Does it still feel like you're dreaming and you're telling yourself 'Get up, get up' but you can't because you don't want to?"

She looked at Zac in an intrigued manner; it was as if he was inside her head right now, according to Helen, her stupidly enormous head. "How'd you know?"

Zac only smiled at the girl. "Been there."
"Honestly, the magic of this island, defies all science." She said.

"Apparently so do your glowing eyes, while you have a scaly fishtail whenever you're wet." Zac retorted.

"Touche." said Kimi smiling.

As Zoe followed the group, she couldn't help but listen to Zac and Kimi's conversation. She also couldn't help but notice certain...similarities between herself and Kimi. No, she saw herself in her, everything about what she used to be, when she was Mimmi. Smart, curious, and always wanting to know everything. Everything about the two were similar; well except for the fact that Zoe had gotten a nice tan after living in Southern Waters for quite a while and Kimi's own skin tone remained it's snowy state. Ok, most of everything about the girls were similar. Even in their names. And that was one of the reasons why Zoe started to feel a certain pang of jealousy toward the girl. After all, she was everything Zoe had once was, when she was Mimmi. And then it was ripped away when Mimmi died.

"Ondina." Zoe whispered to said mermaid. "How old is she?" She pointed to the Winter Omega.

"I think she's 15?" Ondina replied.

Zoe frowned at her best friend. "Wait, how old did you say she was?"

"15." said Ondina. "Why?"

"No reason." Zoe answered quickly, dropping the subject of the fact that because Kimi was apparently extremely intelligent for a person as young as she was, it was hard to believe she was a 15 year old.

"You still haven't said where you're taking us." She said a few minutes later.

"That's because he doesn't know." said Kimi, already starting to lose her patience with the mermaid.

"Or he does know and this is all some kind of trap." said Ondina. "This is crazy, I am not taking another step!"

"That's fine, I didn't ask you to come." Zac said to her.

"Oh you would like that?" Ondina asked. "Just leave me here then!"

The reminder that her powers could freeze things was the only thing keeping Kimi from snapping at the blonde teenager. She had known her for a few hours and was already starting to get a headache from her.

They walked for a few more feet until they reached a large rock wall. Ondina said something but it was ignored for the fact that Zac put his hand on the wall.

"There's something in there." He said to the mermaids.

"And how exactly do you plan to walk through solid rock?" Zoe asked rhetorically.

"I don't plan to." Zac replied coolly. "That's why I brought Sirena. Would you care to do the honors?"

Sirena nodded and lifted her moon ring, it's power dissolving the rock and opening a glowing tunnel.
"I'll stay and keep it open." She said to the others.

While the others went in, Ondina asked Sirena, "How did you do that?"

"Practice." She replied coolly. "Be careful."

While Sirena stayed outside to keep the entrance open, Ondina, Zoe, Kimi and Zac went inside the tunnel. It wasn't like the trident chamber, it was longer and much more narrow than that. And all the while, it seemed to give off a mysterious aura in the air.

"Do you wanna tell us where we are?" Ondina asked.

"We are still on Mako," Zoe added on. "Right?"

"Sure." Zac slowly replied. "Just, nowhere on the map."

"I wonder what's in that tunnel?" Kimi thought out loud.

"That's a good question." said Zac. "I have to go through there."

"No!" Zoe had grabbed his arm.

"Absolutely not." Ondina added on.

"Maybe they have a point." said Kimi. "This place is an unexplored region full of variables and unknown quantities. I mean, beyond that tunnel could contain a surplus of X elements and-"

"Kims, you're doing it again." Zac held her shoulders.

"All I'm saying is," said Kimi, regaining her composure, and pulling Zac a little lower so he could hear her (she was 5'5) "Do you want last year to happen again?"

Pondering deeply on her words, Zac looked into the dark gloomy tunnel and whispered, "I'm going in."

Once Zoe and Zac went into the dark tunnel, Ondina pulled Kimi's arm and asked her, "What do you mean 'Last year happening again'? She asked her.

"Considering the amount of trust you have for my friend, I'm not sure that story is mine to tell." Kimi replied, walking into the ominous trail of darkness.

Maybe she had seen too much Star Trek with her brother, because part of Kimi expected to find something out of the ordinary, like a portal to another time. Guess again when they reached the end of the tunnel to find they found a structure, but it wasn't something they would find in a museum exhibit.

It was a large platform, surrounded by 12 blue bioluminescent pillars that looked eerily like legs of a spider. It gave even the mermaids the distinct feeling that this was no ordinary relic of ancient times.

"This is the place." Zac announced. "The place in my vision." He cupped his hands around his mouth and yelled, "Hello!" His voice echoed in the cave.

"If anyone's around, you just told them we're here." Ondina chastised the boy.

"I don't think so." Kimi ran up to the platform and examined it. "See the way the pillars are concave? This style goes back centuries, and since this is a hidden chamber, of course no one's been here for
over decades."

"Clearly a merman built this place." Zac took notice of the large trident carved in the platform.

They all walked around the platform, each inspecting the relic with a mixture of fear and fascination. All except Zac seemed to be moved by the presence of the chamber, almost terrified and waiting for something to come out and attack them.

Zac however, wanted to be in the chamber longer because of the way it made him feel.

"Can you feel it?" He took a deep breath and exhaled, feeling vibrations run through his body. "There's power here."

The girls looked at each other while Zac walked over to a pedestal that had 5 intricate symbols carved into the stone. One being half of a circle rising above squiggly lines, another being a triangle, another being a full circle that resembled a full moon, another being a ring around a dark circle, and then a small trident.

"What's that?" Zoe asked.

"No idea." Zac replied slowly. He waved his hand over the device board and the symbols glowed upon his hand's presence.

"Don't touch it!"

Zac retracted his hand from the board immediately, per Ondina's demand.

"I don't like this." Ondina muttered.

"It's ok, I'll be careful." said Zac, said, still waving his hand over the device board. He pressed the dark circle inside the ring and as he did, he heard Ondina cry out, "Stop get back-"

"Ondina!" He heard Kimi cry out. When he looked up from the board, only Kimi and Zoe were standing there.

Zoe Khatha's eyes instantly went from being calculating and perceptive to cruel and vengeful. "What have you done with her, you son of a bitch?!"

"Nothing!" Zac replied. "I swear!"

"Don't LIE!" Zoe pushed him, knocking him down on his feet.

"What is your problem, Zoe?" Zac yelled at her getting back up to push her back.

"Enough!" Kimi shouted, getting both of their attention. "Listen to yourselves! Ondina's missing and you're playing the Blame Game!"

"Got any ideas of where my best friend is? Because now is perfect." Zoe snapped.

"I don't know what happened." said Kimi. "And I'm sure Zac meant no harm, but fighting about it isn't going to help anything."

"Then where is she?" Zoe asked. "Ondina! Dina! Onde esta voce, Ondina? Ondina!"

But what they didn't know, was that Ondina was asleep in a prison built in the chamber's defense system—for any mermaid that tried to either trespass or take control of the chamber itself.
After a fair few minutes of calling out for the missing mermaid, the teens eventually stopped.

"She's gone." Zoe clenched her fists.

"It was not me." Zac repeated himself.

"Well something in this chamber contributed to her disappearance." said Kimi, walking and trying to recreate the scene. "She was walking this way and-"

"Stop!" Zac exclaimed, stopping Kimi from stepping onto the trident. "I don't want you disappearing too."

"Where," Zoe held back her raw emotions. "Where could she have gone?"

Zac thought deeply on this question, looking around the chamber. "This is a merman place. Maybe it doesn't want mermaids inside."

They went outside of the tunnel to find only Sirena, who was still holding her moon ring out in order to keep the tunnel entrance open.

"Where's Ondina?" She asked fretfully.

"We were gonna ask you the same question." Zac told her. "Have you seen her since she went in?"

"No." Sirena replied, closing the tunnel.

"Crap, crap, crap." Zoe ran her fingers through her hair. "Ondina!"

"Maybe we all have a higher chance of finding her." said Kimi. "We should split up, meet back here in 45 minutes."

With that, everyone took off, calling out for Ondina. Trying every path they could to try to find her.

In the forest…

Kimi was searching for Ondina, calling for her name everywhere she went. Yet it seemed like no trace of her was ever to have been found. She wished she had a moon ring, or some kind of potion to help her out-

"OMPF!" She looked up to realize she bumped into Zoe.

"Watch it, kid!" Zoe exclaimed.

"Sorry." Kimi mumbled silently. Zoe just looked at her and continued to walk until Kimi asked, "Why are you doing this? I mean, I only just met you today, but you seem like a smart girl."

Zoe had always done her job as a bounty hunter to support her foster parents, and after she ran away, she just collected knowledge, potion items and even a few bucks to support herself. But was it ever enough?

"Veridia says he screwed her so that means I gotta make an example out of him." Was all Zoe said.

Kimi raised an eyebrow. "And that satiated your curiosity?"
Zoe narrowed her grey eyes at the girl. "I don't ask questions."

"See, I don't believe that." said Kimi. "Even Einstein always had questions."

"My only question is why didn't Veridia just deal with Zac herself in the first place?" She asked in a very icy tone.

"It's the same reason she needs him powerless." said Kimi. "Because only he can control the merman chambers of Mako."

That remark got the Northern mermaid's attention because as soon as those words reached her ears, a heavy silence weighed upon the air.

"Wait, what?"

After a period of time looking for their friend, Zac and Sirena both came back to the sealed secret tunnel entrance, all empty handed, literally.

"I never found her." said Zac.

"Same here." said Sirena.

"We think we may have a way to get her back." said Zoe. "It was actually the Ice Queen's idea."

Kimi scoffed. "You should talk." She muttered.

"What?" Sirena asked.

"Nothing." said Kimi. "Zac, you unintentionally made the chamber transport her somewhere right? What if you used the same method to bring her back?"

"But think of the risks." said Sirena. "What if you all disappear and never come out?"

"Sirena, this is our best chance of getting Ondina back." said Zac. "We have to take the risk, if it means saving someone. Look at it this way, it can't possibly make any things worse."

Nodding reluctantly, Sirena used her moon ring, and opened the chamber.

"I'll stay outside in case she comes out here." said Kimi while Zac and Zoe went inside the glowing tunnel.

"So," said Sirena, keeping concentration. "I guess you've really met Zoe."

"I've known her for 2.4 hours and already she hates me." said Kimi. "And I can't come up with a reasonable answer for why."

"I don't know her that well." said Sirena. "She only came to the pod last year. She's a rather...complicated mermaid, like Ondina."

"Any idea what made her like this?" Kimi asked.

"From what I can tell, Zoe used to be a sweet girl." said Sirena. "Then something terrible happened to her."
"What happened?"

Sirena sighed sadly. "Not even Ondina knows."

In the jungle...

Erik was walking in the woods, acting his part of the mission he was assigned by Slade; to find any source of Mako that would help him conquer the island. He kept searching and searching but couldn't seem to find anything. That is, until he saw a glowing light near him.

"What is that?" He whispered to himself, walking to where the light was. But when he got to where the light came from, he didn't find it, but he found someone who he believed to be a ghost for a second, but then when he looked more closely at the girl, he realized that this was all too real.

That hair. Erik thought. That nose, could it be?

"Mmm?" Ondina stirred. When she opened her eyes, Erik knew it was his childhood friend, who had moved from his "neighborhood" over a decade prior. Ondina hadn't frequented the cafe much so of course it was only now that he would recognize her. But frankly, merpeople didn't have mirrors or photographs so he wouldn't be too surprised if she didn't recognize him.

"How did I get here?" Ondina asked.

"Don't you know?" Erik asked.

"You're that new waiter, right?" Ondina asked. "What are you doing here?"

"Exploring but then I saw you." said Erik. "I have to say I'm not surprised you don't remember me but I'm also a little disappointed."

"Why would I remember you?" Ondina asked. "I hardly know you."

Erik raised an eyebrow and crossed his arms. "Is that so? Dinie?"

"Dinie?" Ondina asked, heading to walking back. "It's funny, no one's called me that since..." She turned around and looked at the merman as if she were truly seeing him for the first time. "Erik? Is it...really you?"

"Yes it is, Ondina." said Erik. "It is."

"Oh!" Ondina ran into him and hugged her long lost friend, with a few tears dripping down her face. "I missed you so much!"

"Me too!" Erik exclaimed, holding the teenager in his arms. "I can't believe you're here! I mean, look at you! What happened to those freckles I used to tease about?"

"Oh and that reminds me." said Ondina, before lightly punching him in the shoulder. "I owed you that one for 10 years."

Erik laughed. "Yet you still hit like a piece of kelp."

"Oh?" Ondina asked. "Says the merman who used to have noodle arms and big ears that I used to put seaweed in?" Ondina retorted.
"What can I say?" Erik asked, raising his hands. "I finally hit puberty. You're lucky that our tears don't trigger our tails because I would not have been amused." Erik pointed to his shirt that had a wet spot on his shirt, that didn't affect him since merfolk tears had a special chemical in them so even if someone were to throw a bucket of a mermaid's tears on another merperson, that merperson would still be standing.

"Believe me," said Ondina. "There's a lot that's happened, but speaking of which. The clan…" Erik looked down, his mind briefly replaying that horrible night. "I heard what happened to your parents...how did you survive? And Raiden, is he?"

"He's fine." said Erik promptly. "In fact, he's more than fine. He's a young healthy teenager. I'm just glad you were able to get out before that night happened."

"I'm so sorry." said Ondina hugging him. "I can't begin to understand what the past 10 years have been like for you two."

"Well they were bad and not so bad." said Erik. "It's complicated."

"I can imagine." She said.

"Ondina!" They heard Zoe's voice call out.

"I better go." said the mermaid. "That was Zoe. She and the others must be waiting-"

"What others?" Erik asked her. "Who else is here? And who's Zoe?"

"I came here on a mission." said Ondina. "Long story. As to who Zoe is, long story short, she's my foster sister."

"Foster sister?" Erik repeated.

"I have to go." said Ondina. But just as she turned to leave she said to her old friend, "Ho davvero perso te." (I've really missed you.)

Erik smiled at her. "Mi sei mancato anche il mio amico." (I've missed you too my friend.)

Watching Ondina meld into the trees, Erik wondered, if he should meet her again. If he did, what would they say to each other. Their pasts would probably be a touchy subject, particularly to Erik himself. But either way, 10 years had passed and even Ondina knew they certainly weren't the small mischievous children plotting their next adventure.

Back to the chamber entrance...

When they came out of the tunnel, Zac tried calling out for Ondina, but no one arrived.

"It didn't work." He said.

"Obviously." Zoe said with venom laced in her voice.

"What about Rita?" Kimi suggested. "She might have an idea."

It seemed like their friend was lost forever until...

"Ondina!"
Sirena spotted the teenager walking out of the woods, looking as if nothing happened to her, save for some leaves in her hair.

Zoe hugged her best friend and lifted her in the air. "Oh, Ondina!" She grabbed her shoulders. "What were you thinking, don't ever do that again!"

"Zoe, I'm fine." Ondina said.

"Where were you?" Kimi asked. "We searched a third of the island looking for you."

"I woke up in the jungle." said Ondina, and then turned to Zac with anger gracing her face. "You lied to us, you said you didn't know what that place was."

"I swear, I don't." Zac pleaded. "What happened to you was a complete accident."

"Sure." Ondina replied sarcastically.

"It really was." said Kimi.

"Icy, shut up." Zoe snarled, earning an appalled look from Sirena.

"We need to go." She said to try to ease the tension.

"We sure do." said Ondina. "And don't you even think about coming back."

Zoe advanced on him but Ondina pushed her back lightly saying, "I got this."

The next thing Zac knew, he was on the ground in pain, the pain he was feeling from Ondina's blow to his batteries, or as where another might refer to where the sun don't shine.

"What the hell?!" He shouted.

"That's payback, dumbass." He heard Ondina growl.

"Zac!" Sirena exclaimed, helping him up with Kimi's aid. "Are you ok?"

As he got up, he gave a heated glare at the girls, who were giving each other a high five as they trekked down the forest.

"Bitch." He muttered with annoyance.

Kimi wasn't sure which of the duo he was referring to, but she decided to drop it and not further the humiliation her friend was suffering.

At the Gold Coast City Park…

Thalie paced near the bench, where she set up some pizza for refreshments. She had never been more nervous in her life, coming face to face with a killer before.

Even though technically she had been almost murdered 11 years earlier, she had never met Veridia before in her life. So in reality, Thalassa had no idea what to do in the meeting she was going to have with the merman.

What would she do? What would she say to the person who blasted her down with lightning,
weakening her and putting her near death's clutches? And more importantly what would she say, to the person who was the same age as you and held a knife above her ready to kill her? She was terrified that night of course, but she still had no idea why she still wasn't in a casket, 6 feet in the ground.

"Pizza!" She heard a male voice. "Gotta love this stuff."

She turned around and it was Raiden, wolfing down on a couple of slices.

"I'm glad you came." said Thalie, sitting down.

Raiden groaned. "Love that song."

Thalie chuckled softly. "Raiden, you remember why I called you here, right?"

"Of course." The 15 year old teenager wiped his mouth with his shirt. "I always keep my promises. But first, before you make some excuse that us mermen are the bad guys, why don't you get those curls out of those cute ears and listen to my side of the story?"

"Fair enough." Thalie set a slice of pizza on her plate, but didn't pick it up to eat it.

"I come from a very..hostile tribe. Know what that is?" He took a bite out of his pizza.

"Yes." said Thalie bluntly.

"Yeah, well, there was a raid. Apparently my tribe is not so fond of mermaids and they aren't so fond of us, so I was on Guard Duty, when I happened to notice you coming along, and I shot you down."

"And you thought I was a threat." said Thalie.

Raiden made a sound of satisfaction. "Brains and beauty. I like that in a woman. Although now I'm not to sure about the brains. Why would you go near Neptune Island? Haven't you heard the stories?"

"I was swimming out there because I was visiting my aunt's pod and I couldn't sleep so I decided to take a swim to clear my head." She explained. "I didn't know about Neptune Island."

"I can see why." said Raiden. "Being the only half human on the planet, that must mean you still don't know the depths of your natural habitat."

"Yeah." Thalie's gaze faltered. "I guess."

"But anyway," He said "Any questions?"

"Only one." Thalie said after a pregnant pause. "Why didn't you do it?"

Raiden looked up with confusion gracing his face. "Didn't do what?"

Thalie gave him a glare. "You know what I mean. My memory may be a little fuzzy, I may have been badly hurt, but I still have scars from when you struck me with lightning and I still recall you holding a knife above me, ready to kill, and then the next thing I knew, I was in my house, still alive. So why was I?"

Raiden's confusion switched to disbelief and outrage. "You know, for a half mermaid, you should be a little more grateful that I spared your life."
"That's what I'm trying to find out." said Thalie. "Why did you spare my life? Why didn't you just kill me when you had the chance? Why did you let me go?"

"Oh for the love of!" Raiden cursed under his breath. "Fine, you want your answer? Here's your answer-I was a coward, I was weak, and I couldn't kill you because I didn't have the balls!"

Without another word, he took off running into the canal that led straight to the ocean.

Thalie looked at the water for a short time then moved to clean her lunch from the table. While she was doing so, she couldn't stop thinking about the mysterious merboy that had just left. He carried an air of macho coolness but even Thalie could tell that he had a lot on his shoulders, and he must have gone through a lot. Either way, she knew it wouldn't be the last time she would see the boy.

*I've seen the outer shell.* Thaile thought to herself as she looked out into the canal. *But who are you, Raiden Consorzio?*

At the Grotto…

"Mako's a mermaid island." said Zoe, while being in a meeting with Sirena, Ondina and Rita. Kimi wasn't there because Ondina didn't want a wannabe messing up their mission. Same with Zac, except Zoe didn't want their target interring in their plans.

"Mako didn't always belong to us." said Rita. "During the Mer Wars, there was a great battle fought over control of the island and the mermen won. So the place you saw must have been a relic of those times."

"And now Zac's presence has activated it." Ondina finished the elder mermaid. "I told you guys the moon ring was a bad idea-see what happens when you don't listen to me?"

"Let's not fight, please." said Rita, trying to diffuse the tension.

Ondina huffed softly. "All I'm trying to say is that instead of severing Zac's connection to the island, we've just made it stronger."

*This feels familiar.* Sirena mused to herself, reminiscing in a failed plan a year earlier when she and her friends Nixie and Lyla had attempted to remove Zac's powers during his first full moon. It wasn't the best plan then, seeing as Zac went to Mako anyway, but it was better than no plan at all.

"We need to keep an eye on him." Zoe declared. "24/7, cause who knows what could happen if he actually brings that place to life."

"Zoe's got a point." said Ondina. "We need to make sure he never does it again. Ever."

"Zoe?" Sirena piped up. "When Zac had his visions about Mako, I noticed you were acting a little odd. Is everything alright?"

"Yeah." Zoe quickly said. "Yeah, I'm fine."

But Rita wasn't convinced. "Girls, why don't you go back to Mako and get some sleep? And Zoe, would you mind staying behind for a chat?"

The 17 year old Canadian girl looked at the other mermaids and said, "It's ok. I'll be fine."
With that, Sirena and Ondina ran off to the grotto entrance, leaving the other mermaids in the grotto.

"So why'd you want to talk to me?" Zoe asked. "Do you know something about where Ondina disappeared?"

"Actually, I wanted to talk about what happened after Ondina returned from her predicament." said Rita. "Sirena told me that you went to do something to Zac but Ondina apparently followed your lead and kicked him down?"

"I was gonna slap him and Ondina's way was extreme but it kinda works." said Zoe.

"You agree that Ondina's way was extreme but you don't agree that you girls did a spiteful and childish thing for no reason?" Rita asked her incredulously.

"He deserved it." said Zoe. "He could have gotten my friend hurt."

"There's always going to be some people who will disagree with your methods." said Rita. "Are you gonna kick them in the private parts?"

"Like I said," said Zoe. "I would have done it lower than that because I know how to keep my cool."

"What would your parents think if they saw you acting like you know everything and can do anything?" asked Rita.

Zoe scoffed. "Phoebus and Esme, yeah they would have given me the lecture of the my life and ground me for a week or three. But my birth parents? Forget it."

Rita took all the time she had, to look in the teenager's eyes; which had a certain ambience that broke Rita's heart to feel, let alone look at. It had a certain broken and lonely quality that seemed to be masked by Zoe's sardonic and sarcastic attitude.

No teenager should have to carry whatever burden of that amount. Rita thought to herself.

"I see myself in you Zoe." said Rita. "A lot of myself. Even in the sea, it's hard at your age to struggle to make good life choices. And I know you're brilliant and talented, so I don't want to see you throw away what you can offer to the world. I just expected more out of you."

After a minute's worth of a heavy silence, Zoe turned around and ran to the grotto pool, diving into the water, completely unaware that Ondina was listening to the conversation invisible.

In the Hamasaki House…

Kimi sat at her computer looking over the footage of the full moon simulation as well as the results of Zac's cardiac and respiratory reaction. It looked like some of Zac's natural bodily responses had now become connected with the moon's pull. All of the research she did seemed to make sense until that day, when something seemed a little off. Or rather someone else seemed a little off.

Zac was the only one in the vicinity of the moon ring, so why was Zoe experiencing the same results?

Sighing in frustration, she switched on her recorder and started to explain her discovery of the day.

"This is Yukimi Hamasaki." She spoke into the recorder. "Log entry 214. August 13th 2015, 9 pm, Australian Eastern Standard Time. I am now looking over the results of the full moon simulation
from earlier today. In this simulation, I have tested the subject, Zachary Mark Blakely to the power of a stimulant full moon in order to test the subject's cardiac response to the lunar force. So far we have seen 4 distinct phases of the exposure.

Phase 1, the subject's breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure all increase as the body tries to accustom to the power of the moon.

Phase 2, the subject's occipital and temporal lobes' activity have increased by about 64%.

Phase 3, the subject's brain activity has taken paranormal experience as the subject seems to gain clairvoyant and remote vision sight.

Phase 4, the subject's brain seems to lock on a specific place. Subject shows signs of fatigue, déjà vu, and confusion.

But now it seems we're entering Phase 5, other people apparently sharing this vision. In the footage, it appears that Zoe, one of my acquaintances has had a similar reaction to the moon. It would appear that the activity in both Zac and Zoe's insular cortex's have increased by about 49.95%. Is it possible Zac and Zoe's had the same vision at the same time? Was I recording actually synchronized neural activity? Now, for this whole observation, I can only ask one question."

Sighing, Kimi put down her glasses and looked at the computer, whispering,

"What the hell is going on here?"
No one's POV

In a warehouse…

In the center of the warehouse, a man in a red ninja suit with spikes on the leather armor, sat in the middle meditating. Behind him, a young Korean boy about 16 sneaked behind him, raising his sword to strike. As if he could see in the back of his head, the clad red ninja grabbed the sword up and performed a back kick to his attacker. 2 more boys snuck up to attack but ended up getting defeated with a few punches. With that, the red ninja's training was complete. The door opened in the room, revealing a black man in his 20's in front of a desk. Behind the desk was a Hindi man in his early 40's.

"My lord." The red ninja addressed the man as he kneeled before him.

"I trust that one of my greatest pupils has been using his time wisely." The ever mysterious voice of Agni Tiraken spoke.

"I have assembled an army of mermen." The red ninja spoke. "The Kanhoji Cult awaits your orders."

Agni smiled a little. "Excellent. Because I have discovered an old enemy living in the Gold Coast. Rita." Before Agni said her name, the black man threw a photo of a 16 year old Rita Santos on the floor.

"Rita?" The red ninja asked. "As in Rita Santos?"

"She is training Omegas of her own." Agni said. "Finally. I will have my revenge from all those years ago. I want her and those Omega brats wiped out."

"I will not fail you master." The red ninja said.

"I know." Agni replied. "But to be certain, you will work alongside Xever." The black man, twirling his pocketblade smiled in great pride.

"I don't need any help." The red clad ninja spoke. "Especially from this street rat."

"Are you sure rich boy?" Xever asked in his thick Brazilian accent.

The red ninja readied to fight. "Anytime you want to face me and…"

"I am not interested in your petty rivalry!" Agni snapped at the two men. "Xever is familiar with the dark underbelly of any city. You will work together."

"Don't worry my lord." The red ninja said. "We will find Santos and her disciples. And destroy them." Xever scoffed at him as he walked out.

"Leave Xever." Agni commanded.

Xever bowed. "Yes my lord."

After Xever left, Agni called out, "Tae."
"nae ju ne?" (Yes my lord?) Tae answered in his native tongue, Korean.

"lita santeeurul chaj-Abosibsio. geuligo geunyeo neun jogeum ppalli kadeul leul chamjobjonaebnida." (Find Rita Santos. And send her a little see you soon card.) Agni commanded in Korean.

"Al-assda." (Got it) Tae replied, before bowing and leaving.

On the rooftop of the Santos Household, Rita Santos looked out to the horizon of the sea. She sighed remembering how her little girl used to ask about the magic of the sea when she was just a baby. It saddened her to think that she missed out on her transformations so she could support her. But at least she had friends and a good family she was raised by. Suddenly, an arrow whizzed by her head, striking the wall. Taking an inspection on the symbol on it, (which was a valknut inside a circle with a horizontal line across it in the middle), she gasped in horror. That symbol she had seen all those years ago in that dreadful building. She noticed a sheet of paper attached to it. It couldn't be. She thought. It couldn't be him. He is in prison. Opening it, she read from it.

"Rita Santos,

You thought you had stopped me. I have returned to the Gold Coast and I have long been out of prison. One day, you will face me once more. We will finish what we started, all those years ago. I know you're training Omegas, my men will come after them, especially the red haired one. I'll be waiting and mermaids don't do well inside stone walls.

Agni Tiraken

Lord of the Kanhoji Cult."

Rita's hands trembled at the mention of her old enemy. Looking out to the sea, she whispered, "I just hope the kids are alright."


We raced for miles and miles doing flips, twists, and turns.

Check it out! Kimi cried out using the underwater mental link, before rising to the surface to do a strong leap about 10 feet long, diving back into the water. Rose swam up as fast as she could and performed a double flip before diving back in the water. Helen and I already surfaced by then to realize that we were in a trick competition.

"Top that ladies!" Rose yelled out. Her and Kimi were about 10 feet away from us. Perfect distance for my trick.

"Alright girls." I said out loud, preparing for my trick. "Check this out." Using my powers, the water rose, carrying me a little high before it pushed me off, and in mid air I performed first 4 straight flips before diving back in the water. Helen and I already surfaced by then to realize that we were in a trick competition.

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"Alright girls." I said out loud, preparing for my trick. "Check this out." Using my powers, the water rose, carrying me a little high before it pushed me off, and in mid air I performed first 4 straight flips before diving back in the water. Helen and I already surfaced by then to realize that we were in a trick competition.

"Cute sissies." Helen remarked, cracking her knuckles.

"What's your trick gonna be?" Kimi asked. I could tell Helen was grinning.

"Now who said it had to be tricks?" She asked, diving into the dark water. It was night. Out of
nowhere, Helen surfaced, and pushed us to the sandy floor of the reef. Basicaly she tackled us. Even underwater, I could hear her laughing.

What was that Helen? Kimi asked. You didn't do any flips.

Oops. Helen mock said. Just then, we heard a rustle in the water. Looking up, we saw a figure. Redying ourselves with our powers, we surfaced to face… a puppy? It was a white beagle, it almost looked like Buster from one of my former neighbors. The area glowed orange because Helen had created a ball of fire in her hand, giving some light. To be honest, I thought that this was some sort of shark. I was a little embarrassed actually.

"Don't give up Thals." Helen said to me. "You just might win this one."

But Rose, being the girl who she is, decided to fawn over the dog because it was kind of cute. "AWW! It's a little puppy." Scooping him up in her arms, Rose began playing rubbing it's belly. "And it's name is…"

"Buster!" We heard a man call out. We looked up and we saw a man with a flashlight on waving it around. We treaded carefully enough not to get caught as we approached about 5 feet from the boat Mr. Carson was in. "Buster?"

"It's Mr. Carson." I whispered to them. "I recognize him from when I used to live with Zac." Just then Rose, began to approach the man, but Kimi grabbed her shoulder.

"Rosalina what do you think you're doing?" I asked her.

Rose just shrugged her shoulder. "What? I'm returning Buster to his owner."

"Are you an idiot?" Helen asked. "Wait. Let me rephrase that. You're an idiot!"

"You can't show yourself to a…human." Kimi said quietly.

"Why not? It's dark." Rose said.

"He has a flashlight, he'll see your tail and freak the heck out!" Kimi hissed. "That's why not!"

"No they won't." Rose tried to reason. "I'm not so scary."

Helen looked at her incredulously before saying bluntly, "You have a giant fin attached to your waist."

Rose put on her best face. "Look, this guy is gonna see that I'm just a regular dog loving person like him. Next thing you know, we'll be best buds! This is gonna be awesome!" Before she could hear anything more, she dived down, carrying the dog.


No one's POV

"Buster!" Mr. Carson called out once more before seeing Rose surface from the water, carrying his dog. He shone his light on her and as soon as he saw where her legs were supposed to be, where he saw her tail, he lost it.

"Ola señor!" Rose said cheerfully, raising his soaking wet dog. "Here's your…" Rose didn't get to finish because Mr. Carson screamed.
"Latina fish freak!"

"But I got your dog!" Rose cried out.

"Help! She's got my dog!" Mr. Carson dropped the flashlight. Out of nowhere, the dog attacked her, clawing at her face. Rose's posse joined up with her and Thalie placed the dog back on the boat before all of them swam to the shore.

"Face it Rose." Helen spoke up as we all dried up our tails. "Normal people will never understand us. Heck, we don't even understand us."

Rose sighed in a little sadness. "Yeah. But I bet that guy would." She pointed to a billboard of Dan Cradford.

"Dan Cradford." I said. "The swimming superstar. With a chain of pools across the country. He's your soulmate?"

Rose did a really cool fighting stance. "We have so much in common!"

"What if you stop standing like that?" Kimi asked her.

Rose pondered for a second. "We'll have a little less in common. But still a lot. And look! He's in town for a swimming expo!"

"Face it Rose." Helen said. "Dan Cradford is the last person on Earth who would be friends with you. Well tied for last, with everyone else on Earth."

Rose and me glared at Helen, and we turned around to see masked men surround us. As soon as we saw a few of them, hold a floating ball of water in their palms, we knew they were mermen.

"Mermen?" Kimi asked. "In the Gold Coast? Other than Zac and the Raiden guy Thalie mentioned?" We all readied our powers as I armed myself with floating water, Kimi had her hands glowing with teal light, Helen's hand was on fire, and mist was threatening to pour out of Rose's hands. Out of nowhere, a knife was thrown at Kimi but she froze it, gravity pulling it down. The men started attacking us. It was confirmed, our first battle had commenced. It was a good thing Helen taught us karate in secret.

3 men approached Helen but she knocked one down with a high kick before fire whipping another guy to knock the third one down. But another kicked her back.

Rose blasted anyone who came close to her with strong wind currents.

Kimi conjured an ice staff and attacked some guys while freezing some guys who tried to splash her. Meanwhile, I splashed a few here and there, but they were actual good fighters so I did some punching and uppercuts.

"Why are you so happy?" I asked Helen, who was smiling, once we were back to back fighting some guys.

"It's just nice to finally fight some people who actually put up a good fight." Helen said back. "Instead of prophecies, or teachers, or the lunch line crowds."

Suddenly, a red clad ninja with brown leather padding jumped in front of us and before we could even use our powers, he beat us to the ground. Well almost all of us. Rose prepared a bals of wind
before she caught her and looked at her in the eye.

"Who are you?" The red ninja asked. Rose performed a back flip using her air powers, and released a powerful wind turrent, sending them off their feet. Suddenly, police lights illuminated and me and my girls dived in the water and swam to our homes.

The next day

Helen's POV

"What is the trouble Helen?" My sensei asked. It was afternoon karate practice with my sensei.

"Last night, me and my posse were attacked by some thugs." I felt dishonorable for lying to my sensei but I couldn't say that the thugs were mermen, because you pretty much know what would happen. "We managed to fight them off, because I had been teaching them some of my moves."

"Very insightful Helen." My sensei said. "Always teach those who are willing to accept the challenges ahead."

"But Sensei," I said. "Their leader was crazy good. By which I mean he was good at karate, and… seemed a little crazy. Besides, he had all these guys with him. It wasn't a fair fight."

"What do you mean a fair fight?" Sensei asked me.

I struggled to find an answer. "A… fair fight… you know when either side could win."

"So a fair fight is a fight you could lose." Sensei mused walking towards me.

"Well, yes." I answered. "What I mean is…"

"You don't want to assure your victory?" Sensei asked again.

"No I do but…" I didn't finish because Sensei had swept me off my feet and I landed on the floor hard. "Hey!"

"Was that fair?" Sensei asked.

"No!" I complained.

"Did I win?" Sensei asked again.

I sighed. "I see your point."

"Seek victory, not fairness." Sensei advised.


In the grotto

Rose's POV

It was just me, Zac, Evie, and Ondina hanging in the grotto. We were all just hanging out.
"Oh I wish me and Dan Cradford were friends!" I exclaimed reading from my magazine. We had so much in common. I wondered at then why no one would listen to me. Just because we had tails didn't mean we had to be cautious of everyone we talk or even look at.

Evie just chuckled. "Rosie. You already have human friends. Like me and Zac."

"Sorry guys." I said to Evie, looking back to my magazine. "You two don't count. Zac, you're my best friend's brother. And Evie, you feel our pain. So you have to like us."

"Too bad there's no place for fish teens to meet people so no one can see how different they are in the water." Ondina sassed at me. I just glared at her in return.

"Wait, there is!" Evie exclaimed. "The internet! Hey Zac, can I see your laptop?"

"Sure." Zac got off of whatever he was doing and handed the computer to his girlfriend.

"Remember Facebook?" Evie asked me.

I just facepalmed. "Of course! Why didn't I think of this sooner? But I don't have an account, my parents won't let me use Facebook until I'm 17 years old."

"I'm pretty sure that this Dan Cradford doesn't have a book of faces." Ondina remarked.

"No Ondina." Zac explained to said person as Evie showed me how to get an account. "Facebook is what land people use to try to find people around the world in just seconds."

I just started typing away until I found Dan. I requested to be his friend to him and I waited with anticipation.

"Rosie." Zac said to me. "I'm pretty sure that people don't always respond immead…" The computer beeped, showing that my friend request had been accepted. "But sometimes they do."

"No way!" I exclaimed. "Dan Cradford has accepted my friendship! I've got a friend! Thanks Eve!" I hugged Evie before getting up to leave.

"Where are you going?" Ondina asked.

"To hang out with my friend." I answered. "Dan Cradford."

"This guy's famous." Evie said. "He probably has thousands of 'friends.' Plus this is your first time using this social website."

"Why are you even doing this?" Zac asked. "Why the sudden desire for friends when you already have them?"

"Guys, the people I know with tails are just uptight and rigid about meeting new people." I said. "Mermaids or mermen shouldn't have to worry about going out in public because they're scared of getting wet. And wouldn't it be nice to meet new people? Anyway, later!" And I left, off to meet Dan.

In the grotto, the others looked concerned, well, save for Ondina.

"This ought to be a lesson for her." Evie said.

"But shouldn't we go after her?" Zac asked.
"Nah." Ondina said. "Kid's gotta learn somehow."

I went out to see where Dan Cradford was. According to his Facebook profile he usually trains at the Rockafeller pool. Sneaking up behind him, I giggled a little before he turned around in surprise.

"Who's there?" The Kentucky native shouted.

"It's me!" I cried. "Rosalina Gomez!"

"What?" He asked.

"We're online friends," I explained. "You accepted me into your group."

Dan looked confused for a second before regaining his composure. "Ah yes, Rosalina. Pleasure to meet you." We shook hands. "Please come with me to my place." Later, after I hung out with him, I met the girls out at the place where we were attacked.

"The guys are obviously mermen," Thalie analyzed. "Which means they are trained to get out of the water fast, and dry fast. In order to have some stealth, to have the advantage, they would have dried at those rocks." She pointed to the large rocks east of her direction.

"Doesn't seem fair am I right?" Kimi asked.

"Helen told me her teacher told her that it's not about fairness." Thalie snapped. "It's about victory."

"You kind of sound like the mermen Ondina and Mimmi are freaking out over about," Kimi said.

Thalie gave her a hard core glare. "Is that supposed to mean something?"

"Ok! Ok! I'm sorry!" Kimi exclaimed.

"Anyway, what happened between you and Mimmi?" Thalie asked.

Kimi just groaned. "It's just… she hates me. I don't know why."

"Did you show off?" Thalie asked.

Kimi scoffed. "Of course not! I merely showed her an experiment and she was impressed, and as soon as we got to the merman chamber I told you about, she started to hate me."

"Mermaids." Thalie muttered. "They're so rigid!"

"I know right?" Kimi agreed.

"Although some are an exception," Thalie mused.

"Like your mom, aunt, Sirena, Nixie, and Lyla?" Kimi asked.

"Yeah." Thalie said.

"If you ask me, I enjoy the silence without Ondina." Kimi said. "I mean seriously, the girl doesn't know how to listen!" (A.N I mean no offense to you Isabel Durant or any fans of Ondina)

"Ditto on that." Thalie said. "I had to endure a long lecture from her and Mimmi about how dangerous my brother truly is."

"What did you say?" Kimi asked.
"I just ignored them and I read my magazine." Thalie replied smoothly.

"Frosty." Kimi agreed. Meanwhile, I was talking to Helen all about Dan Cradford.

"And then, Dan Cradford did his 100 yard free!" I exclaimed. "Man that guy can rock a 100 yard free!"

"Eh, maybe he'll do it again when he takes you to the prom!" Helen said exasperated. "Enough already Rose, you've been going on about this for 3 hours!"

"Oh." I said. "Someone sounds jealous. You just can't admit that you're wrong."

"I'm not wrong." Helen shot back. "I'm just trusting my instincts."

"Fine." I said. "I guess I'll just trust my instincts."

The next day, I went to Dan's place as he invited me.

"Ola Rosa!" Dan greeted. "Please come in." We entered his room which was a little messy. "So how is my rosy friend doing?"

I giggled. "Already going with nicknames?" I asked.

"It suits a beautiful Latina like you." Dan replied. He had a lean physical appearance with black hair and brown eyes. He was about 16.

"So what are you doing?" I asked.

Dan shrugged. "Nothing much. You?"

"Well I'm here, talking with you." I replied. "Why did you want me to come over?"

"What can I say Rosa?" Dan asked. "No matter how hard I try, I can't stay away."

I blushed a little. We then went out for pizza, but as we were eating our slices, I got splashed with soda. Thinking quick, I ran to the bathroom where I sprouted my scaly tail. I heard a gasp behind me and I saw Dan looking at me.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"Helping a mermaid in distress." Dan answered, as he dried my tail but I brushed off his hand. "But in exchange for me not telling, you have to tell me how you got like this and if there are others."

"Watch this." I said. Focusing on the air around me, I generated strong wind enough to dry the soda off my tail.

"Wow." Dan said amazed. "How did you do that?"

"Magic." I said, standing proudly, once I was dry. We then went back to our place and since he saved my tail, I told him everything I knew about mermaids.

"So your high school principal, and best friends are mermaids?" Dan asked.

"Pretty crazy right?" I said, admiring his sword on his wall. "Nice sword by the way. It looks old."

"Thanks." Dan said. "It's my uncle's. It's over 400 years old from medieval Austria."
"My friend Helen is a black belt in karate." I said. "She's been teaching my friend Thalie some sword fighting, Japanese style."

Dan stroked his chin. I could tell he was thinking of something. "You know, I used to take Tai Chi. It's associated with the elements."

"I would be glad to learn it." I said proudly.

"But, you have to swear not to show it to anyone." Dan said firmly.

I did a 'Scout's honor' sign with my hands. "I promise I won't show a soul."

In the grotto…

"And then he kicks." I exclaimed, doing the motions as I said them, wind convulsing with my arms and legs. "Twists, and… sweeps the leg! The Death Dragon!" Dan had taught me that Tai Chi sometimes pertained the movement of the elements.

The other 3 girls looked amazed.

"That was amazing!" Thalie exclaimed.

"Yeah it's devastatingly effective and complex." Kimi observed.

"And yet even Rosalina can learn it." Helen muttered.

"Thank you." I said, bowing, before realizing what Helen said. "Hey!" On my computer, I heard the beep. "It's Dan!" I typed back to him. "He wants to get together for a little B-ball. Can't wait to find out what the B stands for!" I stood up from the couch.

"You're going now?" Kimi asked.

"Yep." With that, I was off to Dan's.


Thalie's POV

We took turns practicing the technique. The water seemed to move with my motions but something about this technique seemed off. Like it was made to suck the energy out of your opponent. For now, it was me and Helen.

"Not quite!" Helen yelled, jumping up to avoid my sweeping kick.

"Wait I think I got it!" I exclaimed. I performed the Death Dragon, but as I did, fiery energy seemed to be sucked from her mouth and into my hand and that was almost done as she fell down. "Helen are you ok?"

"I'm fine." Helen replied. "That was really freaky."

"Where." My mom out of the blue asked, enunciating every word. "Did. You. Learn that?!"

"Rose learned it from her new friend." I explained.

"The person who taught her that technique is no friend." My mom said. "It comes from… one of my enemies."
We all look flabbergasted. "Your enemies?" Kimi asked.

"It's a long story." My mom said.

"So you mean..." I began. "Cradford is a human agent to one of your enemies?"

"He must be." My mom concluded.

"So Dan is just pretending to be Rose's friend to get..." I said before my mom cut me off.

"To me."

"Why?" Kimi asked. "Who could be out for revenge?"

"Find Rosalina." My mom told us. "That's what's important. She's in trouble."


Rose's POV

"Hello?" I asked to Dan's place. "Hello? Dan? Did I come early?" Sensing someone behind me I turned around to see the same red clad ninja from 2 nights ago. He wasn't alone. A black man in his 20's was with him. "Tell me what you've done with Dan, or you guys are so in for it!" They started attacking but luckily I dodged them but I got hit a few times.

"Haven't you figured out who I am?" The red ninja asked.

"Should I have?" I grabbed his double fist strike and I used his arms as bars to do a flip and kick his face. But the black guy struck me hard and I flew up and hit the ceiling.

The red ninja laughed cruelly. "We've already met face to face."

The pieces all fit together as I gasped in horror. "No, it can't be... Dan?"

"Clever yet so gullible." The red ninja pulled off his mask and revealed Dan with his cold brown eyes staring down at Rosalina.

"Dan?" She asked. She tried to use her powers but Dan put on her face, a temporary apathy gas mask as they tied her up and locked her in a room. "I thought we were friends. You saved me from getting caught."

Dan chuckled coldly. "You actually thought someone like me could be friends with a freak like you? Pathetic."

"I say we get rid of her." The black man said with his thick Brazilian accent, pointing to the sword on the wall.

"Don't forget, we need her." Dan said as they walked out. "All part of the trap."

I was left all alone. I should have listened to Evie about online social networking. My parents were right about not letting me get an account. Suddenly, I heard a person drop from the ceiling.

"Who's there?" I whispered. The figure stepped into the light. He had a black hoodie on, jeans and tennis shoes. But his face was not hidden. But I could never forget that face.

"Diablo?" I asked.
Diablo shushed me. "Rosalina, me es." (Rosalina, it's me.) He said in Spanish. "No hacer un sonido. Te tengo en un minuto." (Don't make a sound. I will have you out in a minute.) As soon as Diablo picked the lock, he stretched his hand outward, and when he pulled it down, the ropes untied themselves.

"Cómo..." (How?) I asked before I gasped.

"Sí, soy un tritón." (Yes, I'm a merman.) Diablo said, grabbing my arm. "Ahora prisa. No tengo mucho tiempo." (Now hurry. I don't have much time.)

When he led me to the door, I stopped. "Diablo, ¿qué está pasando?" (Diablo, what's going on?)

"Le dije, no te lo puedo explicar todo. Tus amigos están próximos.." (I told you, I can't explain everything. Your friends are coming.) Diablo replied.

It was true. My friends were all taking down the guards. Good thing they didn't notice us.

"Tengo que ir. No olvide, todavía soy su amigo" (I have to go. Don't forget, I'm still your friend.) Diablo whispered to me.

"Rose!" I heard Helen whisper.

"Are you ok?" Kimi asked while Thalie was hugging me.

"How'd you get out?" Thalie asked me.

"I didn't." I replied. "Diablo busted me out of my cell."

"How did he know where you were?" Helen asked.

"And more importantly how did he free you?" Kimi asked.

"Because he's a merman." I said. The rest were shell shocked.

"Diablo Nagual is a merman?" Thalie asked.

"Shocker for me too." I said. I turned around to try to find him, only for Diablo nowhere to be found!

"How did he escape?"

"Is he invisible?" Kimi asked.

"I can't sense his heat." Helen said. "Since I'm the girl who can control fire and heat, I have infrared vision whenever it's dark."

"But Thalie, can you try to track down Diablo?" I asked.

"Forget Diablo now, we have to get back to the grotto." Helen said.

"No." I said before telling them what happened and then telling them my plan of my own.

"I'm sorry for not being careful about online social media." I said hugging them.

"It's ok." Helen said. "I always hated Facebook." We all ran out of the house and Kimi lifted a sewer lid, and we dived into the sewer. I know what you're thinking, ewww! But don't worry, the sewer is dark and perfect for my plan. Dan and his buddies dropped down, they were following us of course. When they started walking, each of us grabbed one cronie at a time. By the time they got to a pipe
room, Dan and his Brazilian sidekick were left.

"SHOW YOUR FACES!" The South American man shouted as he flipped on a light switch. We all turned visible at the command, ready for action. "They've trapped us!"

"Take em down!" Dan yelled. 2 pairs of our gang got a separate person. Helen and Thalie got Dan, while me and Kimi were stuck with the black Brazilian. He did some sort of martial arts with extreme flexibility to knock us down, but we were still fighting. Helen blocked and performed high kicks to Dan while behind him, Thalie used the rising water as a springboard for her to do a leap, a flip and strike Dan. But she couldn't because as if he could sense her attacks, Dan destroyed the water swords and kicked her and Helen back, both of them getting splashed. But thanks to Helen's heat powers combined with Thalie's water powers, they both got dry in 4 seconds. They looked at us and Kimi gave the signal to switch. We then ran to our different opponents which meant me and Kimi were fighting Dan. We fought them well until we had them each cornered.

"They knew we were following them!" Dan cried out.

"That's right." I said coolly. "Not so gullible as you think I am now huh?" Dan did a high punch but I blocked it and performed the Death Dragon on him, my wind putting in extra beating force.

I said as I did the motions, "Sweep the leg. Hi-ya!" I kicked Dan, piling him on his sidekick. "Hit it!"

Thalie's hands reached out and pulled back quick, unleashing a powerful stream of sewer water, sweeping them away down the deeper parts of the tunnel, far away from us.

"Well." Helen began. "That didn't seem very fair."

"No it wasn't." Thalie complied.

We all just laughed before I said, "High Five!" And we did our signature synchronized high five slap.


Back to the grotto…

Thalie's POV

After our battle with Dan, and Rose getting a serious lecture from my mom about social media, we were having victory pizza. But Mom looked distant, like she was thinking about something.

"Rita?" Kimi asked my mom. "Aren't you hungry?"

My mom turned to us looking worried. "I think we're celebrating too soon."

Helen huffed. "Too soon? The bad guys were swept away by Thalie's river of raw sewage. By my watch, that makes it the perfect time."

"One of my oldest enemies knows I'm alive." Mother explained. "And worse, he knows about all of you. I feared this day would come that he returned."

"Wait you're an enemy with a land person?" Kimi asked.

"Not a land person." Rita answered. "One of the most feared mermen in the seas."
"So it's not over?" I asked.

"Oh no," Mom said. "It's just the beginning."

At the café…

Rose's POV

I stared at my computer, thinking how much of an idiot I was. I still couldn't believe that I was stupid enough to trust someone instantly. But what was more shocking was the fact that one of my best friends, Diablo, was a merman this whole time. I didn't get mad at him for lying to me, I could see his reason.

"How you doing Rose?" I heard Cam ask me. "Why do you look so blue?"

"Cam, I trusted somebody on Facebook to be my friend just because he was famous and he turned out to be a world class jerk." I explained.

"Don't be so hard on yourself." Cam said. "I'm pretty sure whatever happened wasn't your fault. Well it sort of was because you didn't know what you were doing on social media." Wow Cam way to rub it in. "Rosalina, you're an awesome kid."

"Cradford didn't think so." I said glumly.

"Well, like you said, he's a world class jerk." Cam said to me, patting my shoulder. "You deserve way better friends than him."

That perked my ears up. "You know what? You're right. Thanks Cam!"

"Anytime." With that Cam left and I unfriended Dan Jerkford. I pumped my fist in the air in victory.

"Yes! Revenge!"
No one's POV

The Gold Coast was quiet at night. Perfect setting for a black Hybrid Toyota with a gang of 4 teenage boys. 3 of them wore black leather jackets while one wore a brown one. They all had t-shirts of different colors underneath them, jeans and tennis shoes.

"Smell anyone Wolfboy?" The leader in the purple shirt asked. Said teenager transformed into a hawk and took off in the air looking for anyone before transforming back into a person.

"No." Wolfboy replied.

"Alright." The leader said. "Speed Demon, park the car, the rest, come with me." Everyone but Speed Demon got out of the car and in front of the Gold Coast Paradise Mall. The car left them to park and Speed Demon ran back, using his super speed.

"Alright Network, you're up." The leader gestured to a Hindi teenager wearing a green t-shirt underneath his black leather jacket. Network walked up to the mainframe panel on the wall, placed his hand on it and activated his powers to hack into the system.

"Well Network?" Speed Demon asked.

Network scoffed. "Easy. Security system stinks." He finished neutralizing the alarms before saying, "Check it out." He flicked his wrist and all the doors opened within the mall. Network and his gang went inside and activated their flashlights. "No need for that." Network said. He raised his wrist and turned on the lights in the stores that didn't have windows. He also turned on all the hall lights, dim enough to be seen by them, but hidden from the outside world.

"Nice work Network." The gang's leader said, patting Networks back.

"Thanks Voltage." Network replied.

"Big bucks." Voltage announced. "Good clothes, and more. Way less boring than the bank. Alright boys, make this quick!" And the four teenagers went off to do some "shopping."

(They say I'm trouble, they say I'm bad. They say I'm evil and that makes me glad.)

Voltage looked around and found a jewelry store. The first thing he did was raid the cash register and swipe out a couple of hundred dollar bills. Then he looked around at the jewelry and figured that he needed some, not for himself, but for a certain someone. Once he looked at the jewelry, Voltage decided not to get any... tonight.

(A dirty no-good, down to the bone. Your worst nightmare, can't take me home.)

Speed Demon zoomed in and out of every store until he found a mechanic store. Analyzing the place, he made a list of what to take.

(They think I'm callous. A low life hood. I feel so useless. MISUNDERSTOOD!)
Wolfboy took strolled around the ground floor. The first place he visited was the comic book store where he stole the latest issues of the X Men and Fantastic Four. Next he sniffed the area and a grin creeped on his face as he found what he was looking for.

(Mirror, Mirror, on the wall. Who's the baddest of them all? Welcome to my wicked world. Wicked world! I'm rotten to the core, core, Rotten to the core. I'm rotten to the core, core. Who could ask for more? I'm nothing like the kid next, like the kid next door. I'm rotten to the… I'm rotten to the, I'm rotten to the core!)

After 20 minutes of shoplifting, the boys all met at the entrance, bags full of what they stole. Most of it was money and clothes.

"Wait where's Wolfboy?" Speed Demon asked.

"Oh sweet! Meat!" Wolfboy exclaimed. The others groaned in annoyance rolling their eyes.

"He found the meat locker?" Network asked.

"He found the meat locker." Voltage confirmed. The 3 boys found Wolfboy at a McDonalds store rummaging through the meat locker. They were able to find him because of Network's ability to sense technology.

"You got the stuff?" Network asked Speed Demon.

"I got the stuff." Speed Demon replied. Walking over, he sprayed a mist that got Wolfboy sleepy a little bit, before Voltage dragged him from his brown leather jacket collar and Network pulled both his and Wolfboy's bags to the car. After Network left the mall exactly as they came, Speed Demon stepped on the brakes and they were off away from the mall.


In the Moon Pool,
Thalie's POV
Tonight, I led my friends to a very special place. If those mermaids weren't gonna share it with us, well… tough for them. As we surfaces the other's jaws dropped to the ground.

"Ladies." I announced, gesturing my arms in a presenting way. "Welcome to the Moon Pool."

"Whoa!" Rosalina exclaimed.

"So this is the…" Helen said in awe before finished by Kimi.

"Place that turned us all into what we are now."

Rose scooped up a bunch of water.

"Rose what are you doing?" I asked.

"Drinking some magic water." She answered simply.

"And why would you do that?" Helen asked.

"Because if you drink some, you might get a more awesome mermaid!" Rose explained happily.
"Or a need to go to the bathroom later." Kimi deadpanned.

"Either way it's an improvement." Helen remarked.

"An improvement of what?" Rose asked. "My ideology?"

"Please." Helen said. "The only ideology you have is you say you have the ability to fly."

"I'm telling you guys." Rose whined. "I can do it. I just need a lot of practice. I mean so far, I've been able to rise just a few millimeters before I dropped to the ground. It was exhausting."

"I believe you Rose." I said. To be honest, I sort of didn't believe her. But I had to wait and see.

"Oh no!" Kimi cried. "Rose, you, you have a zit on the end of your nose!"

Rose paled. "Are you kidding me?! NOOO! WHY?!!" She looked at her reflection to find no zit but Kimi grinning. "Yukimi. You are so dead." With that, Rose splashed Kimi and the two entered a splash war.

"Guys." I said to try to stop it, but I couldn't because they were having so much fun, I couldn't help but giggle at their antics.

"I just figured it out." Helen said behind me, putting a hand on my wet shoulder. "You know what your problem is Thals?"

"What?" I asked.

"You care too much." Helen replied.

"And your problem is, you don't care at all." I said to Helen, patting her head.

"Oh in that case you care a lot more than I do that we're… late for our lesson for example." Helen reminded me. I froze at her words. Thinking quick I rounded up the girls and we all swam back to the grotto to attend our power lesson.

"Today we're going to be focusing on the fundamentals of the origin of all mermaids: Water." My mom explained. She was still teaching the lesson, because she still said I was too young to teach. I had just as much experience as Mimmi or Ondina. My mom lets me fulfill the prophecy of my birth last year, yet she doesn't let me teach my best friends. Strange.

"Look at the water." My mom said, gesturing the glass bowl of water. "Visualize your element, as I lift it." My mom lifted a ball of water from the glass and turned her attention to us. "Who would like to go first?" Kimi raised her hand and the ball of water froze and unfroze as Kimi lowered her hand. Rose went next, she used air wisps to move the water around. I was next as I split the ball in four balls and back together again. Helen tried to do something with it, she tried steaming it but it wasn't anything good according to her.

"Ugh." She groaned. "Why is it you guys can do anything with water but all I can do is destroy things?"

"Helen." Rita began.

"No." Helen said. "This isn't fair. I know I can do so much more but I just can't do with you guys."

"That's not true." I defended. "You can do great things. We just haven't found it yet."
"I need to get a drink of water." Helen said firmly.

Helen's POV

As I left the grotto, I couldn't help but wonder, is this where I'm supposed to be? Is this where I can discover the extent of my powers?

"Those girls are just holding me back." I told myself. "I should be out there, experimenting with my powers, fighting those mermen punks. But all they want to do is try the stupid basics. Sometimes I wish I was on my own. Doing things my way. I'm sick of everyone telling me to be something I'm not."

"You're not wrong you know." I heard Ondina behind me. "From the way you were talking, it sounds like you're thinking, "I don't belong here. I never belonged here." It's ok to think that, you're right. You're not one of us. You never were." That hurt me to the core. But if there's one thing I don't do it's give up without a fight. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

"Who are you to judge me like this?" I snapped back. "From the moment I met you Ondina, you've been nothing but a total snob. You attitude sucks, you're a grade A pain in my ass."

"How am I a total snob?" Ondina asked.

"Because you and your sidekick are just a couple of bitches who can't let things go." I shot back.

"We could be doing our job faster if you children would just stop getting in the way!" Ondina yelled at me.

"Ondina, can you please get your head out of your ass? It's not a hat." I sassed. "You know what? If you want me out of the way, why don't I just leave?"

"First good idea you've had since the moment I met you." Ondina said. We had an intense stare off before I huffed.

"Wish granted Ondina." I said. "I'm out of here."

Out on the streets…

Ugh! I couldn't believe Ondina! I thought as I blasted fireballs in the air. "This always happens." I said to myself. "I'm fine, until those girls push my buttons!" I fired a blast of flames at a nearby tree but I extinguished it before it could reach the leaves. "It's not like I ever fit in. They just don't get it." As I moved down the park, I felt the heat of some figures behind me. Thinking quick, I made my way to the darkest part of the park, I turned around, igniting my hand in fire to see 3 of those mermen assholes who attacked us.

"More of you idiots?" I asked. "You guys just made my night." They made their moves but I took them down easily. As soon as they were defeated, I sighed and said, "Ah, I feel so much better."

Suddenly, I heard the sounds of a person behind the tree.

"Show yourself!" I yelled. The person stepped out of the darkness, revealing himself to be a Chinese teenager about my age. He wore a sleeveless black sweatshirt, jeans and black tennis shoes. He had somewhat messy hair and jade green eyes. On his face, was plastered a smug grin.

"Impressive." He said. He had somewhat of a Chinese accent.
I didn't know what to say so I said, "You say that like I should be honored."

"Well when you are complemented by a merman of high class, you should be," The boy said.

"Please." I scoffed. "You're saying that you're a merman of high class nobility and my skills are important enough to catch the attention of somewhat like you?"

"Duh." The Chinese merman said. "Honestly, don't you know of the ranks of merman families?"

"No." I replied. "I just know of mermaids."

The Chinese boy sighed in disappointment. "Why am I not surprised?" Out of nowhere, the boy threw a gas pellet at me which clouded my vision. I was too late to defend myself as the boy ran up and punched me, sending me flying back out a few feet. My vision cleared up as I saw a pair of sai pointed at my neck. "FYI, first rule of battle. Always expect the unexpected. My name's Xandou by the way. See you around." And just like that, the boy left in the dark of the night.

"What was that?" I wondered.

In the grotto…

Thalie's POV

"Where's Helen?" I asked. It had been about 20 minutes. "I'm starting to get worried."

"Don't worry I'm sure she'll be back." Rose said sympathetically. Just then Mimmi came in.

"Have you seen Helen?" Kimi asked.

"No." Mimmi replied in an icy tone. "And good thing too. Wouldn't want anything burning down. Go back to your lesson."

Ignoring her, we went back to our lesson. But it wasn't the same without Helen pushing us to do hader. She was our team's strength. In other words we did poorly.

"Come on guys." Ondina challenged. "You can do better than that."

"I'm sorry." Rose said. "It's just not the same without Helen."

"We need her." Kimi said simply. "Every time we feel down, she always helps us get stronger. Yes, she's sarcastic, tough and aggressive. But she's still a valued member to our time."

"You can do fine without her." Mimmi said.

"You should talk." Kimi said.

"Or maybe you guys could do without the Pigblood." Mimmi said. That hurt me to the very core. It hurt the first time when Nixie said it to me. But now, after everything I had worked for to make Mako safe, I get called that racist name again. The room filled with silence. Even Ondina gasped. I could tell that even she didn't approve of it.

"Mer-awkward." Rose muttered.

"Mimmi, Ondina." I said finally having had enough of their attitude. "I have sacrificed everything I
had left for our pod, when I say our pod, it's also mine as well as much as it's yours. Instead of thanking me for almost dying for you, all you mermaids do, is treat me like shit!"

Before they could say anything back, Rose interfered. "Ok just shut up! Everyone! Come on I joined this group so I could hang out with a bunch of really cool chicks! And also cause I was sick of my parents fighting and I needed to get away from that. But… this is serious horseshit. Oh that smell. Stinks everywhere. I don't want to be like the old mermaids!"

"Yeah, I want to be how we are now." Kimi agreed.

"You should have left us alone." I said.

"Oh so this is our fault?" Mimmi asked.

"That's not what I'm saying." I said trying not to fight.

"No. No. no!" Ondina said. "That's what you're all thinking isn't it? That's what you're all thinking isn't it? That we're the jerks! That we're the girls obsessed with the rules!"

"But you're both too controlling! And it's gonna ruin all of us!" I said.

"Your so called brother ruined our lives." Mimmi retorted.

That's when Kimi's patience was used up. "We could have revolutionized mermaids and even done your job for you, BUT YOU TWO PINHEADS SCREWED IT UP!"

Without second thought, Mimmi using her powers flicked water and splashed Mimmi.

"What the hell Mimmi?" Kimi exclaimed. "What is your problem?"

"I figured it out." I said finally. "Mimmi, I get your deal with Yukimi. You're jealous."

Mimmi laughed. "Me jealous? Why would I be jealous of a human?"

"Because she is younger than you." Rose defended. "Has better powers than you, and more importantly, she's smarter than you."

"You know something Gomez, I'd have to disagree with you on that one." Mimm snarled.

"Whoop! There it is!" Rose exclaimed. "Face it Mimmi, I've seen jealous, but you top the charts!"

"Girls what is going on here?" We all heard Sirena. "Ondina. A word. Now."

Ondina left while Rita came in and discussed things with us.


No one's POV

"I was coming in from the café, and I saw Helen burst out of the house in anger. She said your name in hate. So what happened?"

"Well the girl just needed to be reminded of her place so I did that." Ondina retorted.

"That's not your place." Sirena said.

"Why not?" Ondina asked. "I'm trying to keep her from burning stuff and she thinks that she is all
"Of course it is!" Sirena exclaimed. "Being part of a team doesn't mean that you dictate who goes where. It's about getting along. It doesn't matter how different each team member is, it matters that you respect them as an accomplice. Now go find Helen and apologize!"

Helen's POV

On the shores of Mako Island

As I paced and paced on the beach of Mako, I couldn't help but ask myself, "What if Ondina was right? What if I don't belong there?"

"You always talk to yourself?" I heard Xandou behind me.

I grinned. "Sometimes I'm the only one who will listen."

"Oh I'll listen." Xandou said, drawing out a dagger. "When you beg for your life." It was a good thing I always carried with me a dagger just in case. "Armed, quite the mermaid you are."

"Let's see how well you do against someone who can see." I challenged.

"Let's see how well you do against someone who's had years of practice," Xandou retorted.

"Let's see how well you do against a human." I said back. "Never mind, let's just go." With that Xandou charged. We laid attacks on each other but each of us would deflect them.

"Nice use of weaponry." I said. "Glad it's not just tridents." I swung my blade at him but he dodged it easily.

"You're not bad yourself." Xandou said. "For a mermaid." We continued to fight more before Xandou did an impressive backwards summersault. "You're good. No wonder some mermen have a hard time fighting you."

"It's not like their big boss hasn't been trying." I replied.

"I know." Xandou agreed. "It's all he ever talks about. Revenge, revenge, power, power."

"Really?" I asked. "I take it then you don't approve?"

"No I'm fine with it." Xandou quickly said. "I'm just saying, he needs a hobby." With that, Xandou charged again, but I deflected him. Out of nowhere, he performed a roundhouse kick and then a back kick which knocked me back. I checked my hand that swiped my jaw and I saw a bit of blood.

"Not bad," said Xandou. "But I've seen better."

I chuckled. "With a simple blade maybe. Not with a blade of fire." What he didn't know was that the handle was made of moonstone, which allowed me with enough concentration, to set the blade on fire without melting it. And it would make the deadly force of the knife look deadlier. So I did said action. Xandou's illuminated face was a face of impressive. And of course we charged again.

But this time, Xandou was here, then in seconds he was behind me punching my back.
"How did you do that?" I asked.

"It's a rare ability of mine." Xandou explained. "Which I will explain later. No one has ever outran or outswam moi."

"If I didn't take the hit from you, I'd say that your powers are the coolest thing I have ever seen." I said groaning with pain.

"Oh you ain't seen nothing yet, sweetheart." Xandou said smugly. We attacked each other more.

"You know what?" I asked. "I don't think you're as bad as you pretend to be."

"Oh?" Xandou asked back. "What part of attacking you with a blade do you not understand?"

"Like say, out in the park." I retorted. "You could have finished me, but you didn't. Why is that?"

"Because you're the first thing in this city that isn't slow." Xandou replied. "Besides, I don't you're as good as you pretend to be." Charging at me, Xandou grabbed my wrist, took my blade and held me with my arms behind my back, and held the burning blade against my neck. It was a good thing that I was immune to fire. "Don't tell me that the good girl card doesn't expire after a while."

I grunted in an effort to break free. "It's better than the alternative."

Xandou just laughed. "Which is what?" He asked. "To have fun? To be different? To just get the job done?" It creeped me out how much he and I were alike. Without second thought, I elbowed him, grabbed my blade and pressed it against his chest. "Guess I struck a nerve."

I chuckled. "Because I... beat you?" Xandou at abnormal speeds punched me aside and held his blade at my chest.

"As if you could beat me." Xandou said smugly. "But anyways, you know the museum near the docks?"

"Yeah." I replied.

"Good." Xandou said. "Meet me there at midnight."

"Why?" I asked.

"I want to show you something." Xandou said. Just as he was about to dive back in the water, I grabbed his arm.

"My name's Helen." I finally said.

"Fierce name for a fierce girl." Xandou remarked. "Later." Shrugging me off, he dived into the water. I swam back to the café, to have a little talk with Evie. When I saw that she wasn't there, I called her on my phone.

"Helen?" Evie asked groggily. "This better be good."

"Evie." I said. "I need to talk."

"Can it wait until morning?" Evie asked tired.

"I met this boy." I said.
Evie gasped. "Tell me everything!" She was wide awake.

"Well." I began. "He's really cool. He's also a merman. And uhh… he's somewhat of a juvenile delinquent."

"Helen, are you crazy?" Evie asked.

"Evie." I said. "He's different. He's…"

"A juvenile delinquent." Evie said.

"Yeah but he's…" I said.

"A juvenile delinquent!" Evie hissed.

"Look I know I shouldn't be hanging out with someone like him." I reasoned.

"Yeah, you got that right." Evie remarked. "And do you wanna know why? It's cause he's a juvenile delinquent!"

"Evie." I said silencing her. "He's fun! And I'm sick of being held back. When is it I get to have fun?"

Evie remained silent before asking, "So what does he want from you?"

"I don't know." I answered. "I'm meeting him later at the docks near the museum. He's got something planned."

Evie scoffed. "Yeah, like say, kidnapping you there! It's a trap Helen!"

"I don't think so." I said. "There's good in him, I know there is. I can feel it."

Evie sighed. "I hope you know what you're doing." And she hung up, leaving me to think.


No one's POV

In the Australian headquarters for the Kanhoji…

Xandou made his way to his boss's office. He was summoned to the Kanhoji Cult's leader for a discussion. He hoped that he wasn't in serious trouble. Opening the door, he made his way about 3 feet from Agni Tiraken himself before bowing and kneeling before him.

"Xandou." Agni said sternly before speaking Chinese. "Wǒ liǎojiě dào, nǐ yǒu jiù hǎi pàqiǎn xiāofāng ōumǐjiā." (I have learned that you had the opportunity to dispatch the Fire Omega)

"Zhēn de ma?" (Really?) Xandou replied.

"Dànsì nǐ ràng tā qù dàiti." (But you let her go instead.) Agni continued.

Panic flared inside Xandou. He tried lying instead. "Zhè bùshì zhēn de, tā táole chūlái." (That's not true, she escaped.)

Agni raised an eyebrow in suspicion. "Wǒ juédé yǒudiǎn nányǐ xiǎnxīn." (I find that a little hard to believe.)
"Sāngtuōsī měirényú táo chū nǐ méiyǒu tā?" (That Santos mermaid escaped from you didn't she?)

Agni growled in anger. "Gòule!" (Enough!)

Xandou's eyes widened in fear but he regained his composure in order to show respect as Agni made his way to him. "Děngdài." (Wait).

Agni paused, but his gaze still cold as stone. "Xiāofāng ōumǐ jiā kěyǒu wǒmen de." (The Fire Omega could be of use to us.)

Agni's silence was deafening before he sighed and said, "Jìxù." (Go on.)

Xandou stood up and faced him in the eye. "Zhège nǚ huái." (This girl.) Xandou began. "Tā de lìliàng, tā de shílì, tā de gōnglì. Wǒ cónglái méiyǒu jiānnguò nàyàng de qiánlì, rènhé rén... Chúle māmā. Wǒ jīn wǎn zǎo xiè shishòu zhíyǐ tā de juédòu, ér tā jīhū dà wǒ." (Her power, her strength, her skill. I've never seen that kind of potential in anyone else... except Mom. I challenged her to a duel earlier tonight, and she nearly beat me.)

Agni shifted. This mermaid sounded like she could be of use to him. "Xiànzài nǐ shuō nǐ yào tā jiārù zhège zǔzhì." (And now you're saying that you want her to join this organization.)

That shook Xandou to the core. Agni could figure things out so easily. It was one of his many traits that attracted some mermaids who sided with the mermen. "Shì de xiānsēng." (Yes Sir.) "Rúguǒ wǒmen ràng tā jiārù wǒmen de hángliè, wǒmen kěyǐ zuò shì bù kěnéng de rènwù, láguò mímí xíngdòng, zuò zhème duō. Yǒu zhè zhè měirén yú jiārù wǒmen, yòng zhèngquè de xùnliàn, tā de cùnzài kěnéng shì gémìng xìng de chóngbài." (If we get her to join us, we could achieve impossible missions, pull off covert operations, and do so much more. With this mermaid joining us, with the right training, her presence could be revolutionary in the Cult.)

"Zhège zhuàngtái měirén yú nǐ suǒ shuō de míngchēng." (State the name of this mermaid you speak of.) Agni commanded.

"Helen." Xandou answered. There was a long silence before Agni spoke again.

"Hěn hǎo." (Very well.) Agni replied, walking behind him and putting his hands on Xandou's shoulders. "Wǒ xiāng nǐ néng dédào tā de jiāméng." (I want you to get her to join us.)

"Shì de xiānsēng." (Yes sir.) Xandou replied before leaving but he was stopped by Agni pulling on his arm.

"Tā kěnéng huó, dàn zhīyǒu dāng tā jiārù wǒmen." (She may live, but only if she joins us.) Agni said sternly. "Míngbái le ma?" (Understood?)

Just as he reached the door, Xandou spoke back, "I understand...Father." He left the room thinking, Do I really want to do this?

At the museum docks...

Helen's POV

I made my way to the museum docks, where I saw Xandou pacing. I didn't swim so I walked out of the shadows and cleared my throat.
"I was beginning to think that you were a no show." Xandou said. "But it seems that you don't disappoint. Sit." I did so in a lotus position and Xandou began his speech.

"The Kanhoji Cult is one of the greatest merfolk organizations known in the seas." Xandou began. "We operate in many fields. Science, archeology, technology, you name it! I'm the son of the big cheese, Agni Tiraken. The duel at Mako was merely a test of your skills, and you passed."

"And let me guess." I said figuring it out. "You and your old man want me to join your little club."

Xandou smiled. "You're smarter than I gave you credit for Helen." He said. "And for the record, the Kanhoji is not some little club. It's one of the most elite societies in the world. I want you to join my father's society because I know that you can do great things."

"But why talk about it here, instead of where your dad is?" I asked unsure. Xandou tossed me binoculars.

"Because of that." Xandou said, pointing up north of the museum building. I looked in said direction of the binoculars and I saw a rare jewel in a necklace on display.

"That's the Heart of the Ocean!" I realized.

"One of the most powerful amulets made by mermaids." Xandou said. "It's ancient, it's priceless, and it's yours. If you help me."

I bit my tongue in fear. I didn't really trust that merman at first but I had a feeling of what he wanted me to do. And I really hoped that he didn't mean it like that.

"Do what exactly?" I asked with a little fear.

Xandou chuckled. "You know what silly." He said, lightly punching my arm. "We're gonna steal it."

"No we're not." I retorted immediately. I'm all for doing things my way, but stealing was a deal breaker.

"Come on Helen." Xandou whined. "That amulet's just sitting there collecting dust! You know you deserve that trinket. Certainly more than some lazy rich guy."

Did I? I wondered. Did I really want to do this? Maybe I did deserve more than what I have. Maybe joining this cult wouldn't be so bad.

"Stop being held back Helen." Xandou said convincingly. "Stop waiting for people to give you the life you want. Go out and take it."

I wanted to do it. I wanted to stop being a team member and start being out there on my own, but I had a life here. I had friends, and if there's one thing friends don't do it's abandon each other for their selfish needs. I had a family here who I couldn't abandon here. If my sensei was here, he would say to me, "Listen to your heart." So I did that and I said to Xandou's face, "No."

Xandou was not happy. "You're gonna have to choose Helen."

"I can't." I said. "It's wrong, and I'm listening to my heart."

Xandou's face took confusion before turning back to stone faced. "You're starting to bore me."

I took his hand, and I felt a little spark as our skins touched. "Xandou." I began. "You... you don't have to do this."
"I…" Xandou began before we were interrupted by Ondina.

"Helen?" Ondina exclaimed. "What are you doing?! Who's he?"

I blushed furiously as did Xandou but I quickly said, "Uh, Ondina, Xandou Tiraken, Xandou Tiraken, Ondina."

"What are you two doing here?" Ondina asked. "On a date?"

"No!" I said. "I can explain!"

"This should be good." Xandou muttered behind me.

"You see, Xandou and I… share an appreciation for…" I didn't finish because rising from the water, was a giant octopus.

"Bloody Hell!" I screamed.

"Tiraken, you wouldn't happen to know what this is doing here right?" Ondina asked.

"Don't ask me." Xandou quickly said. We all spread out trying not to get wet. I heated up the area with enough heat once the octopus got out of the water and it dried up but it kept moving. We tried fighting it, but the tentacles got us. Ondina got trapped pushing tentacles away from her. I held on to a pole as the tentacles tried to pull me up. Xandou however was watching the whole time and he didn't do anything.

"Xandou!" I cried. "Xandou please! Help!"

In lighting speed, Xandou threw a dagger in a sheath at my feet. I looked at him in surprise.

"Zàijìàn." Xandou said cunningly, diving into the water. I picked up the dagger with my feet and placed it on my hand as I let go. I unsheathed the knife and plunged it into the creature and pulling it back out. I also cut off the tentacles fighting Ondina, helping her up.

"Helen, follow me." Ondina instructed. "This type of octopus is found in the Mariana trench, it hates bright light."

"Got it." I said, firing blasts of fire at the creature. "We need to get in close to the mouth!"

"You're right!" Ondina exclaimed. Ondina used her powers to lift some tentacles away while I sneaked up behind and unleashed an enormous fire blast. It didn't make a dent but it did weaken it. We fought and fought and it looked like we were winning. Until we charged at it and the creature used one of its remaining tentacles to push us away, making us hit a nearby cargo box.

"It's going for the street!" Ondina cried out. We made our move towards the departing giant octopus.

"We can't let it get away!" I yelled, running in front of the creature and with all my strength, I created somewhat of a fire wall to distract the creature while Ondina jumped and used her moon ring to vaporize the giant octopus in a blinding flash of moonlight. With a piercing shriek the creature was gone and left as dust.

"That was." I said panting. "Too close."

"You're a pretty good mermaid Carter." Ondina said. "Sure, you're raw, unfocused, dangerous, crazy! But not bad."
I smiled at her. "Thanks. You're not so bad yourself. For a sea girl."

"Let's go back." Ondina said. On our way back, Ondina cleared her throat. "Helen, I'm not so good at this." She said.

"So good at what?" I asked.

It took Ondina about 2 minutes to say something. "I want to apologize for being such…"

"A bitch? An A grade jerk?" I asked.

"Yes." Ondina said. "When I first met you, I just was so impressed by your sarcasm and charisma, I just became a little jealous."

"Well I'm glad you apologized." I said, lending my hand out to shake it with her's. "Friends?"

Ondina shook my hand. "Friends."

In the grotto…

No one's POV

Thalie, Zac and Sirena were hanging out in the grotto.

"Hey has anyone seen Helen or Ondina?" Thalie asked.

"Dude!" Helen and Ondina came into the grotto. "The way that we chased that monster down."

"And what about when I vaporized it with my moon ring?" Ondina asked. "How cool was that?"

"And don't forget the way I cut off those tentacles, that was the awesomest part!" Helen exclaimed. They both turned around to see Zac, Sirena, and Thalie look at them in shock.

"What's up?" Ondina asked. "No hanging out spot for me and Helen?"

"Whoa!" Zac exclaimed. "Ok. What's up with you two? BFF's now or something?"

Sirena approached the two. "I see you've made a new friend Ondina." She said.

"Yeah, Helen's cool." Ondina remarked.

"Thanks for getting along with her." Sirena said to Helen.

"No problem." Helen said back. "But that don't mean that she's faster than me."

"Is that a challenge?" Ondina asked.

"Let's go!" Helen and they shook hands in competition psyche.

"Great!" Thalie said. "You know what this means right? Now we have… Two!... Helens!" And just like that, Helen and Ondina took off to Mako's sandy shore, Ondina being the victor.

"Not bad speed." Ondina said. Keep practicing and you'll get it by the time you're my age."

"Oh I'll get it by the time next week comes!" Helen said, the two new friends laughing in good
"So what's with the guy who tried to kill you?" Ondina asked me.

Helen giggled. "Ondina, he didn't try to kill me, he saved me."

"He threw a knife at your head." Ondina deadpanned.

"Correction." Helen said. "He threw a knife near my head."

"Can I remind you that he left us to fight a monster?" Ondina asked me.

"Nobody's perfect." Helen said to her, leaving for my house.

In Helen's room,

Helen's POV

I looked at the dagger. It was a pearl dagger made in China no doubt. It was a good thing I took Chinese, because I could read the inscription. As I looked into the blade, I could almost see Xandou's green eyes staring back at me. When I was around him, I felt safe, myself even. I didn't want to say I had feelings for this guy because I had just met him. But he understood me like no one else ever did. Turning off the lights, I went to sleep remembering the Chinese inscription on the blade he gave me:

"Never give up without a fight."
A New Nerdy Friendship

In the café

Xhiva's POV

I paced in the café, trying to figure out what I was gonna do while I was here in Australia. Maybe I could go to school. But I had already completed my homeschooling when I was 13. I had never been to a real school because me and my brother had gotten some of the best education in the world. Though Xandou would prefer to waste his potential and his IQ on racing with other mermen and on land in cars he built from scratch. Xandou and I are two halves of one whole. I'm the thinker, while he's the builder. Though I'm more about the computers while he's about the moters.

Suddenly without seeing the person coming, I bumped into someone as I walked to the counter. I was ready to give this guy a lecture when I looked up and I didn't see a guy, but the most beautiful girl I had ever seen in my life. She was an Asian girl who was about my height, 5'5 with the most bright light brown eyes I had ever seen. They almost looked like gold. Her hair was black as a winter's night, but it had some white streaks in them in the front. Her skin was pale as snow. She wore black pants, purple sneakers, and a blue tanktop. She had her hair in a French braid and wore rectangular glasses like I was wearing to go with my green vest over my black t shirt. Overall, I had seen pretty girls but none could compare to the beauty in front of me.

"I'm sorry." The goddess said to me. I was speechless. She was talking to me. An impossibly beautiful girl was talking to me. "Are you ok? You're zoning out a bit and… staring at me"

"Are you single?" The words escaped my lips before I could even process them as I slapped a hand on my mouth. The Asian Venus stumbled back surprised.

"Summimasen?" (Excuse me?) The girl asked in Japanese, which confirmed her ethnicity.

"I'm sorry." I quickly said, straightening myself up. "I…didn't see you there."

The girl laughed a little. "It's ok. My name's Yukimi." She stuck out her hand as she said her name. Her beautiful name. It fitted her because I had automatically identified her as an Omega because of her hair strands. Here she was, this beautiful snow goddess.

"Wow…." I said, pushing back the urge to blush. "That's a pretty name."

"Thanks." Yukimi replied. "But you can just call me Kimi."

"I'm…." I stopped breathing as I had for a few seconds, forgotten my own name. "Xhiva. I'm Xhiva." I shook her hand and her hand felt like snow, smooth and delicate. I looked at her and I noticed that she was blushing a little. Kimi sat down in a table and pulled out her notes. I sat down with her and tried to start a conversation but every time I tried, I would always say sentences that don't make sense.

"So what are you working on?" I asked finally filtering my mouth.

"I'm just working on a little… geography project." Kimi replied. The way that she stopped mid sentence rang the lie detection bells in my head. I had been taught to detect any sign of deception within a person's sentence context. So she was telling a lie but not really a lie. "On Mako Island. Nothing special, just doing a little summer project on the geology."
"I take it geology isn't your thing." I said trying to find some common ground with her.

Kimi nodded. "Biology and medical science. Sometimes chemical engineering."

"Interesting." I mused. This girl was impressing me more and more. Usually the typical girls I met were into cosmetics or simple dating. Kimi was into the academic interests. "I study computers."

"What about computers?" Kimi asked.

"Coding, digital breakdown, digital pattern recognition, the whole nine yards." I said, a little too proudly.

"I'm impressed." Kimi said quietly. I pumped my fist in my air.

"Yes!" I said out loud without even realizing it. I felt a hand clamp my shoulder, and I looked up to see a blond boy staring down at me.

"Could you excuse this kid here for just one second here Kimi?" The boy asked.

"Sure Cam." Kimi replied. Just then her face became angry. "Damn! My computer crashed!"

Seeing another chance to impress her, I asked her to leave from her chair and I worked my technological skills to fix her computer and made it so it never crashed, saving her work in the process. I did it in only 16 seconds which left her jaw hanging.

"Whoa." Kimi said.

"Ok, now I need a serious talk with this kid." Cam dragged me over to outside.

"Dude!" I hissed. "What the hell?"

"I'm just trying to help you talk to a girl." Cam explained. "What's your name again?"

"It's Xhiva." I said in annoyance. "And I don't need your help. I was doing fine."

"Dude, the first thing you ask her is if she's available on the market." Cam retorted.

I froze for a second. "Ok you may have a point." I said. "But what's your motive Cam? That you want to tutor me in flirting?"

"Exactly." Cam replied. "Take it from someone whose classmate has a girlfriend. Trust me he talks about her every day. It's Evie this and Evie that."

"Ok." I said giving this some thought. To be honest I had no idea what I was doing. I even didn't know how to talk to a girl without screwing up actually. "What do I do?"

"Ok." Cam said. "First look her in the eye, not the kind of look you were giving her."

"Why what was wrong with it?" I asked.

"Xhiva to be honest, you were looking at her all swoony." Cam replied causing me to fume in embarrassment.

"Second." Cam began. "Talk to her like she's one of your closest friends… Oh whatever, just get back in there and hopefully make your move."
"You really have no idea what you're doing do you?" I asked rhetorically.

"Maybe." Cam said. "Good luck dude, you're gonna need it."

"Why?" I asked.

"Let's just say that she's can be cold, icy cold." Cam said unsure. This confirmed that Omega's element, winter.

"I'll take my chances." I said smugly. I've faced sea monsters. How hard can a 15 year old Omega of Winter be?

"Is that you Adolf?" I heard Diablo greet Cam. (A.N Dominic Deutscher, if you have read that, please know I know you are of German descent or may not be depending on your last name, and I solemnly swear that I do not mean any offense to you. You're awesome. This is just a quote from the character itself.)

Cam just groaned. "Still not German and what are you doing here?"

"Getting a shake. Why?" Diablo asked.

"Face it dude." I said to Diablo. "You're here, because Rosalina is here."

Diablo blushed madly. "I am not!"

"Speaking of girls, didn't you have one to talk to?" Cam reminded me.

"Wait, you met someone?" Diablo asked pulling his ever infamous grin. "Good luck, you're gonna need it."

"Same with you and Rosalina." I retorted which made Diablo growl in embarrassment. I walked back in to Kimi's table. She wasn't there but her stuff was. I looked on her computer and I saw research on mermaids and their DNA. There was also stuff about superheroes with similar powers to hers. But the most interesting thing I found was notes on the energy fields of Mako Island.

"Why are you looking at my notes?" I paled at Kimi's voice behind me. I turned around and I saw a bit of a pissed Kimi glaring down at me. For a second there, I thought I was a goner.

"Umm..." I fumbled around my brain for an explanation but then I took Cam's advice. But his advice would get me in a deeper pickle. "I was just curious about your little project you gorgeous... specimen." I buried my head in my hands in sheer humiliation. How was I going to get myself out of this?

"I forgive you." Kimi said. "But you should have just asked me."

"Yeah." I nervously chuckled.

"So you're interested in things besides computers?" Kimi asked me.

"Oh many things Kims." I said not filtering my thoughts. "Like you." Kimi chuckled while I just facepalmed. "What the hell is wrong with me?"

"I don't understand why you're saying all those things, it sounds like you're trying to do this thing boys do called flirting." Kimi said. The proof was in the pudding. I was trying to flirt with her. And I was failing miserably at it. Unbelievable. I thought. I can hack the Chinese intelligence agency system yet I can't talk to a girl. I was then saved by a text from my phone. It was from Erik saying I
had to be back at Carlos's house for a meeting. "I'm sorry Babe, but I have to go. It's a foster family meeting." I slapped my hand across my cheek a little in self reprimanding.

"Ok." Kimi said. "It was nice meeting you."

As I reached the door, I said back. "It was nice meeting you sweetheart." I groaned in frustration. "Why am I so bad at talking to women! I mean I have a sister for crying out loud!" I muttered under my breath.

"So how did it go?" I heard Cam behind me with Diablo next to him wiggling his eyebrows. I gave Cam my worst glare ever that sent him stumbling a few feet back. It's a Tiraken family trait.

"2 words for you Cam: You're fired." I said to him.

"Oh!" Diablo exclaimed. "Burn!"

"Diablo come on!" I grabbed Diablo by the arm and dragged him away.

"You got the text?" Diablo asked me.

"Yeah I got the text." I replied. Soon, we made our way to the house where Erik and the others were waiting.

"Alright. Now how are we gonna do this mission?" Xandou asked. None of us were paying attention except for Erik and Carlos. Carlos is Diablo's foster dad and the guy who owns the house.

"Boys!" Erik exclaimed.

Xandou of course got his impatience kicking in. "Do I have to actually remind you what we're all here for?"

"Mako Island." Diablo replied not looking up from his XMen comic book. "Blah blah blah."

"Slade's conquest." Raiden added on. "Blah blah blah." The two troublemakers bumped fists ending in a little "ba-la-la-la".

"This is our one chance!" Xandou began. "To prove ourselves to the other mermen." At that note we all looked at him with sympathy.

"To prove that we are just as strong, capable, smart, and powerful as the previous generation." Erik said.

"Why don't we ask one of the four Omegas?" I asked.

"And have them in the line of fire?" Erik asked. "Are you insanse?"

"What does it matter?" Carlos asked. "They're teenagers. They're all just kids who may get caught in the crossfire if we pull them in this."

"We don't know anything about them." Carlos said. "All we know is that they are dangerous, inexperienced, and extremely powerful, which makes them very valuable to Xhiva and Xandou's father and the Chief."

I started to get angry, causing the lights to flicker a bit. "If you think for a second I'm going to let you use these girls..."
"You don't have a choice Xhiva." Xandou snapped. "And neither do I. Either we play ball with the Chief or who knows what will happen to the girls?" He got real close to my ear and whispered in Hindi,"Viśēṣa rūpa sē hēlēna. Yā Yukimi. Háṁ, maiṁ tumhēṁ usa para ēka kraśa hai patā hai. Jrūvā dūra sanvēdana yāda hai?" (Especially Helen. Or Yukimi. Yeah, I know you have a crush on her. Twin Telepathy remember?)

After some time, thinking this hard, Erik stood up and declared to us, "Here's how this is gonna go."

In Diablo's POV

The meeting was over. I rushed to the bathroom to test out the shrink stone my germana sent me. I locked the door because if anyone found out I had a slab of a rare type of Adder Stone, the guys would never stop asking me to borrow it.

"Yeah!" I quietly shouted out, doing poses with the stone in front of the mirror. "Uh huh, oh yeah!"

I checked the door before saying, "Pretty impressive." I walked back before saying again and activating the shrink stone, "What are you looking at? Boo ya!" A blast of white light came from the stone and shrunk the mouthwash. "You got shrunk tiny mouthwash!" I shrunk the soap. "You done been shrunk!" My phone rang and it was my uncle. "Ola?"

"¿Tienes la piedra?" (Have you got the stone?) My uncle asked me in Spanish. "Ella quería asegurarse de que usted lo consiguio." (She wanted to make sure you got it.)

"Oh sí Tengo la piedra contracción bien." (Oh yeah I got the shrink stone alright.) I replied.

"¿Estás jugando con él?" (Are you playing with it?) My uncle asked me.

"No, no estoy ... jugar con él." (No I'm not...playing with it.) I lied to him.

"¿Qué pasa con Veridia?" (What about Veridia?) My uncle asked me.

"Veridia?" I spluttered before laughing. "No ... no me hagas reír. No" (Don't...don't make me laugh. No.) My uncle began talking more before I cut him off. "PD La perra ni siquiera sabe que estoy aquí. Y PPS, por el momento he terminado con ella, ella va a ser totalmente enganchado!"(P.S. The bitch doesn't even know I'm here. And P.P.S., by the time I'm done with her, she's gonna be begging for mercy!) I shrunk my toilet in the process. "Adios." I leaned down to the miniature toilet.

"Aww." I cooed at the toilet. "Look at you, a little tiny toilet, for a little tiny baby to..." I didn't finish because the toilet exploded in my face, my tail forming in the process. "No! Curse you tiny toilet!"

In Kimi's POV

Me and my friends were at the beach, tanning ourselves. I could never tan. Thalie though has some hope.

"Man, I kind of miss going into the sea." Helen said.

"Um you kind of can." Rose said.
"No." Helen said. "I meant in public. I used to bring my cousins in there and tackle them in the water."

"Hello, ladies." We heard Dylan Walsh behind us with a surfboard. "Wanna join me?"

Helen was about to make a snappy comment, when Thalie stepped in. "No thanks Dylan." She said warmly.

"Your loss." And he left with the board in the sea.

"Look at the bright side Helen." Rose said. "At least we can catch up to Thalie."

"I guess." I said. Putting on some lotion, I saw Raiden, at least at much description as I put. I got the brown hair and tan skin right. He was wearing a short sleeved green plaid button shirt, jeans and sneakers. It looked like he was staring at us. Mostly at Thalie. Who I may add, was staring at him, blushing a little. Thalie waved to him and Raiden winked at her.

"I saw that." Helen said to Thalie.

"What?"

"I think you have someone watching you Thalie." Rose teased prompting Thalie to bury her face in the towels, while I just rolled my eyes. I remembered Xhiva from earlier. He seemed pretty interesting. And smart. But he kept talking to me in what sounded like preschool flirting. But I had only just met the guy. It's not like I liked him? Right?


No one's POV

At Kimi's house…

Xhiva made his way to Yukimi's elite house. He had hacked the Australian government files and gotten her address. He had to admit, her place was pretty impressive. He rang the doorbell, hoping for someone to answer. He heard footsteps and saw a Japanese woman at the door.

"Oh Hello." She greeted.

"Oh Konnichiwa, Hamasaki-San." Xhiva spoke in Japanese.

Mrs. Hamasaki looked surprised. "Oh Nihongo hanramasu?" She asked. (You speak Japanese?)

"Hai." Xhiva said. "Watashi wa nihongo o hanashimasu." (Yes, I speak Japanese.) "Watashi wa yukimi no yūjindesu." (I am a friend of Yukimi's.) "Yukimi hōmu wa arimasu ka?" (Is Yukimi home?)

"Hai. Watashi wa kanojo o shutoku shimasu. Dōzo ohairikudasai." (Yes I will get her. Please come in.)

Xhiva entered the pristine house and awaited Yukimi. Said mermaid was in her room with her friends.

"Why didn't she tell him I wasn't here?" Kimi asked annoyed.

"But you are here." Thalie retorted.
"He doesn't need to know that." Kimi said.

"We can't lie to him." Rose backed up Thalie.

"Why not?" Kimi asked. "It's not like he matters."

"I don't think that lying to Xhiva is a good idea." Helen said. "He did find your notes on Mako. Maybe he saw something else."

"There wasn't anything interesting to see!" Kimi complained.

"Look, we don't want to make him suspicious." Thalie reasoned. "Just find out what he wants." Sighing, Kimi agreed to the plan and went downstairs to meet the boy, who was looking at the Japanese artifacts.

"Uh hi." Xhiva said to Kimi who only smiled back.

"How may I be of service?" She asked which only caused Xhiva to laugh slightly.

"Um… I thought…that we…" Xhiva tried very hard to shut his mouth. "Could talk."

"About what?" Kimi asked.

"Mako." Xhiva said.

"And what is it about Mako you want to converse about?" Kimi asked.

"Well, your notes indicated more than a…geology project." Xhiva said.

"Were they?" Kimi asked, playing dumb.

"And just a couple of weeks ago, there was the giant flash of bright light from the volcano." Xhiva said.

"I didn't see anything." Kimi said quickly.

"Playing the oblivious card I see." Xhiva observed.

"What card?" Kimi asked.

"Ok." Xhiva said finally. "If you wanna go like that, but I'm gonna find out what's going on." Xhiva left the house, causing Kimi to follow him.

"There's nothing going on." She said trying to cover it up.

"Doesn't it feel good to stretch your legs?" Xhiva asked me out of nowhere.

Kimi stopped in surprise. "Why what's wrong with my legs?"

Xhiva shrugged. "Nothing at all. You've got awesome legs." He mentally screamed for saying something like that. He was worried he would sound like a pervert. Which is something he really didn't want to sound like.

"They… do the job." Kimi said. "Why are you interested in Mako?"

"Well I hear it's a tourist attraction." Xhiva said. "Guess that's one more thing on the list of things we have in common."
"We don’t have anything in common!" Kimi exclaimed frustrated.

"You really like to verbal joust don’t you?" Xhiva asked.

"Well then stop being vexatious and I won’t!" Kimi exclaimed again.

Xhiva leaned down on her and whispered, "I knew I could get you to like me." Xhiva and Kimi walked more to the pier talking.

"Xhiva, I'm not that interested in you." Kimi said to him.

"Good." He replied. "I didn't want there to be any misunderstanding."

"What misunderstanding?" Kimi asked.

"That's the point." Xhiva said. "There is none, we're just two people out for a walk together."

"Um, we are not together." Kimi defended herself.

Xhiva only chuckled. "Right, we just happen to be two people walking in the same direction at the same pace."

"Why do you want to talk to me about Mako?" Kimi asked, halting Xhiva.

"Same reason as you." He answered. "Sight seeing, wasn't it?"

"We were just…" Kimi looked for a lie. "Looking around."

Xhiva got closer to her, a little. "Look, you don't have to play that game with me. I…know you're different, special even."

"We just met!" Kimi said. "You hardly know me!"

"Watashi wa, yukimi o okonaimasu. Hontō ni sō." (I do, Yukimi. I really do.) Xhiva retorted back in Japanese, which Kimi, knowing the language, understood perfectly.

"Maybe we should stop." Kimi said, just before a hose sprayed on her and pushing her back to the fishing boat. Xhiva rushed to the girl to find sort of a different person. Kimi had even more white streaks in her hair, her skin was paler, and her eyes. Her eyes were like glaciers in the arctic, pure teal. And her mermaid’s tail was sleek, bronze, and all. To put it in simple words, she was utterly breathtaking. Literally, Xhiva stopped breathing the moment he saw her.

"Hey!" Xhiva heard the old fisherman behind him. "What are you doing?"

"Nothing." Xhiva covered up. "It's all good." He turned back to the boat, only to find the mermaid gone. Groaning, Xhiva banged his head against the wooden pole. "Blew it!" Yep, Xhiva had kind of screwed up.

In the moon pool…

Kimi's POV

Of all the mistakes I could have made, this was definently the worst. If I had a list of the worst days of my life, this would be number 3. I made my way, where frost started forming, as I started crying.
As my tears came out, a mini snowstorm formed over my head, little snowflakes falling on my head. "Are you ok?" I heard Evie behind me.

"I'm fine." I snapped, the ice on the rocky ledge I was on getting harder.

"What's wrong?" Zac asked.

"Nothing." I said.

"Kimi do you want me to go and get one of the others?" Evie asked.

"No!" I exclaimed. "I don't wanna see anyone!"

"Please Yukimi." Evie begged. "Tell us what's the problem."

"Whatever happened, it can't be that bad." Zac said. Turning around I told them, my voice breaking, "He saw me."

"Who?" Zac asked puzzled.

"One of Erik's buddies, Xhiva!" I said, crying. "He saw my tail!" And I left the moon pool to go drown my sorrows. I found a coral ledge and as I landed on it, the entire ledge froze, making an icy bed. It was actually pretty comfortable.

In the pier

No one's POV

Zac, Sirena, Rose, Evie, and Thalie were all there.

"Poor Yukimi." Rose said. "How'd it happen?"

"We didn't get a chance to ask her." Zac explained. "All she said was that some boy named Xhiva saw her."

"He did see Kimi's work on Mako and mermaids."

"Well what are we gonna do?" Evie asked.

"If Thalie would agree, she would use her voice power to lure him into the ocean."

"You mean…" Evie paled. "Drown him?"

"You know what Cotton's parrot said, "Dead men tell no tales." Rose said, smiling.

"That's not funny and you're not helping." Thalie reprimanded.

"Maybe we could talk to Xhiva." Zac suggested. "Maybe convince him not to say anything about what he saw."

"If you tell Erik that you know Ondina has a tail." Sirena reasoned. "He's gonna wanna know how you know and…what else you're hiding."
Zac just sighed. "We we gotta do something. Because if he doesn't do something, we're all in trouble."

In the ocean on the frozen coral ledge, sat Kimi, still looking blue. Swimming towards her was none other than Helen Carter. She held Kimi's hand silently telling her to be strong with her warm gold eyes. Smiling a little, The Omega of Ice and the Omega of Fire made their way to the moon pool.

"Yukimi?" Helen asked.

"What's the very first thing that crosses your mind when you see your tail?" Kimi asked coolly.

Helen gave it some thought before answering, "Don't show yourself to land people."

"Mermaids have been our greatest secret for 9 years." Kimi said. "And I broke the most important rule in history."

"Look it was an accident, and you know it." Helen reasoned.

"Helen you know that's not gonna cut it." Kimi said. "Xhiva saw me, a me that I shouldn't have. We should never had tried that experiment. I'm sorry I dragged all of you into this."

"Kimi, you're my best friend." Helen said smiling. "I would have gone with you anyway. As with the other girls, because as you know, we have your back as you have ours. So watcha gonna do?"

"Swim to the pod." Kimi said. "I don't give a shit if I am indoctrinated. I gotta tell them what happened. It's over Helen."

"Yukimi." Helen said firmly. "Don't go talking like that. Look at me, Before you met us, what was your life like? You used to get picked on all the time mercilessly because of your smarts and your grades. Some even called you an Asian stereotype. And when you became our best friend, no one dared call you a nerd, just as no one dared to call me a nigger. It's true, back in London, I was actually the only black girl in my school. If you can get past all that teasing because of your amazing IQ, you can think of a way out of this mess."

"I appreaciate your concern Helen, but I don't see another way out." Kimi said sadly.

"For someone so intelligent, you're a little dumb in these situations." Helen snapped. "It's simple, talk to Xhiva. Ask him to keep quiet."

"Helen, you think I haven't thought about that?" Kimi asked. "He's a normal boy. And a teenager. This is probably the most exciting thing that's ever happened to him. There's an 11% chance that he will keep quiet."

"Then I suggest you get your moping tail over there and talk to him." Helen said, patting Kimi's shoulder.


At the café…

I walked to the café, where I saw Xhiva as predicted. Nodding to him, he followed me to the same place where I got splashed earlier.

"Kimi." I heard him behind me.
"Don't say anything." I said. "Just listen. What happened today was an accident. You were never meant to see me like that. I mean, that me. Which I can guess has you a little freaked out, because trust me, the first time I saw my tail, it was a pretty big shock. No offense. The truth is…mermaids exist. And there's a whole world out there that land people don't know about. And this world will be in danger if you say anything to anyone. Do you understand? You cannot tell anyone what you saw. Please Xhiva, I'm asking you to keep this a secret."

"Can I speak please?" Xhiva asked. "I will never tell anyone. I promise. I mean…how could I sell out the most beautiful mermaid I've ever seen?" I blushed a little.

"Xhiva, I'm the only mermaid you've ever seen." I said.

"Uh, you might be surprised by what I've seen." Xhiva said assure. "There's uh…something I want to tell you."

"Xhiva, really?" I asked walking down the railway to the dock. "A land boy meets a mermaid and now he's asking for her hand? I'm sorry but it's just too risky."

"That's what I'm trying to tell you Kimi!" Xhiva exclaimed. "I'm not a…"

"I'm sorry, Xhiva." I said sadly. "From here on out, we are not friends." I dove into the water and surfaced to see the Hindi boy once more. "Sayonara."

"Kimi wait!" Xhiva dived into the water and he disappeared. There was movement in the water and a blue muscular tail flapped. Could he be? Behind me, Xhiva surfaced. There was no denying it. Xhiva was a merman.

"Told you we had things in common." Xhiva said smiling.

In the grotto…

Me and the girls were discussing things. "Xhiva and his foster family are mermen?" Rose asked. "You sure?"

I gave a her a "seriously?" look. "The tail is a real giveaway."

Thalie paced around the room. "First Zac, now 6 more?"

Helen grinned. "I'm pretty sure that the Mako Mermaids aren't gonna like this."

"Why?" Kimi asked. "They said they would keep the secret."

Helen scoffed. "Well of course, they have to."

"But you believed him just like that?" Thalie asked.

"Yes. Xhiva could have blabbed about my tail, but he didn't." Kimi said. "But he didn't. Instead, he showed me his. I say that's a fair demonstration of trust."

"Does this mean…" Helen began smiling. "You're not gonna swim to the pod?"

"A good friend reminded me that 3 amazing girls are there for me to support them. I wouldn't want to let them down by not doing that. Friends forever?" I stuck my fist out and they did as well.

"Friends forever." They all said in unison.
At the café…

The senior merteens sat discussing what they had learned. It turns out that Ondina knew the Consorzio brothers because they had started from the same clan, a pod of mermaids and mermen. They all originated from Italy. Ondina kept Erik and Raiden's tails a secret in order to protect them.

"You mean they're like me?" Zac asked. "With a…"

"Exactly like you." Sirena confirmed.

"Wow." It was all Zac could say.

"What up dudes?" Cam said from behind them.

Thinking quick the merteens waved him off.

"What are these boys doing here?" Evie asked.

"Kimi's trying to figure that out." Sirena said.

"Aren't most mermaids and mermen supposed to be enemies?" Zac quizzed.

Mimmi took a sly smile. "Then this should be an interesting encounter."

She could not be more right as Kimi approached the 15 year old Chinese-Hindi merman who was looking out into the sea.

"What are you doing here?" She asked him.

"I'm a sucker for a sea view?" Xhiva replied lamely.

"You know what I mean." Kimi said. "Why did you and your brother come to this place?"

"We move around the world, checking out the coasts." Xhiva sort of lied. "We saw signs of mermaid activity. You guys weren't exactly subtle. Your friend's moon ring and your hair ties were the clinchers. It's why we…left our tribe."

"Then why didn't you tell me who you were when you searched through my work?" Kimi asked.

"I was afraid I would scare you off." Xhiva explained truthfully. "Things haven't gone too well between mermaids and mermen."

"What's your interest in Mako?" Kimi asked again.

Xhiva shrugged. "What's yours?"

"Were you born annoying or did you take classes?" Kimi asked.

Xhiva laughed. "See? There's your sense of humor!"

Kimi smiled. "Well are you gonna answer my question?"

"I get the feeling… that Mako's important." Xhiva again lied.

"It certainly is to natural mermaids." Kimi said.

"No." Xhiva said. "Mako's special, like you. Maybe we could…join forces? Find out why?"
Kimi looked into Xhiva's reddish brown eyes before saying, "Maybe." She checked her watch and swore.

"I'm gonna be late!" She said. "I have to get to dinner!"

"I understand." Xhiva said. He took one last look at her before saying without even realizing it, "She looks so beautiful in the sunlight."

"Thanks!" Kimi said. Xhiva paled.

"Did I say that out loud?" He asked. Kimi nodded. "Damn it!" Kimi just laughed and ran off.
Boys Being Boys

In the park

Raiden's POV

I walked in the park where I was supposed to meet my brother. I wondered what it was this time. Maybe he found out about the robberies me and my friends have pulled. How he always knew where I was on land was a mystery. But I overheard him and Xhiva talk something about a tracking device in my phone.

"Raiden." Erik said behind me, causing me to jump and shock him a little.

"Dude! Seriously?" I asked.

Erik just laughed. "Sorry bro. I found Zac."

I just groaned. "Why do we need to talk to that dweeb?"

"Because he's the solo merman and we need to show him the ropes." Erik answered. I just rolled my eyes. I followed him to the 17 year old Asian/Caucasian merman.

"You're a hard man to track down." Erik said out loud. "You wanna hang out?"

There was a pause until Zac replied with, "Above or underwater?"

"Sorry dude." I said. "Erik wanted to tell you but…what was he supposed to say? 'Hey everyone, we're the Consorzio bros who are descended from an ancient line of mermen. Who's up for a fro yo?'" We all just stood there.

"You guys went out of your way to keep it a secret." Zac said.

"Of course we did." I snapped. "Who wouldn't keep it a secret?"

"But why didn't any of you say something when you knew what I was?" Zac asked us.

"We have to be cautious as you guys." I explained. "Besides Erik here is the big cheese."

"Ondina told me how you got your tail though." Erik said. "A land boy with merman powers. Awesome."

"And you two are the real deal." Zac said. "Bet you're both pretty fast in the water."

I just scoffed. I was the third fastest in the Blade Boys. "Is that a challenge?"

"How about a race to Mako?" Erik asked. "But first…"

At Carlos' house…

No one's POV

"What's the newbie doing at our place?!" Raiden yelled out as we reached said destination. "Mako's that way!"

Zac and Erik just laughed at Raiden's expense as we reached the door.
"Chillax you big baby." Zac said laughing.

"I told you Raiden." Erik said to me. "I gotta show him the other guys. And anyway Zac's never seen our place."

"Oh great." Zac said as we entered. "I get to see your fishboy place."

"Heads up!" Zac stopped as a home makeshift bike zoomed past him. The rider got off and left the bike to Zac's curiosity. The house itself is very quiet yet at the same time filled with technology and sea stuff. Zac looked at the bike in admiration. It was a yellow mini mortercycle that was suitable for riding in home, but only for tests. The wheels looked like they were attached to nothing as glowing moonstone held onto them.

"Whoa." Zac muttered. "Lunastone-mag suspension?" He had obviously spent a lot of time listening to Kimi as she helped him with his science work.

"Oi." The bike's rider said suddenly. He was wearing a black leather jacket over a white t shirt, black gym pants, and Nike shoes. "Who are you?"

Zac fumbled for an answer before Erik stood up. "Speed Demon. This is Zac."

Speed Demon took off his helmet, revealing himself to be a 15 year old Chinese looking boy with spiky black hair and jade green eyes. It was none other than Xandou Tiraken.

He popped his bubble gum in greeting. "Welcome to the fishboy place." He said sarcastically.

Zac laughed. "I've never seen a bike powered by moonstone. And I don't see any brakes."

Xandou smiled, taking out the back wheel. "Zero resistance plus no brakes, equals faster bike. But sadly, not, fast, enough." He tossed the wheel in a bin of similar wheels. "Yet." And Xandou walked upstairs.

Zac heard a whirring sound and followed it. He found a station with two pillars in front of a guy who was wearing goggles. It was a lab full of tools and computers. He got to the pillars before the guy stopped him. "Whoa!" The guy cried out putting out his hand. "Do not move! Behind the safety line please!" Zac did said action before Erik stepped in.

"Hey Network." He greeted said merman. "This is Zac." Network took off his head gear revealing a Hindi boy with windswept black hair and reddish brown eyes. He wore a green t shirt over jeans. This was Xhiva Tiraken.

"Hello Zac." Network/Xhiva greeted. "Prepare to be amazed. Catch." He threw an apple through the pillars and the apple was cut into paper slices! Network flipped a switch and the pillars activated what appeared to be a green glowing window.

"Is that a…laser window?" Zac was beyond impressed.

"Yep." Network said. "With a little magnetic confinement for ultra precision. Oh hey Voltage." He looked at Raiden.

"Need this." Speed Demon/Xandou said suddenly swiping a wrench using his superspeed.

"Dude!" Network cried. "That's my stuff!"

Zac just stood there gaping. "How did he do that?" He asked Voltage/Raiden.
"Xandou has the ability of superspeed. He has all basic merman powers too." He explained. "Think of him in the water torpedo swimming and multiply that by 10. Same as a cheetah on land."

"Whoa." Zac could only say.

"How he was born like that, we have no idea." Erik said. "We think it may have something to do with his mother."

"Hey guys." A thick Hispanic voice sounded from the kitchen.

"Hey." Erik said. Carlos is a merman from Spain who was in his 30's. He was pretty skinny.

"So you must be Zac." Carlos said approaching him and shaking his hand. "I've heard so much about you."

"Thanks." Zac said.


Zac snickered. "Bass Boy?" He asked between laughs. Erik turned beet red in embarrassment.

"For the 200th time people!" Erik said frustrated. "My voice is not that deep!" (A.N, Alex Cubis, if you're reading this, sorry but your voice is freakishly deep. I will tell you that.)

"Sorry mi compadre." Carlos said. "But your voice is pretty deep and I'm still convinced that you used to take testosterone."

"Not as bad as Speed Demon when I caught him taking steroids." Erik said.

"That was a dare, BB!" Speed Demon's voice echoed.

"Anyway." Voltage/Raiden explained. "Carlos here pays the bills and runs the house. We call him Salsa."


"I spill salsa on my shirt one time Diablo!" Salsa/Carlos shouted. "One time!"

Erik just rolled his eyes and smiled. "Said merman is the one who comes up with the nicknames.: He explained to Zac.

"Uh." Zac began. "Who's Diablo?"

"This guy." A voice sounded. "Right here." Right above them was a white parrot that doged Raiden's lightning blasts as it tried to get away.

"Raiden!" Erik scolded his little brother.

"What?" He asked. "You know how much I hate birds out of their cages!"

"You're afraid of birds?" Zac asked smiling.

"No!" Raiden said. "I just hate it when they're out of their cages. And the wings… it's freaky."

"Other than that, did that bird just talk?" Zac asked.

Erik just chuckled. "That my friend is not just a bird. Come on." Hearing Erik, the bird began to
change form. The feathers on the tips of the wings melted into hands, the wings stretched into arms, the talons merged together as human feet and the bird's legs became human legs. On the upper body, the feathers disappeared revealing a small upper body. On the head, the feathers became hair on top while the rest became skin. The beak shrank until it became a human nose. Finally, the once-bird dropped to the floor.

Standing in front of Zac, Bass Boy/Erik and Voltage/Raiden was a 15 year old Hispanic merman. He wore a white t shirt with a red and orange bull, ¾ jean shorts and brown closed toed sandals. On his head was an orange cap for the Spanish soccer team. His eyebrows were arched perfectly and he wore a grin that gave Zac the feeling that he shouldn't trust this guy with anything sharper than a pillow. His eyes were the ones that said that statement. They were a bright amber orange.

"This." Voltage/Raiden introduced. "Is Diablo Nagual. Also known as Wolfboy."

"Hi there." Wolfoy/Diablo greeted. "Sneaky devil by day. But by night…" Diablo proceeded to transform into 3 different animals: An eagle, a Kimono Dragon, and a horse and back into Diablo. "I'm also a handsome devil."

Zac stood gaping like a fish. "How… did… you?"

"I'm a morpher." Diablo explained. "I can transform into any animal."

"Basically about 1,000 species of animal, land or sea." Erik/Bass Boy clarified.

"Shut up." Zac could only say. The rest just laughed. "So Wolfboy, if I may call you that, what is it you're working on?"

"No I'm not a scientist or an inventor." Diablo/Wolfboy explained. "Though I am a MAJOR science enthusiast. I've been trying to get Network's girlfriend, Kimi…"

"SHE'S NOT MY GIRLFRIEND!" Network/Xhiva screamed walking in the kitchen. The rest just snickered.

"Then explain why you kept muttering her name in your sleep!" Xandou/Speed Demon yelled back. Network/Xhiva turned beat red and started muttering a string of Cantonese curses.

"Dude!" Diablo/Wolfboy cried. "Language! Literally!"

Network scoffed. "Oh and you're telling me that you know Cantonese?"

"No." Wolfboy replied. "But it doesn't take a genius to know what you said was pretty horrendous."

"And for the record." Speed Demon said to his brother. "Kimi under the sunlight? Seriously?"

"You promised you wouldn't peek into my dreams!" Network exclaimed.

"Technically it was a vision, and you and I can't help it when we get visions of each other." Speed Demon retorted.

"Vision?" Zac spoke up out of the blue.

"That's right." Network said. "Vision sharing, it's a mer twin thing."

"Wait, you two." Zac gestured to the Tiraken brothers. "Are twins?" Xhiva and Xandou stood by each other.
"Personally, I think we look identical." Network stated proudly. "Not to worry, you are not to first to doubt that we are twins."

"I understand why." Speed Demon said. "I'm so much better looking."

Network gave him a glare before continuing. "The reality is, our mom is Chinese and our father is Hindi."

"So you have a crush on Yukimi Hamasaki?" Zac questioned Network.

"Oh you bet he does." Bass Boy said.

"He talked about Yukimi nonstop." Voltage said.

"Shut up." Network muttered. "I didn't."

"Yeah, yeah you did!" Wolfboy shouted. "You was swooning! 'Oh Yukimi Hamasaki! My darling lover girl!' Wolfboy didn't get to say another word because Network had started tackling Wolfboy. Speed Demon joined in but got caught up in the fight and all 3 of them started fighting. While Erik and Carlos tried to break up the fight, Voltage led Zac to the basement.

"So you're an Omega?" Zac asked.

"Yep." Voltage replied. "Guess which element am I?"

"Electricity." Zac said.

"No." Voltage/Raiden replied. "It's lightning."

Zac looked puzzled. "Same thing."

"Lightning sounds cooler." Voltage complained.

"Touche." Zac said.

"It's obviously how I got the name Voltage," Raiden said. He pointed to the two doors. "The one on the left is for the sea entrance, which is why we are in the only beach house up north town. The left is my band's room." Voltage opened the door revealing a rock band's room, with instruments, rock band posters, speakers, the whole nine yards.

"You guys have a band?" Zac asked.

"Yep." Voltage answered. "It's our hobby besides the twins' work, Wolfboy's pranking, and my baseball."

"You play ball?" Zac asked.

"A little." Voltage replied. "Band and no band, me and the other 15 year olds are the Blade Boys."

"Very original." Zac commented. "You know I play guitar too. And I sing a little. I'm a tenor."

"Me too." Voltage agreed, picking up his electric guitar and strumming as he spoke. "So I'm in here, chilling and I hear Carlos going, "Raiden. (Strums a few notes) Take out the trash!" (Strums more notes) And I say, "I ain't taking out no stinking trash!" (Strums about 3 more bars) Cause I'm a rebel! (Strums more measures) No one tells me what to do! Erik says, "Raiden, make your bed." And I say, "I'll make my bed when I'm good and ready." (Strums a chord) Or never! (Strums another chord
while playing the guitar behind his back) What are you gonna do about it? (Strums a long chord) Yeah, I make my own rules."

"RAAIIDEEN!" Bass Boy yelled from upstairs.

"Coming Erik!" Raiden yelled back, dropping his guitar and running upstairs with Zac following. They both arrived to see the fight stopped.

"What's the yell for?" Zac asked.

Erik just shrugged. "I just felt like doing it, plus the fight was over."

"Anyways." Wolfboy said. "I've been trying to get Kimi to make a formula, that can turn me into an XMen at will." Wolfboy showed them a comic of the XMen with Wolverine on it. "But she says that's "not science."

Zac only chuckled. "I gotta agree with you, it's really not."

"Yeah, and I guess the cookie robots I asked the Tiraken Hermanos aren't "science" either is it?" Wolfboy asked.

"Nope." The twins replied in unison.

"What about, invisible Nutella?" Wolfboy asked again, prompting us to roll our eyes. "Imagine eating Nutella, but everyone just thinks you're crazy!"

"Just stop." Network said. Voltage, Bass Boy, and Zac had already been outside on the house dock.

"Pretty crazy family you got there." Zac said.

Erik just sighed. "Yep, it gets hectic."

"You get used to it." Raiden said.

"So how do I get a nickname?" Zac asked.

"Whoa!" Erik said out loud.

"Hold the brakes!" Raiden said holding his hand up. "You can't just get a nickname!"

"In order to get a nickname, and be one of us." Erik explained. "You gotta earn it."

"Ah, damn it." Zac cursed.

"Well." Raiden said out loud, already at the edge of the dock. "While you two are talking, I just could have that head start and beat you idiots to Mako."

"Oh no you don't!" Erik and Zac said in unison and dived after Raiden. The raced for miles and miles. When they reached the first trench, Raiden and Erik stepped on it going faster than ever. Soon, the surfaced to breath. Raiden being first, Erik being second, and of course, Zac being third.

"Dude!" Zac exclaimed. "I thought I was fast!"

"We have been doing this a little longer than you have genius." Raiden retorted.

"I had you both at the first trench though." Zac said. "And then Raiden hit the gas, followed by Erik
and I was like "where'd they go?"

"Well for a rookie, you've got some real speed." Raiden said.

"Thanks." Zac said.

"You guys wanna keep going?" Erik asked. "There's a deep trench around here, with a radical drop off. Unless you two are so tired."

"Oh you wish Consorizio." Zac said challenging. We dived back into the sea, made the drop off and surfaced.

"How was that for a wicked drop off?" Raiden asked.

"It was pretty cool!" Zac replied.

Erik chuckled. "Stick with me. Me and my brother have got a whole lot to show you about being a merman." Just then, Zac's face turned serious.

"Guys we have company." He said. "Down." It didn't take a genius to figure out that a boat was right behind them. Luckily they ducked before surfacing.

"That was way to close." Erik said.

"Yeah." Raiden backed up. "By the scales of our tails."

"That's Evie's dad." Zac said taking a look at the boat.

"You sure?" Erik asked.

"Positive." Zac said. "Wonder why he's here. He's never done a dive tour to Mako before."

"This is not cool." Erik said.

"We gotta get out of here." Raiden said. The trio swam to the café and walked in to meet Thalie, her gang, Mimmi, Sirena, Evie, and Ondina.

"Did you get my message?" Evie asked her boyfriend.

"Yeah." Zac replied grimly. "After your dad's boat almost ran us down."

"Wait, the 3 of you were at Mako?" Sirena asked.

"Just in the water." Erik clarified. "Don't worry, no one saw us."

"We have to stop your father taking people out there." Thalie said, with Ondina and Mimmi nodding in agreement.

"Why?" Raiden asked. "If we stay away, there's nothing to see. Besides, can't you just go in stealth mode?"

"Making ourselves invisible is not the solution." Thalie said stubbornly. "I need to think." She left. Thalie was wearing a purple and green tye dye tanktop and dark blue shorts. And blue flip flops. She had her hair in a ponytail. Raiden followed her outside.

"Thalie." He called out to her.
"I can't believe that you can't see how dangerous this is!" The red haired mermaid exclaimed. "Am I the only one here?"

"Stopping Evie's dad could draw attention to us." Raiden reasoned. "Are you that stubborn to try to blow our cover?"

"I have to protect Mako!" Thalie reasoned. "It's my duty, even from last year!"

"It's a big ocean." Raiden said. "There's lots of space. I'll show you parts of the ocean you won't believe."

"Raiden, you don't get it." Thalie said. "Mako Island is not something that can be dismissed just like that. My mother was born there! My aunt was born there! Our pod has one home, Raiden. One home! They live there and they're not leaving!"

"I didn't know how much that island meant to you." Raiden said understanding.

"Now you know." Thalie said. "Can you please help me?"

Raiden stood silent.

"Right." Thalie said, understanding. "I get it. You almost killed me. Why should you?"

"You're right." Raiden said. "This isn't my fight."

"I've waited for your answer since the moment you saved my life." Thalie said. "I'm not waiting anymore." With that, she left and took a walk in the streets.

Mimmi was following her. "Mermen are different Thalassa. You can't expect him to understand."

"Why?" Thalie asked. "This isn't about mermaids verses merman. It's about merpeople verses land people. Why is it he can't see that it is his fight?"

"He's really gotten under your scales hasn't he?" Mimmi asked.

Thalie scoffed. "Of course not! I'm just…angry for wasting time talking to him. I should have known it was pointless."

"So." Mimmi began. "What are we gonna do about Evie's dad?"

Thalie smiled. "What us mermaids have always done. Look after ourselves."

At the café Erik was talking with Zac. "Is your step sister always this protective of her family?" He asked Zac.

"Pretty much." Zac answered. "Ever since the prophecy, she's been a tiny bit tighter."

"Prophecy?" Erik asked.

"Long story." Zac said.

"Hey." Raiden said out of the blue. "Guys I've got good news."

"You're a hologram and I'm an only child?" Erik asked causing Zac to snicker.

"Better." Raiden glared at his brother. "I've just got off the phone with the guys and they told me to
tell you Zac, that you have been invited to an all out, all you can eat seafood buffet, merman dinner at my place!

"So I get to have dinner with you guys?" Zac asked. "Sure! I'm in!"

"Yes!" Erik said before leaving to work on his shift.

At the merman house…

Zac rang the doorbell at the Fluctes house, to be greeted by Erik.

"Zac just in time!" Erik greeted. "Come on in!"

In the living room was Diablo hula hooping and singing up and in a d major scale, (In tenor voice). All of a sudden his hula hoops were dropped by Carlos’ telekinesis.

"Diablo." He said sternly. "What did I tell you? No hula hooping in the house."

"Killjoy." Diablo/Wolfboy muttered.

"Is he always this active?" Zac asked Erik.

"He's still a kid." Erik explained. "And he's adopted and all by Carlos."

"Where are his real family?" Zac asked.

"When you live in South American waters." Wolfboy explained. "Your family takes care of you until you're nine. Then they take off."

"My dad was a bull fighter." Carlos added on. "He left me when I was 19 to join the pros."

"Who are your parents?" Zac asked Wolfboy, whose face took grim at the reminder of his parents.

"Well my dad's a psycho pervert and my mom's a political bitch." Wolfboy simply explained. "Trust me, you do not wanna know my mom."

"Where are the twins?" Voltage asked.

"Upstairs playing Call of Duty." Erik said.

"Now we're done!" Two voices said in unison. The Tiraken twins ran downstairs.

"Let's eat!" Raiden said, running to the table. It was littered with bowls of sea food. Of course Zac attacked the prawns, while Raiden attacked the clams.

"I'm just glad my step sister isn't here." Zac said. "She'd freak at the sight of all this fish."

Raiden stopped eating. "Wait, are you saying, Thalie, hates seafood?"

"Strangely, yes." Zac replied.

"A mermaid hating seafood?" Speed Demon asked.

"Now that's something I would pay to see!" Network added on.
Diablo took a whiff of the air and covered his mouth. "Dude! How much perfume does your girlfriend have? I can smell it on you, from how many times she's hugged you or kissed you!" Zac could only stare in shock. Diablo and him were on opposite sides of the rectangular mahogany table. Yet Diablo could smell something on him. The pieces all fit together.

"Diablo Nagual." Zac asked. "Are you part dog?"

"No." Diablo replied.

"Good." Zac said going back to his food.

"I'm part werewolf." Zac nearly choked at his food at Diablo's sentence. He certainly hadn't expected the word "werewolf" to be in that sentence.

"Holy flipping shit. Are you kidding me?" Was all Zac could say.

Erik just chuckled. "Nope. Diablo is a quarter werewolf. It's how he got the name Wolfboy."

"And because of this." Wolfboy opened his palm to reveal on it, a birthmark in the shape of a wolf's paw.

"Technically 25% of his blood is werewolf." Network just shrugged.

"Network." Speed Demon said. "Must you be so technical about everything?"

"Well he is a technopath after all." Voltage pointed out.

"What's a technopath?" Zac asked, causing a shocked look on Wolfboy's face.

"Didn't you read comic books?" Wolfboy asked.

"Not really." Zac replied.

"A technopath is a person who can manipulate technology with their mind." Wolfboy explained. "It's how Xhiva got the name Network."

"Whoa." Zac said.

"I know right?" Voltage agreed.

"How does it work?" Zac asked.

"Say for example, that you were gonna send a text." Network said. "A normal person needs to type it right? But I can just think of the message and send it through the phone mentally."

"So basically, it's like a telepathic TV remote?" Zac confirmed it, earning a nod from Network.

"You know what I just realized?" Speed Demon asked. "Thalassa Santos is your step sister right?"

"Yes." Zac replied.

"And Rita Santos is her mom right?" Speed Demon asked.

"Where are you going with this?" Zac asked.

Speed Demon gave Zac a deadpanned look. "You never realized that Suncoast's principal is basically your stepmother?"
The room turned very silent. Zac dropped his food out of his mouth without realizing it. "Oh my fucking God." He said. Zac couldn't believe that he was the stepson of the principal. First Diablo being have werewolf blood running in his veins, then Xhiva being cyberkinetic, then Xandou having superspeed, now his mermaid mentor being his stepmother? What else was to come?

"Ok that is freaky." Erik said breaking the silence. "Especially if she's our principal."

Voltage just snickered. "What kind of whaleshit are you talking about?"

"That's part of the reason why we called you four here." Carlos said. "You four will not be spending all this year not inside reading comic books or playing video games. Instead you are going to a special place to spend the weekdays…High School."

Immediately, the four 15 year olds tried to get from their seats but thanks to Erik and Carlos, the Tiraken twins were pushed down to their seats telekinetically, Raiden got tripped over and poor Wolfboy was splashed.

Raiden could only stare in horror. "CHE COSA?! Che tipo di terreno merda è questo?!" (WHAT?! What kind of land shit is this?)

"Raiden." Erik before speaking in Italian. "Avanti. E 'una nuova esperienza per voi. E poi, nessuno vuole essere rinchiusi in una casa tutto il giorno." (Come on. It's a new experience for you. And besides, no one wants to be cooped in a house all day.)

"Still, I'm not going to a place filled to the brim with Neanderthals." Speed Demon complained.

"And other so called smarties." Network agreed.

"Yeah, I don't do uniforms." Wolfboy said.

"I read somewhere that they allow birds to roam free in land school." Voltage spoke up. "I also heard that they peck you in the face if you don't do your homework."

Zac lost it then. He was howling with laughter. "I can't believe." He said between laughs. "That the big tough Blade Boys are afraid of going to high school!"

"Oh laugh it up asshole!" Speed Demon challenged. "You're forgetting who we are. Us Tiraken twins graduated MIT at age 13, well Xhiva did mostly. I just dropped out after the first year."

"We only went when we were 11!" Network exclaimed.

"You guys went to the MIT?" Zac asked surprised.

"Yep." Carlos said while the Blade Boys sat back in their seats.

"So Diablo." Zac began. "I mean Wolfboy. You said you were from South America. Where exactly are you from."

Wolfboy smiled. "Nowhere other than the very sunny, very beautiful, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA!"

"Nice!" Zac high fived Wolfboy. "So, you said I don't wanna meet your mom. How come?"

Everyone else at the table took a grim face. "Diablo's mother is not the kind of mother you would want." Carlos said. "Even though he's never told us who exactly she is."
"Whoever she is." Speed Demon began. "She can't be worse than our mom."

"Our mother." Network added on. "She has a passion for…Ka boom."

Diablo got up and shoved off his silver arm bracer on his right arm. "This bracer was made from the silver bullets fired at my great-great grandfather by angry villagers."

"Your great-great grandfather was a werewolf?" Erik asked.

"Yep." Diablo answered.

"So is it true about werewolves being allergic to spandex?" Speed Demon asked.

"No." Wolfboy replied.

"Full moon?" Zac asked.

"Yes obviously." Wolfboy said.

"Silver bullets?" Zac asked.

"Bullets yes." Wolfboy replied. "Silverware, no. Besides bullets? Who wouldn't that kill?" Wolf boy showed his right arm with a branding scar that said the word, "Devil." "This is what my mother gave me the moment I was born." Zac could only gasp in horror. How could a mother do something as cruel as branding her son? He knew mermaids could be spiteful but he didn't think that they could stoop this low. "She didn't really anticipate a son."

"You're ok right?" Zac asked worriedly.

"Yeah." Wolfboy replied, but his eyes showed otherwise. He was still a little hurt from the abuse his mother gave him.

"Anyway, where are the rest of your parents?" Zac asked. "Didn't your parents raise you?" The merteens had a solemn look on them, each of them reflecting the bittersweet moments.

"Well Erik and Raiden had it lucky, before…" Network trailed off.

"Before what?" Zac asked a sad looking Erik and Raiden.

"Before our parents died." Erik finished. "I was only 8 years old and Raiden was only 5."

"Our parents… were never interested in us, us." Speed Demon explained. "They were only interested in what we could do. They shipped our sister off to far east Asia because of issues rising."

Zac never realized how fortunate he was to have such a loving family. Here he was, surrounded by these kids who had been through rough childhoods. No one should have to have been branded by their mothers simply for being born a boy, no one should have to have been used as tools by their parents, and no one should ever have to suffer their parents dying at childhood. "I'm sorry." Zac managed to get out.

"Well it is leftover night." Carlos announced. "What are you hungry for?"

"Helen Carter, Xandou." Wolfboy teased.

"Shut up!" Speed Demon hissed.
"Well you are!" Wolfboy continued to antagonize. "You already have the hots for her! Omega of Fire and all."

"I said SHUT UP you little fucktard!" Xandou growled, his jade green eyes already showing anger.

"Well my brother was really good friends with this girl Ondina back when we lived in Italy." Raiden said. "I mean, they were practically childhood sweethearts! Erik and Dinie! Sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N..." Raiden didn't get to finish because Erik telekinetically pushed Raiden and his chair back to the kitchen. And before they knew it, they were wrestling each other.

"Boys!" Carlos exclaimed ending the fight. "We have an audience." The Consorzio brothers stopped fighting and got back to the table. The rest of the night was spent with laughs and eating contests. The other mermen said Zac had some potential and with some training, he could be an impressive fighter.


The next day...

Thalie's POV

We were in my mom's grotto. Trapped out of the reef because of divers. We were in the pool in merform. We had hung out there a few times.

"Wish we could go out for a swim." Kimi said to me.

"I really hope that Rose has good news." Helen said sighing. On cue, the blond Latina mermaid appeared in the pool worried.

"Divers are everywhere." Rose reported. "All over the reef."

"So basically us mermaids can be in here but not the sea?" Helen asked.

"This is not acceptable." I said defensively.

"What are we gonna do?" Kimi asked. We got dry and the rest went home, leaving me in the grotto to read some magazines for about an hour.

"I cannot believe you actually did that!" I heard Zac yell at me.

I looked up from my teen magazine. "You sabotaged Evie's dad's boat!"

"I literally have no idea what you are talking about." I said. I didn't understand why Zac was accusing me of wrecking his girlfriend's dad boat. I would never hurt a man who was trying to make a living here.

"This morning you wrecked his air compressor." Zac said.

"Seeing as I was not outside my house the entire day, I don't understand how you can just accuse me like that." I said trying to prove to him that I didn't do it.

"You can't just destroy a man's business because you think Mako belongs to you or your family." Zac said.

I put my foot down. "Ok Zachary." I said. "Let's get something straight here. I don't care that you have an accidental tail. You do not, lecture me about my family's home, IN MY HOUSE!"
"Oh I'll give you a lecture alright." Zac said. "But it'll be short and sweet. You're not just hurting Evie's dad, you're hurting Evie. And I can't let you do that." With that Zac left, and entered the grotto was Mimmi and Sirena.

At the café

No one's POV

Zac sat at his table outside awaiting his fish burger.

"Feel like hitting the water?" He heard Raiden behind him. Zac liked Raiden a little but there was something about Raiden that made him cautious and on edge.

"Creaming me twice wasn't enough?" Zac retorted.

"You're admitting your defeat already?" Raiden asked. "Not very mermanly of you. Besides I could give you a five minute head start."

"Don't you remember the little problem we had on the reef yesterday?" Zac asked rhetorically.

"Word on the street is that the boat is out of action." Raiden said back. "So we should be ok."

"For now yeah." Zac said. "Except Evie's dad is working on it now at the marina."

Fear flashed on Raiden's face before he got ahold of himself. "Is that so? But hey, there's a lot of ocean so don't stress. So chillax. Might give you that headstart in that race."

Raiden walked inside, leaving a suspicious Zac outside. Rosalina came out with the fish burger in her hand.

"Thalie didn't do it." The Latina Air Omega mermaid said to her friend.

Zac just rolled his eyes. "Of course you would say that."

"Zac we were inside the grotto because of divers." Rose explained. "She was with us the entire time. Look, I know how protective she is about her family, but she wouldn't go that far as to actually hurt your girlfriend." Zac silently agreed with her before Carly stepped out.

"Zac I'm so proud of you." She said.

"For what?" Zac asked confused.

"Letting a boy talk with your sister." Carly answered, triggering Zac's overprotective instincts.

"Boy? Where?" Zac asked, his blood boiling already.

"I thought you knew." Carly answered. "Raiden and Thalie are talking inside. And just like that, Zac bolted inside to see Raiden apparently flirting with his precious step sister. "She finally has a chance of a boyfriend."

"No." Zac retorted immediately. "Do not say that. No no no." Zac walked over to Thalie and Raiden's table and resisted the urge to wrangle the Italian merman. "Sup?" He asked.

"Come to accuse me again?" Thalie asked.
"Of course not." Zac said. "Just wondering what are you doing talking with a boy."

"Exactly what you said Zac." Raiden snapped. "We're just talking."

"Raiden?" Zac asked. "A word?" Zac led Raiden to the clothes store. "What are you doing?"

"Making friends." Raiden replied. "What, is that a crime with you humans?"

"No." Zac said. "It's just… you better not hurt her feelings."

"You don't like me for talking to your sister, who isn't even your real sister?" Raiden said.

"Well for one, I don't really trust you." Zac retorted.

"You don't even know me." Raiden said, already feeling tension build up.

"I know that you're trying to get something out of her." Zac said, too soon drawing to conclusions.

"Yeah, that's not my motive and you ain't the boss of me." Raiden said. "And FYI, I'm pretty sure you need her more than she needs you." And Raiden walked back to Thalie to continue their conversation.

"Everything ok?" Erik asked Zac. "I saw some commotion with you and my brother."

"Your punk of a brother better not hurt her feelings." Zac said threatening.

"Don't worry." Erik said assuredly. "Us European mermen, especially Italians have a way with the ladies. I mean, how do you think my dad got my mom?"

Later at the marina

It was quiet at the marina that night. A perfect setting for a 15 year old merman who wore a black leather jacket over his purple tanktop, long jeans and sneakers. He snuck into Doug McLaren's boat and started electrocuting the boat. He looked into the moonlight to reveal an Italian boy with tan skin, a strong jaw, light brown hair with gold steaks, and violet eyes. It was none other than Raiden Antonio Consorzio.

"Forget something?" Someone asked out of the blue. Raiden jumped up and was ready to blast him with a lightning bolt when he saw that it was Zac.

"Dude!" Raiden cried out. "Don't scare me like that! I almost fried you!"

"Just like you fried the compressor?" Zac asked.

Raiden took a moment before asking, "When did you know it was me?"

"I suspected at the café." Zac explained. "Then Rose told me Thalie was her when it happened, so it had to be you. Besides, you're that type of guy."

"Smart dude." Raiden said, impressed. "We're not ordinary people Zac. We're special. We need to protect our secret."

"That does not mean, we or you can go around doing what it is that you want." Zac retorted
"You're not a real merman." Raiden said. "You got your tail by accident. Nonetheless, you're still one of us. Which means you gotta decide where your loyalties lie."

"Oh I already have." Zac said proudly.

"So whatcha gonna do?" Raiden asked.

"Nothing." Zac answered. "For now. But you're gonna pay Evie's dad back. You're gonna have Erik do more hours at the café, and you're gonna make an anonymous donation on his website, and make up for the damages that you have done." Zac took a step closer and said in his most threatening voice. "And don't you even think about talking to my sister."

Raiden was flabbergasted. This land boy actually had the nerve to stand up to him. As he got out he looked back at Zac. "Zac before I go, take this into consideration: You're a merman, everyone else there is a merman. You're talented, everyone else there is talented. So what the hell makes you so special? Think about that." And like that, Raiden took off.


The next day…

In the park…

Raiden sat at the bench. Even though Erik had understood why Raiden did what he did, he was still pretty pissed that he messed with a man's business and done something so reckless as that. So Raiden counted himself lucky that Erik had grounded him until the next full moon, instead for the rest of the year.

"It was you." Thalie's voice. He looked up to see the beautiful half blood wearing a grey t shirt with a pink peace sign on it, jean shorts, and flip flops.

"Save the lecture." Raiden said tired. "I've already gotten an earful from my brother."

"Why?" Thalie asked. "Why'd you do it?"

"I wanted to help." Raiden quickly said.

Thalie crossed her arms. "I thought you didn't care."

"I'm unpredictable." Raiden said. "It's part of the Italian charm."

"You said it wasn't your fight." Thalie said. "I want to know why you were trying when you were so obviously, not interested." Silence was her answer. "If you don't want to tell me, fine." Thalie walked away before Raiden spoke up.

"I did it to say I was sorry!" Thalie turned around with eyes wide. "I did it to apologize for shooting you down."

"Raiden Consorzio." She spoke. "You mean to tell me that you nearly destroyed a man's business… to say sorry?"

"Kind of, plus I did it just for you." Raiden said.

"Well this isn't really the way to apologize but it's a start." Thalie said.

In the grotto…

Thalie met up with Zac, Evie, Ondina, Mimmi, and Sirena. It felt like old times when she was the youngest. As it happens, Mimmi had convinced a bunch of whales to attract Mr. McLaren's attention. And it worked. A lot actually. Mako was safe and sound.

"I still can't believe you pulled this off." Evie said amazed.

"Whales love to put on a show." Mimmi said proudly. "When I told one that there were some people who were keen to see them, she told a few friends, and they told a few friends…"

"News travels fast in the whale world." Ondina said annoyed.

Zac and Evie looked confused before Sirena explained. "Mimmi speaks fluent humpback."

"No way!" Zac said amazed. Mimmi proceeded to make what sounded like vocal exercises for singing. "What did she say?"

"I'm hungry, does anyone have food?" Mimmi answered. We all just laughed at her antics.

"Ondina knows 5 European languages." Sirena said.

"Really?" Evie asked amazed.

"I know English." Ondina began. "Portuguese, French, Greek, and Italian. I'm actually half Portuguese, and half Greek."

"You told me you were born in Polish waters." Mimmi said.

"I'm talking about blood." Ondina clarified.

"How do I say in Greek." Zac began. "Thalassa, I'm really sorry I blamed you?"

Ondina smiled and turned to Thalassa. "Thalassa, lypámai polý pou sas kaţīgoroúν." Ondina enunciated every word perfectly.

"You weren't kidding." Zac said amazed.

"European merpeople are bred to know a lot of the European languages." Ondina explained.

Zac tried to speak in whale but I don't think he meant what he said, literally. He didn't know what he was saying as we were howling with laughter.

"What?" Zac asked confused.

"You said." Mimmi explained. "Thalassa, you have cute arms."

"Oops." Zac just said. "Let me try again." He tried but was stopped by Thalie.

"Please don't." She said. "My ears can't take it. Apology accepted."

"But I can do it." Zac tried again speaking in whale but it resulted in a pillow fight with all of us.

If there's anything we learned from this is that Zac may be able to sing tenor, but he can't sing whale.
Helen's POV

At Mako Island…

"Alright girls." Rita announced. "That's all for today, let's go." It was the end of the lesson for the four Omega mermaids. While the rest dived into the sea, I walked up to Rita.

"Teach!" I said out loud, getting her attention. "I can do La Anastasia! I'm ready!"

"You're still not maintaining control over your power outbursts." Rita said to me. "One wrong move, you hurt someone and that's it."

"Well I can get more control, just show me." I argued.

"Stop rushing everything." Rita said. "I just don't think you're ready."

"That's what you said to Thalie when you told her that she was too young to teach." Helen said. "I'm just saying if you don't believe in us, how are we supposed to get anywhere?"

"Helen." Rita said. "Of course I believe in you. I just fear that you kids aren't ready. Just be patient, there's time. Stop worrying about La Anastasia. You have school coming up. Focus on that."

I sighed exasperated. It was times like this that I kind of wish I had listened to Xandou. I couldn't help but think of him and the pearl dagger he gave me.

In the grotto…

Thalie's POV

Since Mom was at a school meeting, I had the privilegge, or plan as I should put it, of teaching Evie in secret.

"Alright Evie." I said in front of the water filled tub with the canoe. "What are the 3 C's again?"

"Concentration, Control, and Coordination." Evie replied.

I smiled at her. "Correct! Concentration, Control, and Coordination. Using this set of fundamentals, is a vital part of using your powers. Remember, it all starts with concentration. Now move your right hand out in a C position, and see the canoe in your mind."

Evie did as I told her. But so far, even with all the effort she put in it, the canoe didn't budge. "Come on." She whispered before giving up. "Sorry."

"It's ok Eves." I said to her. "Don't apologize. You just need more practice! Observe." I applied the 3C's and immediately, the canoe rushed towards me.

"How did you do that?" Evie asked me in amazement.

"I had a lot of practice." I answered. "Now relax, and focus."
At the Gomez house…

In Rosalina’s POV

I was helping out with my family in the yard sale we were having. I cursed under my breath in Spanish as I accidentally used my wind to knock over a lamp. I didn't show it, but it wasn't easy for me either when I got a tail. Sometimes, I wished that I didn't have powers at all. I just wanted to stand out but also blend in. I just wanted to be my own person.

"¿Necesita ayuda?" (Need any help?) I heard Diablo ask me. I looked behind me to see Diablo smiling. He was wearing his lucky soccer baseball cap, a white t-shirt under a jean jacket, brown khaki shorts, and his usual brown sandals. I was wearing a pink short sleeved cardigan over a white dress, and blue sandals. I had my hair back by a bandana.

"Sí. Gracias" I answered back. For about some time, Diablo helped me sell some stuff. I had to pull him away from the sharp objects. When you mix sharp objects, plus an animal shapeshifter, plus a prankster, you get bad news.

After I sold a doll, I saw him looking at a book.

"Cinderella huh?" Diablo asked me.

I blushed a little. "Yeah. It used to be my favorite."

"Visto la película?" Diablo asked me. (Seen the movie?)

"Sí." I replied.

"Si usted tiene una luna anillo, usted podría estar haciendo trucos con berenjenas." (If you have a moon ring, you might be doing tricks with eggplants.)

I nearly doubled back in laughter. "Estoy seguro de que era un Diablo calabaza." (I'm pretty sure it was a pumpkin Diablo.)

Diablo raised his hands in surrender. "Sólo estoy diciendo Rosa. Hada Madrina no podían dar good ol' Cindy hasta una horas." (I'm just saying Rose. Fairy Godmother couldn't give good ol' Cindy till one a.m.) "Quiero decir, realmente. ¿Qué? Los hámsteres tuvo que estar de vuelta en sus jaulas hasta el amanecer?" (I mean, really. What? The hamsters had to be back in their little cages by dawn?)

I snickered hard. Diablo could always make me laugh. "Eran ratones." (They were mice.) That's when I decided to come clean about my secret insecurities. "Sinceramente, si tengo un anillo de luna, prefiero ser guapa." (Honestly, if I had a moon ring, I'd rather be pretty.)

Diablo turned to me in horror. I had opened up to him that I was a tiny bit insecure about my looks. "¿Están bromeando?" (Are you kidding me?)

"Para ser honesto, realmente no creo en todo estoy bastante." (Well to be honest, I don't really think I'm pretty at all.) I said before Diablo put his hand up.

"Ok." He said. "I'm gonna stop you there. You're the most talented and naturally beautiful girl I have ever met, and I've met Nicki Minaj. You're beautiful, inside and out. You Rosalina F-ing Gomez! The word Rose is in your name. You're awesome! I like you for who you are, no matter what you are or what you look like." I blushed a little to hear him say that he liked me. "Do you want me to..."
"Stop talking or do you want to stop my confidence giving out, cause I can tone both down a few notches."

"I'm good." I said.

"You know what?" Diablo said rubbing his hands and patting on my cheeks. "There you have some of my confidence. Nope, you need more." Diablo rubbed his hands under his armpits and wiped it on my arms. "Just wait, I'm gonna give you the good stuff." He unfolded his shirt and rubbed his hands on his belly while I ran away from him. But he of course, followed me running.

"No! Diablo!" I cried out in mock terror. "¿Tienes la menor confianza. ¿Por qué desea me da el vientre confianza!?" (You got the minor confidence! Why do you want to give me the belly confidence?!) 

"Usted localiza necesidad!" (Cause you majorly need it!) Diablo yelled back laughing.

"No! Mercy!" I screamed running down the sidewalk, but Diablo, being the natural athlete he was, he ran up to me wrestling me to the ground, as we playfully fought each other. I had to admit, I felt really safe and happy in Diablo's arms. As we lay in the grass, looking at the clouds, he wrapped his arm on my shoulders and held it on tight, like wasn't planning on letting me go. I felt really happy around him.


In the grotto…

Thalie's POV

Evie tried to get it right, but no budge. "I'm never gonna get this." She muttered hopelessly.

"Evie." I said to her. "Look at me." I got serious with her. "Do you think before she became who she is, my mom never had a tough time? I promise you, she did."

"How do you know?" Evie asked me.

"Because, Evie." I continued to explain. "Anyone, who has ever reached for something, they've had a tough time. You know what learning is? Making mistakes. Let's continue." And that's when my (insert sarcasm here) two new favorite mermaids.

"What are you doing?" Ondina asked.

"Teaching Evie to use her powers." I replied.

"What's the point?" Ondina asked. "She won't have them for much longer."

"You figured out a way to change me back?" Evie asked excited.

"I was merely discussing a principle, not a time frame." Ondina dismissed.

"So, while she's got her powers." I explained. "She may at least know what to do with them, let alone control them."

That shut them up as we got on with the lesson.

Raiden's POV

At the café…

I watched Erik finish up with his shift and I couldn't help but think of Thalie. She has an amazing spirit and personality, and I felt protected around her.

"Raiden?" I heard Erik ask behind me. "You ok?"

"Cosa pensi è succederà a noi se non tirare fuori questo?" (What do you think is gonna happen to us if we don't pull this off?) I asked in our native tongue.

Erik pondered for a minute before answering nonchalantly, "Io ... penso che Slade sarà ... tranquillamente deluso in noi, ma alla fine ... orgoglioso di noi per fare il nostro meglio." (I... think that Slade will be...quietly disappointed in us, but ultimately... proud of us for doing our best.)

"Davvero?" (Really?) I asked sarcastically.

"No, penso che siamo molto volentieri carne morta." (No, I think we are definitely dead meat.)

Back in the grotto

Thalie's POV

"I'm sorry I'm not getting this." Evie said to me.

"Don't worry." I said kindly. "If you just believe in yourself, you'll be fine. That's what I learned on my own."

Ondina snickered. "Is that how you got your moon ring? From yourself?"

My blood started to boil, but I didn't say anything. If Ondina knew the sacrifice my aunt made just so I could have protection and a life, then she wouldn't have asked that. "Ondina?" I asked.

"Yes?"

"Shut up." Mimmi and Evie gasped while Ondina looked shocked but then chuckled.

"I'm just saying." She began. "Mimmi and I got our rings from the pod. Our teachers were experts and much older than you and they didn't learn from nobody."

"Excuse me." I said. "I didn't have anyone who had a tail so I had to get by on my own. Remember? And besides, my mom trained me for months."

"Your mom abandoned the pod years ago." Ondina said. "Training methods have changed."

"Mermaids and change?" I said. "Two words that don't go in the same sentence."

"You'd be surprised." Ondina said before turning to face Mimmi. "Did they even know about the magical properties of sea nettles back then?"

"I think you'll find that my mom knows just as much as any teacher in the pod." I said to Ondina's face. "Perhaps more."
"I very much doubt that." Ondina said.

"Are you saying, that us Santos' aren't good enough to teach?" I asked.

"Frankly, I don't give a damn about what your skills are." Ondina sassed back.

"Oh I'd be delighted to show you." I said.

"Then it seems that we're gonna need something more challenging than that canoe." Ondina remarked. We both looked at the model pirate ship and an idea popped in our heads.

"Game on." I shook hands with Ondina.


Helen's POV

I walked in the park with my hands in my jeans pockets. I was wearing a red tanktop jeans, and red flip flops. I had my hair in a bun. I thought about school, what was gonna happen, what sort of mishaps could happen, and all that shit.

"Walking by yourself?" I heard Xandou behind me. "Kind of makes you a target." I looked around and I saw the Chinese merman there. He was wearing a sleeveless black sweatshirt, jeans and combat boots.

"Hey, I can take care of meself." I said defensively.

"I saw that the other night." Xandou said. "You alone much?"

"Yeah, it's my thing." I just answered.

"Good." Xandou wrapped his arm around mine but I brushed it off. "Relax, I'm not gonna hurt you or sweettalk you into my dad's work."

"Thank you." I simply said.

"I was gonna ask you if you like bikes." Xandou smiled.

"Yeah, I mean who doesn't?" I asked. "Why?" Xandou raised his hand and used his powers to turn on his moterbike and have it drive itself to where we were. He got on his ride and started that vroom sound I just love about motorcycles.

"Get on." He said. I got on the back seat and wrapped his arms around his waist. I didn't know it, but Xandou was feeling something he had never felt like before. He usually had his brother in the backseat, never a girl. He never felt this way before.

"Uh Xan?" I asked, snapping him from his thoughts.

"Sorry." He said turning around. "You ready for a ride of awesomeness?"

"Sure." I replied. "Just one thing. Where are the bloody helmets?"

Xandou laughed so hard he was wiping tears. "Helen, haven't you learned? Helmets are for losers!"

"Blimey." I muttered. "My skull is now in the hands of a lunatic." And with that Xandou drove us off into the streets.
In the grotto pool

Thalie's POV

The game was set as stone. It was me verses the European mermaid. We sat on opposite ends of the pool with the model ship floating on the water.

"This is an ancient mermaid game." Ondina declared.

"Yes a game." Mimmi said. "Right Ondina?" Mimmi sounded like she was trying to tell Ondina to take it easy.

"Whoever pulls the ship to their side first, is the winner." Ondina explained.

"So it's like a tug of war without a rope?" Evie asked.

"Exactly." Mimmi said. When Mimmi raised her arm and dropped it, it began. I used my powers to pull the ship towards me, very basic. But Ondina heated the water and used the bubbles to steer the ship to her. I didn't want to use all of my power. It just wouldn't be fair. I may be the Omega of Water but that didn't mean I automatically won. I just wanted to play it fair. Ondina won though.

"Shall we go again?" I asked after my defeat.

"Why not?" Ondina asked smugly. "I enjoy winning."

Helen's POV

Xandou, with the power of his motorbike, zoomed past the trucks, busses, and red lights. I'm pretty sure he somehow managed to run 35. We then arrived at a quiet area at the beach were there were no people.

"Xandou." I began. "That was...AWESOME!"

"I told you so!" He yelled back.

"Don't you have a license?" I asked him.

"Do I look like I'm gonna get a license?" Xandou asked with an eyebrow asked.

"But where'd you learn to drive?" I asked.

"There are a lot of things I knew than most kids my age." Xandou replied. "I started driving cars when I was 10. I wish I had my limo now."

"You have a limo?" I asked.

Xandou winced. "I... did. I crashed it in New Delhi."

I facepalmed. "And that ladies and gentlemen, is why Xandou Tiraken is a dick."

Xandou scoffed. "I ain't the dick. You da bitch."

"Going there I say?" I asked before running and diving in the sea. Xandou followed me. We raced,
and we did some sort of tag in the depths. As I looked at him in his true form, him as a merman, I
couldn't help but marvel at his lean form and his sleek blue tail. He had quite some muscle. Sure he
was a bit skinny but he was a strong young man. The shaggy raven hair and green eyes made him
one of a kind. Whenever he smiled, it was a daring smirk. I had to admit, he looked dashing in his
tail. His tail was like a masculine version of mine, though his had a bit more muscle. Xandou was
truly an impressive merman.

He held my hand, and I swore, my body felt like it was on fire. Not the fiery element I was used to
but a fire that felt like that was missing from my body for a long time. Xandou however took my
hand and led me to this cave. It was a mix between a cave and a secret pool club, complete with a
doors, towels, and lights.

"Wow." I said. "This place is so…"

"Intruiging?" Xandou asked. "Awesome?"

"I was gonna say home but ok." I said. Xandou swam towards me and we both faced the water belly
down, arms crossed and tails right next to each other. We had spent a good amount of time talking to
each other.

"So Helen." Xandou began. "Tell me something about yourself that you've never told anyone
before."

"Um." I stated. "My middle name…is Paddington."

Xandou snickered. "Your middle name is a train station?"

"Yep." I replied.

"Mine's Keith." Xandou said.

"Wow." I said with oozing sarcasm. "How dreadful. And dorky."

"I know." Xandou agreed.

"Your turn." I said to him.

"I tried to compete in the Indy 500." He said. "But I was discovered in the middle of the race and
was disqualified."

"How old were you?" I asked.

"14." We talked for a good while before I realized I had to get home for the family summer cookout.
"Crikey! Sorry Xandou I have to go."

"It's cool." He said. "Thanks for not killing me."

I laughed. "Thanks for not mentioning the Kanhoji." And with that, I took off

In the grotto…

Thalie's POV

"You know we can stop." Mimmi said kindly.
"No." I stood firm. "Ondina still won't admit that my mom's a good teacher."

"Don't feel personalized." Ondina said. "Not your fault yo mamma's out of touch."

Oh no she didn't. I can take people calling me Pigblood. What I cannot take is someone dissing my mom like that.

"Let's go." Evie said. "You got this Thals." And with that, another battle was initiated. Ondina tried the bubble thing while I kept my power limited to a small amount, using both of my hands. At first it was rough, but I managed to steer the ship towards me.

"That was awesome." Evie complemented.

"Thanks." I said back.

"Maybe she and her mom are better teachers than you thought." Mimmi observed.

"That was just a fluke." Ondina said.

"What do you say for the best of 3?" I challenged.

Raiden's POV

I stood on the balcony thinking of random things at a time. First school, then the pizza I ate, then my forgotten laundry and the necklace I had on my neck. Erik and I have two halves of a silver heart necklace. Inside the locket is a photo of our parents and us as kids. I think Erik was 4 when that was taken and I was one. I opened the locket and in it was half of the photo. It was a baby me with my mom. I looked a bit like her. I had almost the same hair and the same jawline. I kind of had her smile. But me and Erik got our tans from our father. Erik had his half of the necklace with dad. Now Erik looked a lot like our father. Whenever I tried to picture Dad, Erik was the only face I could see. Erik inherited most of Dad's features. Build, hair, eyes, the works. He said I was starting to look like a masculine version of Mom. Minus the eyes, and with me having both eyes. I looked into the photo and sighed in sadness. I let a tear fall out. I was only 5 years old and yet I still remember what happened.

"Mi manchi Ma." (I miss you Ma.) I missed her soothing hand, her calm voice, and her sparkling sky blue eyes that made him feel better whenever I was feeling sad. She never lost her temper and I never heard her yell. I loved my parents very much. Me and Erik are all that's left so we had to stick together.

Besides, who'd look out for Erik if I wasn't around?

In the grotto…

Thalie's POV

The battle was rough. Ondina conjured up a storm, while I kept it simple and calm. One hand was stretched out, reaching for the ship and the other was placed down for a surprise attack. I waited and waited until just as Ondina was near victory, I raised my left hand up and a water wall appeared heading towards Ondina. I used my powers to make it seem like the wall was gonna tower over her so she stumbled back and tripped, falling to the ground. Now, I wasn't gonna actually wet her, but I
made it seem like I was going to. After Ondina fell down, I made the water rise up, carrying the ship towards me.

"That was incredible!" Evie exclaimed.

"I've never seen anyone make a water wall." Mimmi said. Ondina looked pissed in defeat but I helped her get up as she smiled and ruffled my hair.

"I don't get it." Mimmi said sitting down in the grotto couch. "Why did you hold back until the last minute? Why did you wait?"

"Yeah, I mean." Ondina said. "You have control over our primal element, and yet you used it only a little."

"Were you waiting for the right moment?" Evie asked.

"Exactly Evie!" I said high fiving her.

"What's the point in waiting?" Ondina asked. "When you can just do it?"

"Patience is the key to manipulating water." I explained. "It involves waiting and listening to the water until you have the right moment to strike. It's like being in a race. You pace yourself, until the last lap, you go all out."

"That's why you took it easy on me isn't it?" Ondina asked.

"Yeah." I said. "Plus I wanted to make it fair. So do you now agree that I am fit for my moon ring just as much as you?"

"Face it Ondina." Mimmi said. "She beat you fair and square."

"I have to admit." Evie said. "It was funny when you fell over."

"You looked like a sea turtle, stuck on your back." Mimmi said, imitating her, causing us to laugh.

"Ok fine!" Ondina said. "You and Rita are good teachers."

"A what?" I asked, cupping my ear.

"A pair of very good teachers." Ondina admitted. "And for the record, I didn't look like a beached turtle."

"Beached whale." I said, resulting in Ondina throwing a pillow at me and we then got into a pillow fight.

Later that night…

I gave Evie a last lesson of the day. I hoped that she could do it. "You can do it Evie." I said. "Relax and let your thoughts flow like a river." Evie held out her hand and the water rippled sending the canoe towards her.

"Did…you see that?" Evie stuttered amazed. "I did it!"

"I told you so!" I exclaimed hugging her.

"Just like you said." Evie said. "I applied the 3C's and it happened."
"3C's?" Ondina asked.

"I'll explain." I said. "Evie, try again." Evie repeated and she did it again with success.

"Interesting." Rita's voice sounded out of the blue. "I wonder who taught you."

"Your awesome daughter." Evie said, holding up my hand.

"She's been showing us some of the things she learned." Ondina said.

"I still can't believe that you learned how to control your powers all by yourself." Mimmi said amazed.

"It looks like Thalassa has been swimming in my end of the gene pool." Rita said.

"Mom." I said. "I can explain."

"No need to." My mom said putting her hand up and then hugging me. "My little girl's a teacher!"

"Mom!" I exclaimed embarrassed.

"I admit I didn't want you teaching because I didn't want to let that job go." My mom said. "Teaching is my favorite thing in the whole world."

"How about this." I suggested. "We'll teach together."

"Can we be a part of your mermaid school?" Ondina asked gesturing to Mimmi and her.

My mom smiled. "Of course."

"Rita watch." Evie said. She pulled the canoe towards her and Rita smiled. Evie turned towards me and said.

"Thanks Coach."
Awakening

Thalie’s POV

In the moon pool…

I listened to Sirena's beautiful voice as I thought of my friends. My mom agreed to take them to the moon pool to teach them how to push through the moon spell. I agreed of course but I was still concerned for them. As Sirena approached the last line of her song, I sang in harmonization about 2 notes higher in an E minor including an A. (A.N Play this on piano) I ended in the name note as her, middle D.

"That was beautiful." Mimmi said. "Thalie I didn't know you could sing."

"Thanks." I said swimming up to them.

"It's a song my sister taught me." Sirena explained. "We used to sing it before every full moon."

"You'll be singing a duet with Zac when he comes here." Ondina sassed.

"We don't know for sure if he's coming." I reasoned.

"It's a full moon." Ondina said. "He'll be drawn here. Instead of singing, we should be finding a way to sever his connection with Mako."

"If the force of 50 moons didn't do it, what do you suggest?" Mimmi asked.

"At the very least we can keep him out of here." Ondina said. "Besides Thalie's sidekicks are gonna be here."

I gave Ondina a death glare. "What about Evie?" I asked.

"Evie's not important." Ondina said.

"Thalie makes a good point." Sirena said. "We gave Evie a tail, she's our responsibility."

"Sirena's right." Mimmi said. "Tonight's her first full moon. We should keep an eye on her."

"I'm gonna check on Zac and Evie." I said before leaving for Zac's place. I arrived to see Evie and Zac talking.

"Hey guys." I said cheerfully but noticed quickly that Evie was looking down. "Hey Eves." I said. "You're gonna be just fine."

"Thanks Thals." Evie said before the couple began to kiss. But before they could make lip-to-lip, Rob, my foster father came in.

"Hello Evie." He said. "Thalassa."

"Hey...Dad." I said shaking. It was rare that I called my former foster father "Dad". I missed my real one terribly. After my relocation, I visited them often, and they said that no matter where I lived or whose daughter I was, I was still their little girl. But the sad thing was

"Good to see you." Rob said to me. "How's Rita?"
"She's fine." I answered.

"You got a search warrant?" Zac asked sarcastically while I nudged him for being a goober.

"I'm looking for my open water lures." Rob said pacing the room. I grabbed a box of them and handed it to Rob.

"Going fishing?" I asked which resulted him raising an eyebrow at me.

"You haven't forgotten again have you?" He asked. "Our annual camping trip to Mako?"

"That's this weekend?" I asked.

"Yep." Rob replied. "Forecast is for blue skies and calm seas. And no buts. The four of us are going camping, and we're going to have a great time."

"The…four of us?" Zac asked puzzled.

"You, Thalassa, me, and Cam." Rob explained.

I groaned while Zac huffed. "You're bringing that cheese head?" I asked annoyed.

"Yes, I'm bringing that cheese head." Rob said. "It's high time the 3 of you got over whatever happened."

"Dad." Zac said. "Evie and I have plans."

"It's ok." She said. "I'll be fine."

"You sure?" I asked.

"It's ok." She said confidently. "I'll just have a quiet night…indoors."

"I guarantee that this will be a weekend, none of us will forget." Rob said proudly, before leaving.

"Why do I get the feeling those words are gonna come back to haunt us?" I asked.

"That's what I'm worried about." Zac said despondently.

At the café…

No one's POV

The four 15 year old merman teens sat at the café, hanging out. Raiden stood up and placed a cigarette in his mouth.

"I'm ma meat mamino." Raiden said with his mouth full.

"What?" The other guys asked.

"I'b ba beat babibo."

"What?" They all asked again.

Raiden rolled his eyes before taking the thing out of his mouth. "I'm the Great Bambino." He said
clearly.

"OOhhhh." The other guys said.

Xhiva looked to the table with the senior mermaids and saw a chance to impress even his dad. "Hey guys." He said. "Check this out." He walked to the table and they all looked at him. "Hey girls. Full moon plans tonight."

"Yes actually." Ondina replied looking smug. "We do."

"Great." Xhiva said. "Speaking of which, remember when you guys tried to protect Mako and you got a merman instead? That should really be a lesson to all of you fish chicks out there. If you do the same, old, boring, girly shit every bloody full moon, you will get a mess. All over the place if I might add. Hot shirtless boys, everywhere."

Ondina got up and looked me in the eye. "Listen up here boy. We will not let big headed, egotistical garbage dicks, whoever you may be, get in our way."

"Guilty." Xhiva said in mock guilt. "Your pity's very contagious."

"Hello ladies." Raiden's voice said. He stood there with the rest of the gang arms crossed. "Good ones Network."

"Thanks Voltage." Network said back.

"Full moon tonight hm." Voltage said. "Excited? Or are you stressing already? Is it because you are...how do the Canadians say...in a Kerfuffle?" (A.N that's an actual Canadian slang word, meaning in a stressed situation.)

Mimmi scoffed. "We are so not in a Kerfuffle."

"You know we should really thank you for making this stop more entertaining." Raiden said. "You know...with your bumbling ineptitude. We should send them something Wolfboy, you know? A fruit basket? Or would you prefer mini muffins?"

"Ok we didn't come here to start something." Sirena said. "We're just here to get Mako back, and while we're at it, we just may kick your ass."

Xandou snickered. "You? You're the kicker of ass? You are too nice for your own good. Like a lady, or..." Xandou asked then in Kannada, "Nānu bayasuttēne pada ēnu?" (What's the word I'm looking for?)

"Pukkala." Network replied.

"Yes." Xandou said. "You are like a sook." (A.N Sook is Aussie slang for coward)

"We are not scared of mermen." Ondina said proudly. "Because when we get down to business, us mermaids are gonna blow minds."

Wolfboy chuckled. "With what? More of your make up?"

"That's not what we wear." Ondina defended.


"Listen up, you punks." Ondina hissed. "You 3 just happen to be a minor annoyance, excluding
Raiden, so don't get in our way."

"Your team is like a..." Wolfboy began. "How do you Aussie's say? An earbashing mess. A mess, where dipsticks are applied to it, so what once was a little messy is now even messier." (A.N Earbashing means nagging and dipstick means loser in Aussie slang.)

"Ladies." Xhiva said. "Don't try to kick our ass, because the fact is, you can't. We're the best. Now I really must go wear sunglasses. I'm being blinded by you blond dominated Aussies." (A.N I'm sorry but it's the truth. Both the shows H20 and Mako Mermaids are dominated by blonds!)

With that the Blade Boys left the café, cuing Erik to come and talk to the mermaids.


Thalie's room in her POV

I was in my room packing my bag for the camping trip to Mako when I got a call from Cam. I was gonna delete his number but my mom told me not to in case of emergency. Apparently Erik had invited himself and his brother to our camping trip. The good thing about that was Raiden was coming and I would get to know his brother more. The bad news was, Raiden was coming, and my stupid hormones would fire up. And I didn't even know shit about why Erik would invite himself and his brother on some boring camping trip. Then again it was a full moon then. The worse news was that Zac and Rob would be clinging onto me in case "some boy" would try to sneak me off. It was mostly Zac who was gonna do that.

"Why'd you ask Raiden to come?" I asked Cam on the phone.

"I didn't." His voice sounded through the phone. "His older brother suggested it."

"Well you should have said no." I said stuffing a hoodie in my bag.

"Are you worried that he's gonna discover whatever it is that you're keeping hidden?" Cam asked.

"I don't know what you're talking about." I said quickly.

"You found something on Mako." Cam concluded. "You and those fish chicks."

"No I didn't." I said. That part was true. I wasn't there when Zac, Kimi, Mimmi, Sirena, and Ondina, discovered the merman chamber. But I did know what they found later that night, courtesy of my mom.

"Come on, Thals share." Cam said kindly.

"Cut the sweet talk." I said sternly. "We all know what happened the last time someone fell to one of your little white lies."

There was a pause of before Camp spoke again. "Erik's a genuine fish boy and Raiden has the same firepower as you and the rest do. Whatever's there it can't hurt to have an expert or two along."

"I don't need Erik's help or yours." I said strongly.

"Wait a second." Cam said. "You mention only Raiden in certain sentences and now you say you don't want Erik's help but Raiden's. Is there something going on between you too?"

My face turned red as a tomato before I hung up on Cam.
On the shores of Mako Island…

Me, Zac and the Consorzio brothers arrived at the beach and started walking toward the campsite. I wanted to walk with Raiden, but Zac pulled me to the side and held my hand, with Erik raising an eyebrow. When we got to the campsite, Rob and Cam had already brought the gear with them there.

"Oh nice of you four to show up after we've done all the work." Rob said sarcastically.

"We got stuck on a sandbar." I lied. "And then Erik and Raiden got into a fight about how to get it out and park it."

"My fault." Erik said. "Me and my brother aren't familiar with these waters. I'm Erik. Thanks for letting us come along Dr. Blakely." He and Raiden shook hands with Rob.

"You two are more than welcome." Rob said kindly. "But I don't see why you had to borrow another boat. There was plenty of room in ours."

"Four passengers and all that gear?" Zac fibbed. "It's not safe Dad." It took me all of my restraint not to facepalm. One thing about Zac was that he was a pretty bad liar.

Erik nudged me in the arm and whispered in my ear. "Wow, your foster brother is a terrible liar."

I chuckled. "I know." I whispered back.

"Seeing as Cam and I lugged all the gear." Rob began. "Zac, you and Erik, can set up the tents, Cam and I get dinner and Thalie with Raiden can get the water."

I told Raiden on the way to Mako that if I was to get water, I could just bend the water in the bottle. Easy peasy.

"Wait." Zac held his hand up. "You mean… Thalie…with a boy…on her own?"

"Zac I'm surrounded by men." I pointed out.

"I meant a teenage boy, you know." Zac said.

"Zac she's old enough." Rob said, giving Raiden a death glare.

"Plus there's a chance that one of them has feelings." Cam teased.

"Feelings? No!" Zac tried to cover. "I mean, they barely know each other!"

"You're right Zac." Erik said. "They have to get to know each other better. Raiden, be a gentleman and escort your friend to the river."

"Sweet!" Raiden said, putting his hands on my shoulders and leading me to the creek which was about half a mile down from the camp. What I didn't notice was that Raiden turned his head a round and mouthed "Score!" to Zac.

We walked until we reached the creek. I got out the bottles out of my water proof backpack and manipulated some the water to be filtered and then in little tentacles go into the bottles.

"Impressive." Raiden said while clapping and then grabbing one.

"Um Raiden, they're not…" I didn't get to finish because lightning travelled up from Raiden's body consuming him until the lightning disappeared and Raiden lost his balance because of his tail. (A.N
basically his transformation is like the regular one but instead of the water effects, it's lightning.)

Raiden laid down on his belly, looking at me in embarrassment. "I guess I forgot that they weren't capped yet." He said before nervously chuckling. I just facepalmed and then walked to his tail, when I noticed on his back, faint scars of whip markings and burns. They were fading but you could see them a little. He had a white marking on his right shoulder blade, like a knife scar. I gasped in horror.

"Why the sudden gasp?" Raiden asked.

"Your back…" I said. "Who did that to you?"

Raiden winced before saying, "It's better if you don't know." As I dried up his tail, I ran my fingers over the scars of his tanned back. Raiden kind of shivered. It was almost as if he liked my fingers touching his back. His scars were a bit rough but smooth at the same time. His skin was soft. By the time I was done with his tail, both of us were blushing madly.

Raiden's POV

Thalie-no, Thalassa's touch was unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was indescribable, but the only way I could picture it was the gentlest and most soothing of ocean waves. When she felt my scars, when she ran her delicate fingers over them, she made my back feel like I never had them in the first place. When I felt my legs again I looked up, I saw the half blood teenager herself under the sunlight. She looked stunning, her dark red hair falling on her features, her deep blue eyes shining like the full moon on the sea's surface. Sure she looked pretty with legs, but I never got a glimpse of her swimming at normal speed, not superspeed. As she helped me get up, her hand felt like the smoothest of shells. When she screwed the caps on the bottles with just a flick of her wrist, the way she did it with such ease was just amazing.

"Are you staring at me?" She asked me.

I was close to peeing my pants right there in sheer embarrassment. So in order to avoid any more awkward moments, I said to her, "Let's head back."

No one's POV

Zac and Erik finished up the tents, Rob and Cam were still out there fishing, and Raiden and Thalie were still walking back.

"You ok Zac?" Erik asked. "You seem kind of tense."

"I'm fine Erik." Zac replied. "I'm just freaking because your punk of a little brother is with my little sister."

Erik laughed. "Ok one, he may have a killer edge, but hed never hurt anyone he considers a friend. And two, she's not so little anymore."

"Yes she is." Zac defended. "She's only 15."

"Ok," Erik sat down in front of Zac. "Raiden goes to a lot of trouble just to have a conversation with your foster sister. Zac you are a…how do I say this? The word on the street is that you are a smother brother."

That took Zac by surprise. "A what?" He asked laughing.

Erik gave Zac a "seriously?" look. "You know what I mean." Zac did know what he meant, but he
didn't want to say it. "Dude, all the teens in your class are talking about it. It's ok, I was the same way, and... I sort of still am a little. But as our siblings get older, they will need some space. Oh and for the record Zac, you're a bad liar."

"Uh excuse me?" Zac asked. "How am I a bad liar?"

"Because you say things that don't make sense." Thalie's voice sounded in the campstie. The two senior mermen turned around to see Thalie and Raiden back with the water filled and secure.

Raiden put his hand down and flashed a mischievous smile.

"Raiden." Erik warned sternly. "Don't do what I think you're doing."

Raiden chuckled. "Too late." Raiden pulled his hand up and Zac's underwear was lifted as if by hand and he got slightly electrocuted. Thalie was on the ground howling with laughter.

"What was that?" Zac asked, his hair smoking and his shorts slightly charred

"That, my friend was the ever classic electric wedgie." Erik explained.

"Raiden!" Zac exclaimed. "What the hell? You can't just use your powers on people like that!"

"Uh." Raiden said examining his hand like it was a trophy. "There's a limb on my arm that says I can." He did the electric wedgie about a couple more times. "Besides, it's what you get for making the worst excuse ever! I mean, I was gonna say, "Oh Dad, the thing was, your boat was too crowded, and all of us couldn't fit in it." And you chose, "Four passengers and all that gear, it's not safe?" I'm disappointed, really."

"So?" Zac asked, not getting the point.

"It's supposed to be something believeable, not that!" Raiden exclaimed.

"Jesus Zac." Thalie said. "Why don't you just tell your dad the real reason you can't swim anymore?"

"Or at least what you can do that defies human science." Erik said.

"You wanna know another terrible lie he told?" Thalie asked. "One time when it was raining, and we had to go to school. Do you know what Zac said to his mom?"

"What?" Erik asked, eager to see what happened.

"He said. "But Mom, a storm means lightning. We could get hit." Thalie replied.

There was a pause before Erik and Raiden burst out laughing. They were close to peeing their pants from laughter and cursing in Italian.

"Oh my god Zac!" Erik yelled out, laughing. Thalie was just giggling.

Later that night...

It was dark at night then. The campfire was lit, and the boys ate the fish while I ate some onions. I felt like I was reliving the night it all happened.

"I always hated these woods at night." I commented. "When I was a kid, I was sure monsters were gonna creep out and eat me."
"No monsters here." Erik said. "Unless you count Raiden."

"Hey!" Raiden exclaimed. "I heard that."

"Yeah, I know." Erik said.

"Hey guys." Rob said holding his IPad up. "Check this out. You point this to the sky, and the star navigation app, recognizes the constellations! Pretty cool huh?"

"That's awesome Dad." Zac commented.

"Yeah, that's great Dr. B." Cam added on.

"Don't all rush up at once." Rob said. Suddenly, Erik tapped me on the shoulder, and pointed to Zac who was staring at the moon.

"Zac you ok?" Raiden asked.

"Oh great." I whispered. "He's moonstruck again."

"Again?" Raiden asked. "As in more than once?"

"You know it." I said.

"Wait where is he going?" Erik asked me.

"Don't ask me." I replied. "All I know is we gotta follow him."

We walked about 3 feet away from the moon zombie Zac. "Any idea where he's going to?" Erik asked.

"How am I supposed to know?" I asked. "I'm not the moon-spelled zombie here." We followed him to a similar cave as the trident chamber from all those full moons ago. Even with it destroyed, I could still feel it's dark pulsing energy stopping my heart. I could even feel the coldness of death grasping on my very soul. I sometimes had nightmares about the whole trident ordeal and the war.

"Why are we stopping at this rock wall?" Raiden asked me.

"Because if I'm right, that wall is about to open in 3 seconds." I explained. And right on cue, the rock vanished, revealing a path of golden light.

"What...is...that?" Erik asked.

"Something merman-ish." I said quickly before following Zac into some sort of chamber with glowing pillars, a pedestal, and in the middle, a trident symbol in a circle.

"What the hell is this place?" Erik asked.

"It's that merman chamber Kimi told me about." I said, realizing it.

"There's power oozing out of this thing." Raiden observed. Zac put his hand over the pedestal and on the ceiling, was a dome like you see in a planetarium, with the full moon passing over it. In the trident symbol, water poured into it, and somehow I knew it was moon pool water.

"What the hell is he doing here?" Ondina asked behind us. She had brought Mimmi.
"How should I know?" Raiden snapped. "I'm not the possessed merman in need of an exorcism."

Suddenly, the trident on the floor glowed, mist oozing out of it. Even I could feel the energy.

"Whoa!" Raiden exclaimed. "Erik, you wanna tell me what this is all about?"

"Not a clue." Erik replied.

"This ends now." Ondina declared bravely, stepping up to the symbol, but was held back by Mimmi.

"Remember what happened last time." She warned her best friend.

"Maybe it only likes mermen." Erik suggested before walking around the circle almost to where Zac was.

"Zac, what are you doing?" He asked. "What is all this?" Zac outstretched his hand and the ground rumbled before a piece of earth rose up and rocketed Erik about a yard away. I swore I was dreaming.

"Um, is your step brother supposed to be able to do that?" Mimmi asked me.

"I've never seen him do that." I confessed.

"Stop now." Ondina said, stretching out her hand. Just then Evie came running in with Sirena.

"Zacky!" She exclaimed like a child.

"Evie move!" Ondina demanded before Mimmi did the most unexpected thing ever: She marched up to Zac, took his hand, looked him in the eye and said, "Zac. Stop."

No one's POV

Mimmi and Zac were flung back from each other by an unknown force. As the landed on the ground, a terrifying vision came to them. Fire burning a building, a store being burned down, a woman being crushed by falling debris, and worse, children screaming. The vision ended before they knew it. The two mer teens were on the floor shaking.

"The tunnel entrance!" Sirena exclaimed. "We need to go." The mermaids and mermen all ran outside of the chamber and the tunnel but Erik stayed behind for a bit to take photos.

"Where's Erik?" Raiden asked. On cue, Erik ran outside as the tunnel closed. Everyone but Zac turned to said merman.

"What the hell were you doing in there?" Ondina demanded.

"I…don't know." Zac explained.

"You're gonna have to do better than that." Ondina said. The rest all went back their places unaware of the romance that had bloomed on the beach. But that's a story for another time.

At the campsite, Thalie looked at Zac. "You ok?" She asked her step brother.

"I'm fine." Zac said. "Go to bed." Thalie then shuffled in her own private tent as did the rest of the gang. The mermaids went their separate ways.

But that night was just the beginning of everyone questioning everything they knew about each
The next morning…

In Thalie's POV

I woke up to some tapping on my shoulder and I saw Raiden over me smiling.

"Wake up Bella Addormentata." He said finishing his greeting in his native tongue. I chuckled at Raiden's antics. A piece of the tent roof was missing leaving it like a skylight for the sunlight to seep in behind Raiden, making him absolutely handsome. It somehow made his violet eye glow bright. I hid my face behind a pillow to avoid him seeing me blushing. "Breakfast is ready, and then we're heading back."

"Oh." I said. "Ok, and what did you say?"

"I called you Sleeping Beauty." Raiden explained. "I'm just saying that you are quite a catch. Do you speak Italian?"

I raised an eyebrow. "Do I look like I speak Italian?" I retorted.

Raiden looked me in the eye with his best smile and said in his natural Italian accent, "You have a beauty that is come un pearla."

I stumbled back in shock. What he said and the way he said it was so beautiful, so majestic. I didn't know it, but something in me sparked, that would soon transform into my growing friendship with Raiden. After the stunt he pulled in nearly busting Doug McLaren's business, I started to spend more time with him to try to direct him on the right path. But whenever we talked, Raiden looked confused, as if he didn't know the difference between right and wrong.

"Raiden…" I said in shock. "I don't know what to say. Thank you."

"Pleasure's all mine." Raiden said politely. He pulled me out of the tent, and to the table where I grabbed a bunch of sausages. I looked over and I saw Zac looking down while Erik was talking to him.

"What's he talking to my brother about?" I asked.

"He's offering our help." Raiden explained. "More like his help."

"Don't you want to help him?" I asked him.

Raiden shrugged his shoulders. "Eh, in your brother's case, I'd rather give him an electric wedgie. But because of…present environments, I can't."

"Why do you have to be mean to my brother?" I asked him.

"I'm not." Raiden said. "He's just the dweeb here."

I rolled my eyes. After breakfast, we all headed back for Mako.


Rose's POV

At the café…
I walked to the café to meet my werewolf/merman friend. After what happened last night, we had started to be a little more closer. We weren't dating though. I saw the Hispanic boy wearing an orange t-shirt, cargo shorts, and flip flops. I walked up to him leaning on the railing, and put my arm on his back and was greeted by his warm orange amber eyes, the eyes of the true wolf inside of him. Not as a monster.

"Yo todavía podía lastimaron a usted anoche." (I still could have hurt you last night.) Diablo said to me, concerned.

"Pero no hizo." (But you didn't.) I replied, holding his hand. His hand felt like a strong paw, like a lion's.

"Erik ofrece su ayuda a Zac a descubrir qué es lo que está sucediendo en Mako." (Erik's offering his help to Zac to figure out what's happening on Mako.) Diablo said to me.

"Y?" (And?) I asked back.

Diablo sighed in content. "Francamente, no sé hasta los motivos de Erik en absoluto. Es completamente imprevisible." (Honestly, I don't even know Erik's motives at all. He's quite unpredictable.)"Además, tengo mi Rosa. Sea lo que sea, estamos trabajando." (Besides, I've got you my Rose. Whatever it is, we'll work it out.) And Diablo kissed my cheek. No we weren't dating. But we were closer than before.

(A.N Hold your horses! Don't review yet! You didn't think that this was the end of the episode, did you?)

No one's POV

In the café, things weren't doing so well for Ondina. She felt like she was going to break apart any second.

"Is it hot in here to you?" She asked a nearby person.

"Ondina are you ok?" David asked her. "You don't look so good."

"Actually David," Ondina replied. "I'm gonna go sit down." But before she could even take a step as she turned around, Ondina collapsed.

Immediately, Erik put his tray down and rushed to Ondina. As did Sirena, Mimmi, and Raiden. "Quick!" He cried. "We need to get her to Rita's." Erik carried the unconscious mermaid to his rental Volkswagen and ignored the traffic rules as he raced to Rita's house. They all got out and placed Ondina on the black leather couch.

Sirena placed her fingers on Ondina and cried out, "She's not breathing!"

"Raiden." Erik said sternly.

"On it." Raiden said, his hands humming with electrical energy and placing them on Ondina's bare chest (she's wearing a tanktop). "200 joules. Clear!" A surge of electrical energy was sent into Ondina's body. Just enough to wake her up.

Ondina's eyes opened to hear Thalie, her friends, the Consorzio brothers, Mimmi, Zac, Evie, and Sirena over her.

"Come on." Zac whispered.
"You can do it." Evie said.

"Come on Ondina." Sirena said. "Come on."

"Go Ondina!" Rose exclaimed.

"Ondina please." Erik pleaded.

"Pull it through girl." Thalie whispered.

"Yeah yeah." Helen said. "She looks crappy already."

"Ondina." Mimmi whispered. "Come on."

"You can do this." Diablo said.

"Oh god, she looks dead." Kimi said.

"I need to take Ondina." Rita said approaching them. She scooped up Ondina in her arms and carried her to the grotto. The rest were left to wait.

Later…

It had been an hour since Ondina was taken to the grotto. Everyone but Thalie, Zac, Evie, Helen, Rose, Erik, Raiden, Mimmi, and Sirena went home. The only time Erik had ever been so scared was when Raiden was about to die at the hands of Slade. This was another time.

"How do you have a bad reaction to the full moon?" Rose asked. "Isn't it supposed to help you?"

"I don't know Rose." Raiden said. "I'm not my mom."

"It means she has to rest for a while." Mimmi said.

"For how long?" Zac asked.

That's when Rita came in with a guest. She was a woman who looked to be in her 20's but was actually in her 30's. She was a beautiful Romani woman with deep tan skin, curly raven hair, and blazing bright emerald green eyes. But this woman had some of Ondina's features. She wore a white dress and an emerald pendant. (A.N basically she looks like Disney's Esmeralda from the Hunchback of Notre Dame)

"Hello." The Romani woman waved to the teens.

Zac was staring at her. Not because of her beauty, but because he had this familiar feeling about her. As if he had seen her before. But he couldn't place it anywhere.

"Tia Esma!" Mimmi cried out, hugging her. Sirena joined in.

"It's good to see you too Sirena and Zoe." The woman said to her, hugging her back. "And I see you've made some new friends.

"Who are you?" Evie asked. "And why did you call Mimmi Zoe?"

"Zoe is my real name." Mimmi explained. "Mimmi is just a nickname. And this woman is Esmeralda, Ondina's mother. And my awesome godmother."
"Bonjour Esmeralda!" Sirena exclaimed hugging her again.

"Bonjour mon amie!" Esmeralda said.

Esmeralda walked up to the teens but as soon as she saw Zac, she stopped dead in her tracks. Her heart raced as she saw a face that she thought that she would never see again.

"Ja..Jacob?!!" She exclaimed. "How...how are you here? And how have you stayed so young?"

Zac looked confused. "My name's not Jacob. It's Zac." Esmeralda paled, hearing a name and seeing a face that until now, she believed to be gone.

"It's ok." Rita said assuredly. "He's not that Zac you're thinking of. This is Zac Blakely."

Esmeralda's hopes of him being her friend's son vanished. "Oh. You're not him then."

"He's not who?" Thalie asked.

"Thalassa." Esmeralda said, caressing her cheek. "It's been a long time, and you were so cute as a baby."

"Esmeralda and I are old friends." Rita explained.

"Esmeralda?" Thalie asked. "As in, Esmeralda Marino? As in the one who won the Contest of Champions and took down the Kraken?"

"That's right." Esmeralda smiled.

"What's the contest of champions?" Evie asked.

"It's basically the mermaid Olympics." Thalie explained. Evie, Zac, Helen, and Rose's eyes popped out. Yep, Ondina had a lot to live up to. But she wasn't the only one.

"What's going on here?" Erik had come back with Raiden from a talk. Erik's eyes widened as he recognized the woman in front of him. "Esmeralda?" He asked. Esmeralda and Erik embraced in a hug.

"Oh I knew you two were alive!" Esmeralda exclaimed as Raiden joined. "You two have grown so much! Especially you Erik, you have your father's looks" Esmeralda looked down at Raiden and said. "Raiden, you have grown a lot! I still remember when you were an adorable little hatchling!"

"Esmeralda!" Raiden said embarrassed. "Seriously?"

"Time out here." Helen said finally. "I don't understand. How do you know those mermen?"

Esmeralda chuckled. "Why we're from the same clan of course? Didn't Ondina tell you?"

"No." Thalie said. "She never mentioned her old life."

"You mean to tell me that you guys don't know of the Consorzio bloodline?" Esmeralda looked at everyone in shock.

"I was gonna tell them." Rita said.

"Sure." Esme said rolling her eyes. "Let me tell you. The Consorzio family is a royal family. And Erik and Raiden here are the sons of King Caesar and Queen Persephone of the Consorzio Clan."
That had everyone looking at said brothers in shock. It was shocking enough that those two were mermen, now they had royal blood running in their veins?

"Whoa!" Thalie exclaimed. "Do I have to call you Prince Raiden?" She asked said merman who was blushing.

Esmeralda sat down with the rest and shared her news. "Listen, Ondina has a rare disease, a mermaid's version of pneumonia, Fire Fever. It's a good thing that she has it now, as a teenager, because most adults don't survive it. But she's gonna be ok. I don't want you all to worry. But it could be a while before she gets back on her feet. So Ondina's gonna be out of the picture for the next several days, until she gets better. Don't worry, Erik, she's a tough girl."

Erik chuckled sadly. "I know."

"I think I speak for everyone when I ask how you are two princes? You don't smell like it." Rose observed.

"I guess I should explain." Erik said. "The Consorzio Clan was formed 800 years ago by my ancestor, Paceo (A.N that's pronounced, Pa-chee-o) who made an alliance with the mermaid council, took the trident away and locked it. The grandson of that same merman united all the mermaids and mermen who were against the war and the feud that followed it and formed the Consorzio Clan. One of the very few that still exist. I was the heir for the throne, and Raiden, of course was second in line before… a raid killed our parents and about 150 of our clan were slaughtered as well."

"By who?" Siren asked.

"I'm sorry." Erik said, choking back tears. "It's too painful to talk about anymore."

"Look, it's been a long day." Rita said. "Everybody, let's go home. Except for you Erik and Raiden, come with me." While everyone else went home, and the Consorzio brothers following Rita to the grotto, Thalie tapped Raiden on the shoulder.

"You never told me your of royal descent." She whispered to him.

"Well I forgot to mention it." Raiden said. "You're not gonna freak out?"

"Well the good thing is that it doesn't change our growing friendship." Thalie said. "Prince or not, you're still a good person to hang around with."

"Thanks." Thalie went to her room while Raiden went Erik to the grotto.

"You knew our father?" Erik asked Rita once they reached the grotto.

"I sure did." Rita replied. "And he knew me. I'm sorry for your loss by the way."

"Thanks." Raiden said.

"Now boys this may come as a shock but." Rita took a breath. "Your mother's alive."

"That's not possible." Erik said.

"I was 5 years old and I saw her get slashed in the eye!" Raiden exclaimed. "I thought she died of blood loss or infection!"

"No." Rita said. "She survived. Persephone Consorzio is alive."
"I thought that she was gone." Erik began. "I should have been looking for her."

"It's all right Erik." Rita said warmly.

"Then where is she, we have to find her!" Raiden exclaimed.

"You don't think she would be in Italy do you?" Erik asked.

"No way." As the boys continued rambling on theories, Rita cleared her throat.

"Boys, I have no idea where she is." Rita said. "No one does, or where she goes, or her schedule. I know she's alive because she was the one who dropped my daughter off after she got hurt."

Erik and Raiden's faces fell. "Come on Raiden." Erik said before being stopped by Rita handing them a photo in a ziploc bag.

"That's very kind of you, but we already have a photo of our parents." Erik said.

"So does this one." Rita explained. "With me, my husband, and Ondina's parents."

"No way!" Raiden exclaimed, taking a look at the photo.

"You need it more than I do." Rita said.

"Thanks Rita." Erik said,

"Of course." And with that, the merman brothers went home.

At the merman household…

"What are you doing?" Speed Demon asked Wolfboy.

"I'm calling Rosalina." He replied.

"Why?" Network asked.

"I want to make sure she's ok." Wolfboy asked.

"Why are you so protective of her?" Voltage asked. "And all of a sudden even after a full moon?"

"Diablo Quasimodo Nagual." Erik said. "What did you do?"

They all sat down as Diablo told his story.

Flashback

22 hours ago, on the shores Mako Island

Diablo sat on the beach. He was sitting on a deserted island because it was a full moon and on this particular full moon, his werewolf nature decided to try to take over him. He stopped transforming into a werewolf when he was 9 when he lived in Mexico, but he still maintained parts of the psychological aspect. The power of the werewolf is a terrible thing and can sometimes overcome the sweetest of people. That's what Diablo was trying to avoid. Inside, he was mentally fighting the beast that was threatening to take over his soul. He never killed anybody before but he came close. It was like having another person inside him. Tonight, his inner werewolf was acting up. He had been acting strange all day. He had been eating nothing but meat all day, working out and getting more
aggressive. Now, he was battling the wolf clawing in him.

"Diablo?" a girl asked. Immediately, Diablo snarled an animalistic growl and swiped his hand as if he had claws at the girl. The girl stumbled back into the moonlight, revealing her to be Rosalina.

"Rosalina?" He asked, gasping in horror. He put his hand over his mouth as he realized what he was about to do. He was gonna hurt the one girl he cared about. Fearing he might do more harm he ran from her.

"Diabli wait! I can help you!" Rose cried out.

Diablo tripped and looked over the Latina Air Omega. When he saw her, his wolf side calmed down a little. She looked cute by day, but under the full moonlight, she was a goddess. The moonlight caught in her hair made her glow with the kindness she possessed. When he saw her, he had the instinct to protect her.

"You can't help me Rosalina." Diablo said. "No one can."

"Diablo, just please trust me." Rose said, extending her hand.

"No." Diablo pushed her hand away. "Stay back! I'm a monster."

"Diablo, don't say that." Rose said. "You're my friend."

"Rose I'm not a boy." Diablo said, tears threatening to spill. "I'm an ANIMAL!" Unable to hold it back anymore, Diablo's werewolf side took over. It was painless but the mental shifting was becoming more primal. Diablo's jet black hair added itself brown highlights as it spread all over his body, his hands shifted into paws, his fingernails sharpened into black claws, his already canine teeth, a side effect from having werewolf blood, grew sharper. The transformation was complete, Diablo had turned into an Iberian Wolf, a wolf of Spain.

Rosalina stood there stoic. Sure she was shocked at the transformation that took place, but she was not afraid of him. She never was. To her, Diablo was just a boy with special talents who wanted to live like, just like her.

"Leave me, before I hurt you." Diablo said. That shocked Rosalina a little that the wolfboy could talk, but she learned one month ago that anything is possible, even talking wolves.

"Diablo…" Rose said comforting him.

"Please." He said. "I don't want to hurt you or worse, make you like me." Diablo sat down, of course in doggy position.

And Rosalina did what Diablo didn't expect her to do: She started petting him. Diablo looked confused. Normally, a human would be scared of him, run away from him, or shoot him. But Rosalina, with her gentle scratches, made him feel like something he never felt like: a person. Diablo curled up at her lap and nuzzled his wolf head in her arms.

"You're a good boy aren't you?" She cooed. "Yes you are. Yes you are." Diablo in return barked happily and started licking her face, transforming her into a mermaid. Diablo's blood roared in his veins as he saw the Spanish beauty before him. He wished for a second that he could change back and dive with her in the sea. But then, during the full moon, staying like a wolf felt more natural. He was torn between 2 worlds.

"Sorry." Diablo said.
Rosalina chuckled. "It's ok." Rose then used her powers to dry herself. Diablo, finally regaining control of himself, shifted his form back into human, as paws became hands, fur became skin and hair, and his canine teeth grew shorter.

"So you can change at will?" Rose asked him.

"I can but it feels natural whenever I'm a wolf." Diablo said. "Rosalina." He said, looking in her brown eyes. "Are you scared of me?"

"Diablo." She said. "I could never be frightened of you. In fact, the only thing I'm really scared of is my tail. The reason I act all accepting of my powers is because… I'm not. It's how I deal with it, by trying to lie to myself so the others don't have to worry about my powers. I'm scared too, of them. What if I suck the air out of somebody? What if I choke someone? I like the tail, but the powers, I'm still getting used to them. But whenever I'm around you Diablo, I feel like I have nothing to fear. It was like that when we were kids together."

"Rosalina." Diablo began. "When I first met you, I thought you would be scared of me if I revealed myself, so I kept all my secrets hidden. I thought I was protecting you. But now, whenever I'm near you, I feel… human. Like I have actual feelings and a heart."

"Diablo." Rosalina said. "Having werewolf blood in you, doesn't make you an animal. Taking responsibility of the power, makes you a man."

Suddenly, before the two Latino teens could think, their lips landed on each other. This was the first kiss. The first of many. Diablo felt like he was in heaven with the kind, adventurous mermaid kissing him. The two locked arms as, they kissed more. Rosalina felt protected, like Diablo was her knight in shining armor, or fur. But she was there for him as he was for her.

When the two broke their kiss and landed eyes on each other, something amazing happened to Diablo. He stared at her as a vision landed on him. He was seeing flashes of her as she grew up, how she became friends with her gang, how she met Diablo, how she got her powers, and how she used them. He then saw her as an adult as a mermaid swimming with him. Inside, his wolf trusted her deeply as the vision ended. He felt 4 things, a friend, lover, brother, and protector. This could only mean one thing. He had imprinted on Rosalina Paola Gomez.

"I should take you home." Diablo said. "Wait, why are you out here on the beaches?"

"I felt you were here, somehow and I had a vision of you while I was in the moon pool, and I felt like the need to help you." Rose explained. Diablo took her hand and the two Spanish merteens swam to Rosalina's house. He finally let go of her hand when he reached the door.

That night marked the beginning of the growing friendship of the two Spanish mer teens.

End of Flashback…

"And that's how it happened." Diablo finished.

"You're dead as a doornail Nagual." The Tiraken Twins chimed in unison.

"Wolfboy." Salsa said. "You mean to tell me that you imprinted on a human turned mermaid?"

"I can't control it." Diablo said.

"He's right." Erik stated.
"I'm sorry what?" Voltage asked.

"It's part of his nature and there's nothing we can do about it." Erik explained.

"Still he's just getting her closer to the line of fire, now that he literally can't stay away from her." Voltage said.

"Look, it's getting late." Carlos said. "We've all had a long day, we'll talk about this in the morning."

Diablo's POV

As the rest left for bed, I transformed into an eagle and soared until I reached Rosalina's house. She was sound asleep in her bed. I transformed into a person and sat on the bed, next to Rosalina's sleeping body. I ran my hand through her golden hair and whispered,

"Nunca dejaré que nadie hacerte daño." (I'll never let anybody hurt you.)

Raiden's POV

I tossed and turned in my bed. I tried to get myself to sleep, but I couldn't for some reason. So to try to kill some time, I slipped out of my bed, and walked onto the bedroom balcony. I then started remembering my mother, her warm smile and motherly nature.

"Couldn't sleep huh?" I heard Erik behind me.

I smiled. "No. I gotta say, Mom being alive is a lot to take in."

Erik chuckled. "Anch'io." (Me too.)

He ruffled my hair and I of course, pushed his hand away. "Non toccare!" I exclaimed. (No touchy!)

Erik laughed as we looked into the evening sky. "Erik?" I asked.

He turned his head to me. "Hm?"

"Pensi che vedremo di nuovo mamma?" (Do you think we'll see Mom again?) I asked.

Erik hugged me and I hugged him back. He said to me,

"Raiden, te lo prometto, noi stiamo andando a trovarla se è l' ultima cosa che facciamo." (Raiden, I promise you, we're gonna find her if it's the last thing we do.)
Erik's POV

I slept like a baby sea lion. Well, like a regular human anyway. Nothing could spoil my peaceful sleep.

Boy was I about to eat my words.

The door burst open as a very much awake Diablo, obviously on mega caffeinated coffee, ran in.

"Hey!" Diablo/Wolfboy shouted. "Have you seen my cap?"

"No."

"Thanks." And Wolfboy left, giving me peaceful sleep, which lasted for about 5 seconds before my contumacious little brother was chased in here by the Hindi nerd, Network.

"Erik." Voltage/Raiden began. "What he says here is not true. I swear on Dad's grave." Both the boys were still wearing their PJ's. Raiden was wearing his white short sleeved tshirt and his black shorts as jammies and Xhiva was wearing his green flannel pajamas.

"Bass Boy." Xhiva/Network began, holding his broken phone. "Your brother is a psycho. He fried my phone!"

"Nice hypothesis." Voltage teased. "But'cha can't prove it."

Xhiva gave a death glare before saying, "Yeah but I can beat the crap out of you." And before I could say anything, the Hindi teenager started chasing my little brother. Just as they were in the hallway, Xhiva closed the door hard on his twin brother coming out. Xandou was hit quite hard on the nose. But Xhiva could feel the pain, as he swore he saw blood coming out of his nose.

"Watch we're you're going!" Xhiva yelled at his brother.

Xandou was wearing a dark yellow bathrobe and was holding his hand at his nose. "You should talk!" Xadou yelled back. He groaned in frustration before going to the Consorzio brother's room and yelling at me, "I hate this family!"

"What was that?" Raiden asked Xhiva.

"That was our twinstincts." Network explained. "Mer twins can sometimes feel each other's pain."

"Physical or emotional?" Diablo asked.

"Both." Xhiva said.

"You up yet?" Carlos/Salsa asked me.

Giving up the sleep, I woke up and groggily said, "Yes." Running my hand through my hair, I knew it wasn't going to be a good start to the day. In fact, most mornings started out with a fight. It was
mostly from the twins. So I got up, took a shower, and got dressed. I saw Speed Demon/Xandou, walking down, wearing a sleeveless yellow t shirt, jeans, and his usual sneakers. "Backpack." I reminded him as he turned around to retrieve said item. Just as I was going back into the bathroom, I saw Raiden wearing a purple tshirt, jeans, and PF flyers. But the thing that caught my eye was that he was wearing a black leather jacket. And that he was chewing gum. "Uh uh," I said to him.

Raiden looked down and said to me, "What? It's in style?"

"A leather jacket?" I asked him. "In Queensland? It's too hot for that. Go put it away. And spit out the gum please." Raiden turned around as he was walking to our room and glared at me.

I waited for something appropriate while I was brushing my teeth. In the mirror, I saw passing by, Raiden, with something important missing. "Raiden." I called out to him.

"What?" He asked. "You said put it away."

"I meant just the jacket." I said to him. "You can't go to school, shirtless." Raiden had no grey shirt on, exposing his entire upper body to the world.

"But the ladies love the packs!" Raiden whined, gesturing to his abs.

"She's not gonna notice you!" Wolfboy shouted from downstairs.

"Can your hole, Wolfboy!" Raiden shouted before turning back to me. "Please?"

"No," I said, taking responsibility as his legal guardian. "Go put on a shirt now." Raiden groaned as he went to our room. Don't get me wrong, I want my brother to live his life, but I'm worried about him. I just want what's best for my little brother. Sure he's a pain in the tail, but he's a pretty good guy.

Xhiva's POV

I walked downstairs to get breakfast. I just hoped that nothing wrong would happen at the place they called school. But I would have jinxed it either way.

"Hey Wolfboy." I greeted said merman, who was wolfing down, pun intended, his frosted flakes. What? Did you think we lived on seafood? Diablo was wearing an orange shirt, brown cargo shorts and sandals. He was also wearing his usual SD Eibar cap. He was talking about making the soccer team at this school last night.

"Hey." Diablo said before gasping in shock. "Whoa whoa whoa! You're not going to school dressed like that!"

I glanced down at what I was wearing. A white short sleeved button up t shirt under a green sleeveless sweater vest. On my chest was a red and green striped tie. I wore black jeans and green converse sneakers. I was wearing my usual dark green watch and my new green tinted rectangular glasses. "What's wrong with the nerd look?" I asked, not seeing the problem.

Wolfboy scoffed. "The answer is in your question!" He exclaimed. "Dude, you gotta tone that nerdness down!"

I looked at him with an eyebrow raised. "What and you're telling me you've been to school? Need I remind you that you're uncle homeschooled you?"

"For a few years." Wolfboy said, pouting. "But that's not the point. The point is, nerdness, is so last
year. Come on." Wolfboy led me to his disaster of a room. The dude never cleaned his room, seriously! Diablo sat me down on his wooden chair.

"Why am I even doing this?" I asked.

"You want to impress Yukimi don't you?" Wolfboy asked.

I sighed. I did want to impress Kimi. But not too much. I wanted mostly to stick out, but also blend in. "Yeah. I guess." I replied.

"Alright." He said taking a look at me. "Let's get rid of this first." He changed into a gorilla and with his giant hands, he took my sweater and with a giant rip, tore it off my white shirt.

I was majorly pissed which caused my eyes to glow a bright red. Oh yeah, I guess I should explain the eye color change. You see, the red flicks in my eyes come from my mom, whose eyes were also red. Well originally they were green which is where Xandou got his eyes from, until my mom's eye color changed to red. How, I still have no idea. But whenever me or Xandou got super mad, our eyes changed from our normal color to a bright red. Sometimes when that would happen, our powers would get out of control. Like right then, the lights were flickering, the computers flickered, the TV went all static and all technology in the room started buzzing weird because of me.


"Whoa." Wolfboy said, taking a couple of steps back. "Easy big boy, on the eyes and all. But don't worry, you're keeping the shirt, but take off the tie." I groaned as I did what he said, flinging the tie to the Hispanic merman. "Put this on." He shoved in my hands, a forest green tie. I had to admit it did look classy. I put it on and awaited Wolfboy’s next move. "Now let's get this off." He tried to grab my glasses, but I swiped his hand away, but he saw this coming as he changed into a mouse and scurried on my arm. I tried to get him off, but he was too fast and he carried my glasses to the floor and changed back into a person. "Why do you even wear these again?"

I shrugged. "It's a good fashion accessory."

"Nice." Wolfboy put my glasses on the floor and stomped on them hard breaking them. "There, even without them, you don't need them! Matter of fact, you never needed them at all!"

I just stood there, smiling in victory.

"Why are you smiling like that?" Wolfboy asked me.

"Because mi amigo." I said. "The great thing about having a brain like mine, is that I have lots of back ups."

"Please don't wear the glasses today." Wolfboy said. "Oh and untuck the shirt and mess up your hair a little."

"Why?" I asked.

"Just do it." I did said actions and Diablo stuffed into my hand, a pair of pilot glasses. I put them on and I looked in the mirror only to be shocked at what I saw.

"I look…” I began.

"Say it." Wolfboy challenged.
I took a moment before saying, "Not dorky."

"Not even close." Wolfboy complimented. "Let's get some breakfast."

I stayed for a bit, taking in my look. I looked, kind of macho. A nerd macho. Why Xandou didn't embrace his inner nerd, I have no idea. Probably something to do with the illegal racing he did as a kid.

At the Santos house…

Thalie's POV

I sat quietly in the kitchen, eating my pancakes. My mom was on the roof doing school stuff. I was my own to think some things through. Things like how I was gonna help Evie with the water situation along with the rest of my friends.

"Hey Thalie." Mimmi came up behind me with Sirena carrying a bag of packed codfish. "We're cooking codfish. Do you wanna help?"

I mentally grimaced but I didn't show it in order to be polite. I couldn't cook a fish, less eat one. "Sorry, I gotta be at school." I said. "First day back though."

"Well you can go when we're finished." Mimmi said.

I chuckled. "I would, if I had the option."

"Land school isn't like mermaid school." Sirena explained. "You have to be on time and they take record of your attendance."

"What's this?" Mimmi pointed to the paper next to me.

"It's a schedule." I explained. "The teachers, the subjects, and the time and day of every class. They all gotta fit together so that everyone's at the right place at the right time."

"Machines do all that?" Mimmi asked in wonder. "How?"

"Typical Zoe." Sirena said, using Mimmi's real name. "Just gotta know everything."

"A thirst for knowledge is a wonderful asset." I said.

"You sound just like your mom." Sirena said.

"Thalassa, time to go." My mom said all ready.

"I'll help you Rita." Mimmi said. "Then you can tell me about land school on the way."

And we left to walk to school.

Diablo's POV

After breakfast was all finished, me and the rest of my friends rushed to the car. Of course, this meant us fighting for the front seat. All of us were in a dog pile trying to get to the precious front seat.
"Guys!" We all stopped as we heard Erik. "It's Diablo's day."

"No, it isn't." Speed Demon argued. "It's mine."

We all launched into an argument before Erik yelled out, "Enough! It's Diablo's turn because it is. Now shut up and get into the car."

As we all got in, Network asked, "Where is Carlos?"

"He has a meeting." Erik replied as he started the car. Halfway there, we were all a little tense. Raiden was looking out at the window, Xandou was cracking his knuckles, and Network was texting with a friend in Pakistan. I plugged in my headphones, turned on one of my favorite songs, and silently began to sing.

Where is the moment we needed the most?

Erik noticed, and with a smile sang along with me for a bit, an octave lower.

You kick up the leaves and the magic is lost.

The boys behind us noticed and began to vocalize, in other words, we were all singing a capella. With me and Erik singing.

They tell me your blue skies fade to grey, they tell me your passion's gone away, and I don't need no carrying on.

Network started beatboxing.

Cause you had a bad day, you take it one down, you sing a sad song just to turn it around. You say you don't know, you tell me don't lie. You work on a smile and you go for the lie. You had a bad day, to see what you like, and how does it feel for one more time? You had a bad day, oh you had a bad day!

Erik's POV

As I drove the boys to school, I couldn't help but think back to my first day of alma mater. That was what we called mermaid and merman school in clans. Even though I was really young, I still remember my mom not wanting to let me go to my education center. After some thinking, we arrived at the school. The boys got out, but they kind of all fell out in the middle of their fight. They were betting on something but I don't know what.

"Guys." I said, taking note of the people noticing us. "We have an audience." Immediately, the Blade Boys stopped fighting.

Diablo took a whiff in the air and said proudly, "I love the smell of zit cream in the morning!"

Walking past Mimmi and the Santos', we found our lockers. Turns out mine is next to Cam's, Zac's and Raiden's. I had convinced Rita to put mine next to his, just so I could keep an eye on him. I know, I'm an overprotective merman, but someone's got to keep an eye on my troublemaker of a little brother. We would have separate classes because Raiden would be a sophomore, while I was a junior, despite my age.

"Welcome to the prison." Cam greeted as he was taking stuff from his locker. "If you or your junior squad, need anything, come to the Camster."
"Thanks." I said, taking out some stuff from my backpack into my locker. I peered over my right, and I saw Raiden opening his locker, get some stuff and leave to go to class.

"You're gonna like it here." Cam said. "The natives are friendly." Looking north, I saw Zac and his girlfriend Evie walking towards the lockers.

"We'll see." I said warningly. "Hey Zac. Wanna try out for the swim team?"

Zac chuckled at me. "Funny man."

"Just trying to be friendly." I said. "How about we meet up at lunch? Talk about what happened at Mako."

"We're on equal levels of being up to speed." Zac shot back. I had to agree with him on that.

"But you've got to wonder." I said. "Why did mermen build that place? What's it for?"

Zac closed his locker and said to me, "I've got to go." It was clear that he didn't trust me.

"Once Zac gets paranoid about you, there's nothing you can do to change his mind." Cam explained. "Trust me, I know."

Digging my phone out, I said, "Maybe this will change his mind." I scrolled through the photos until I came across the trident chamber pictures. "See? A chamber on Mako, built by mermen!"

"What are those symbols?" Cam asked.

"That's what I'm trying to find out." I replied.

"Maybe them fish chicks would know." Cam theorized.

"If they do, they're not saying." I said.

"What are these?" I heard Xandou ask behind me pointing to the lockers.

"Lockers." Cam replied.

"This looks like a good storage space." Xhiva replied.

"You've never seen a locker before?" Cam asked.

"No." I replied. "You guys better get to class."

Esmeralda's POV

I was in the kitchen, preparing my special dinner. Cutting up codfish and all.

"How's Ondina" Sirena asked. She was helping me.

"She was fine after she stopped barfing." I replied.

"Ugh." Sirena made a face of disgust. I couldn't blame her. Those sessions were not pleasant.

"Where's Mimmi?" I asked. I had not seen her since this morning.
"She was helping Rita and Thalie." Sirena explained. "But she should be back anytime. What are we making?"

"Ensopado de Balcalhau." I replied.
Sirena smiled. "Your famous codfish stew?"
"Oh yes." I beamed in victory. "Zoe's probably gone for a swim, ran into some dolphins and started chatting." "You know how she is." Sirena said.
"She has to know everything." We both said in unison. Sirena kept cooking and I muttered to myself. "A thirst for knowledge. Just like her mother. Ah, Nerissa could never stand not knowing something."

Erik's POV

I found the Blade Boys and we all went to the Principal's office. Or the door of it. I had to stop Xhiva or Raiden at least 3 times from picking the lock, and 2 times stopped Xandou from kicking the door down. I told them that we had to set a good example for the principal and the rest of the school. I warned them of no funny business, but I didn't believe them when they agreed to it.

"Erik." Rita said behind us. "Xhiva, Xandou, Diablo, and Raiden. How nice to see you." Rita opened the door, but only let me in first. She sorted through my stuff and got my schedule out.

"Remember Erik." She warned. "Just because you have royal blood, doesn't mean you get special treatment."

"That's ok." I agreed. "I understand. I just want to go to school like a normal guy." Just as I was leaving, Rita stopped me. "Erik." She said. "If there's anything I can possibly do to help you transition, just let me know."

"Thanks Principal Santos." I said smiling. As I walked down the hallway, I turned back to the ocean's bad boys and said sternly, "You guys gonna do everything the teachers ask?"

"Yes." The all said in unison.

"Good." I looked at Rita who was peering through the ajar door. "Don't believe them." When I walked down, I turned around and said, "You four. Better. Behave."

Raiden's POV

When Erik left we all sat in the woman's office. She looked like a young woman with most of Thalie's face, and her dark red hair.

When we sat down, she introduced herself. "I'm Principal Santos."

"Wait." I said. "Santos, are you Thalie's mom?"

"You know it." Rita smiled.

"I always thought she was an old lady." Xandou whispered. I snorted in laughter.

"Dude she kind of is." Diablo whispered back.

"You know I'm sitting about a foot away from you and I can hear every word you're saying." Rita said, slightly annoyed.

"My apologies Miss Santos." I said, using some of my inherited princely charm, not that I didn't have some. "Clearly we're getting off on the wrong foot here."
"Raiden's right." Xhiva agreed. Rita quickly forgave us and gave us our schedules.

"Oh Miss Santos?" Xhiva asked.

"Yes?" She replied.

"Could you maybe tell us anything about this merman chamber on Mako?" Xhiva asked.

"No." Rita simply said.

"Come on Rites." Diablo said. "Don't you at least know one itty bitty fact?"

"That's enough." Rita's stern voice was enough to put all of us down. "In the meantime, I strongly suggest that you all put this out of your mind and focus on your other studies. And however familiar you are with my situation outside of school, while we're here, you four will address me as Principal Santos. And for the record, I advise less flirting with the girls and focusing more on your education."

And we all split up, going to class. As I walked I saw Diablo at the soda vending machine.

"What are you doing?" I asked the Hispanic werewolf/type Alpha morpher merman.

"Getting a soda." He replied, tugging his cap. "What do you think?"

"Um Diablo." David said behind us. "We don't stop for snacks right when school starts."

Diablo raised an eyebrow. "Then where are we supposed to go?"

Diablo's POV

Reliable. The method of class shouldn't have even been called a class. Instead it should have been named Torture Zone. I was literally itching to just get out of the seat and run around all crazy. Sitting in one place for one hour was not my favorite pass time.

"I don't understand the purpose of this." I whispered to Rosalina. "We're caged like dogs. And I'm already part weredog and I've already been in an actual cage. Twice."

"Diablo." Rose said to me, my inner wolf already calming down a bit at the sound of her voice. "Relax, we're almost done anyway."

"This sucks." I whispered. "The scent of this classroom is at least 50 percent deodorant mixed with sweat. Yet I smell rose perfume."

"Are you smelling my scent?" Rose asked me.

I just sat there for a second before replying, "No that was accidental."

"Excuse me." Miss. Lamarca called out from his lecture on geometry. "What is going on?"

"Nothing." I said, flashing my infamous smirk. I could have sworn that the math teacher shuddered a little.

"Alright, Mr. Nagual." She said. "This is a warning." It was then I was saved by the bell. Instantly, I ran outside with all of my energy to my next class. I didn't know it, but Rosalina walked, shaking her head.
Raiden's POV

Four words to describe how I was doing: School. Is. Massive. Shit. I mean seriously. I think I prefer Merman Training back in the tribe over...this. I did receive an education of basic human stuff when I was growing up but I focused more on training my powers than literature. Which was the class I was in right then. The only thing that kept me from shooting the board with my lightning, was Thalie. I don't know how she did it, but whenever I tried to make a move just to get some quiet, she always knew what I was doing and gave me a hard core glare. I didn't show it but it did shiver my timbers. No pun intended, since I'm a teenage merman and all.

"What the hell are we doing?" I whispered to the dark-ginger half blood.

"We're learning." She whispered back. "What do you think?"

"Well I for one, think I'm gonna die of sheer patience." I whispered to Thalie.

She just chuckled. "What, you're allergic to it?"

I started at her for a minute before saying, "Yes. Who wouldn't be?"

"You know Raiden." She said to me. "I think that school could be a good thing for you. It could give you a chance to interact with some other kids. You like baseball right? There's a baseball team here."

I pondered over what she said before giving my sheer response. "You are such a mermaid."

"Thanks." She whispered.

"I wanna go home." I said, looking at my paper.

"And where would you think is home?" She asked me.

I scoffed. "Italy, where else?"

Tiraken Twins' POV

(A.N This is my first attempt of writing a bi-POV, so please don't hate me if it doesn't make any sense.)

School was boring.

Amen to that, Xhiva. I mean, no action. But of all the things we did, was just answer basically every single question the teacher asked the class. Even though the other kids gave us glares, except for Helen and Kimi.

What was wrong with that? We were supposed to prove your worth in a learning center. Why the other kids were calling us show offs, we had no idea. It worked this way in MIT, it worked this way in here. As the bell rang, we were grabbed by Helen as she talked to us. She did kind of glare at Xandou. Which kind of got him scared.

Shut it Xhiva.

"What the hell Tirakens?" The black Fire Omega hissed at us. "Are you trying to show off and make the rest of us look like dumbasses?"
"Are you serious?" Xhiva asked her.

"Newsflash guys." Helen continued. "This isn't MIT."

"I'm sorry guys." Xandou said. "In case you haven't noticed, we have to prove our worth."

"Whoa." Kimi said. "Who told you that?"

"Our mother." We both replied. "It's how we survived by showing our intelligence."

Helen and Kimi looked at us in shock before Kimi asked, "Um Xhiva, Xandou, you two have never been to a real public school, have you?"

"Of course not." We both said in unison.

"Let's give you two an education." Helen said, taking Xandou's hand. "Peace de la resistance." Kimi took Xhiva's hand and took him away, while Helen grabbed Xandou's arm and led him away.


Esmeralda's POV

At Mako island…

I swam to Mako, with only one word on my mind. The cooking was still not ready because I wanted to check up on Sirena. Don't worry, I know what I was doing. I had been cooking for years just as I lived on land for some time. Ondina however… didn't inherit my cooking skills. I surfaced just in time to hear Sirena's lovely voice. One of my best friends, had an AMAZING voice. I missed her a lot with her untimely passing and all.

"You have a beautiful voice." I complemented her.

"Want me to teach you the song?" Sirena asked.

"Nah." I said. "Singing's not my thing. I prefer plain old Portugesa."

"I'm teaching Zoe later." Sirena said. "You and Ondina are welcome to join us."

"Where is Zoe?" I asked.

"No idea." Sirena replied. "But you shouldn't be worried. It's good for her to go out and do something for herself for a change."

"Why?" I asked. "What happens the rest of the time?"

Sirena stared at me before replying, "Your daughter tells her what to do."

I simply laughed. "Expected of my daughter." I said proudly. "Oh God, when she gets her mind set to something, it's like…where does she get that from?" Sirena gave me a deadpanned look. "What?"

"Excuse me?" She asked. "Are you kidding me? I think you need to look at yourself in the water."

"Me?" I asked. "No, no, no. I'm stubborn but Ondina? No, that's a whole…she's just like…beyond. It's like she was put on Earth for one thing at a time."

"Still you shouldn't be worried." Sirena said to me kindly. "Let your goddaughter have a little
I sighed. "Yeah, I guess you're right." But my instincts were telling me that little Zoe was somewhere she wasn't supposed to be.

Suncoast High School…

The four Omega mermaids sat together, as always.

"I just feel so sorry for the twins." Kimi said, already feeling sorry. "They must have been raised by very unloving parents."

Behind them, one of the Miller sisters, Brittany scoffed. "You know, I don't care if they come from a pack of angry wolves."

"She's right." The eldest, Jeanette said with sympathy. "We got to at least help them."

"No way." Brittany scoffed.

"But Brittany." Jeanette tried to reason.

"Oh please!" Brittany complained. "This compassion you feel for all mankind, is (scoff) sickening Jeanette!"

"Guys!" The youngest, Eleanor called them over, and the Miller sister went to their table.

"Hey Rose." Helen greeted said person as she sat down. "How you doing?"

"Getting Diablo to sit still isn't easy." She said. Kimi just laughed.

"Hey guys." Thalie said as she sat down.

"How you doing?" Rose asked.

"I've been giving this some thought." Thalie said. "It kind of seems more than just coincidence the four of us are Omegas and Evie's not."

"Well the odds of us becoming Omegas by sheer accident is about 187 zillion to one, but…if we have these powers for a reason, what is it?"

Meanwhile, Raiden was practicing baseball on the diamond, when 8 other boys came in and saw Raiden's skills. His skills were almost equal to their coach, Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez.

"Dude!" An obese boy with orange hair and freckles said. "This guy's got game."

"Yeah yeah." A tan boy said. "Too cool."

"He don't know what he's doing." A sandy haired boy said.

"He don't know what he's doing." His twin repeated.

"Yeah he does." Their coach said from behind the boys. "This guy knows exactly what he's doing."
"At least he ain't an L…7…weeeenieeee." Square Glasses said.

"HEY!" A tall skinny boy called out to Raiden. "Get over here!" Raiden ran towards them huffing.

"What?" He asked. "Can't a guy practice in peace?"

"Woah hey!" A brown haired small boy said. "We actually come in peace."

"I'm Coach Jet Rodriguez." The Cuban man stepped out and shook Raiden's hand. "We're Suncoast's baseball team." As he began to introduce his team, they all readied their spits.

"That's Timmy and Tommy Timmons." Jet pointed to the sandy haired twins, who spit in greeting.

"Mike "Squints" Palledorus." The kid with glasses spat.

"Allen McLellan, we call him "Yeah Yeah."" The tan kid spit.

"Bertram Grover Wheats." The six foot boy with glasses spit.

"Kenny DeNunez." The black kid spit.

"Hamilton "Ham" Porter." The freckled face kid spat.

"And Scotty Smalls. We call him Smalls." The smallest brown hairid kid spit but he managed to spit it far. It only got to his feat.

"You're killing me Smalls!" Ham exclaimed. "Almost as bad as when you didn't know who The Babe was!"

"So who are you?" Bertram asked.

"Yeah Yeah, who are you?" Yeah Yeah asked.

"I'm Raiden Consorzio." Raiden said.

"Consorzio huh?" Kenny said interested.

"Anyway, we've seen you and you're pretty good." Jet said. "Come find us after school and we'll see if you make the team." They all walked back, Raiden feeling proud of himself. That he actually made some possible friends.


Xhiva's POV

I walked around the halls after my next class came and went. I could feel the glares of envy on me. This wasn't uncommon. Back in the tribe, the Blade Boys were practically team of mermen everybody wanted to be a part of.

"Hey Gandhi!" I heard an obnoxious voice behind me. Ignoring the racist remark, I kept walking. But it was a good thing I was a mixed martial artist because I dogged the jock throwing a punch at my head. But he grabbed my shirt and looked me in the eye. "Listen up here punk." He was a Caucasian kid with a mow hawk hairdo that was dyed red and black. He was obviously a football jock, because he was wearing a letter jacket. "Listen here newbie. I don't like it when new punks like yourself think that you're all that, so better watch out."
"Please." I snorted. "I wonder how many brain cells you still have left to use."

"That's it." The jock steamed. "You're dead. Now you got 2 options. 1. The Locker. 2. The Toilet, what's it gonna be?"

Immediately, I answered, "Locker."

"Why did I choose the locker?" I grumbled. The buffoon had stuffed me into a locker. I, Xhiva Vali Tiraken had been stuffed into a locker. Normally I would have used my powers to get myself out, but the problem was, that required the use of hands, and mine were smushed. So I did the only thing that a wimp would do:'

"Help!" I cried out! "Somebody get me out!"

"Hang on!" A slightly deep voice sounded outside. Within seconds the locker door burst open. A pair of arms helped me get out and I was finally free to move.

"Thanks." I looked up and I saw 3 boys. One was wearing a blue sweater, jeans, blue trimmed glasses, and sneakers. He had brown hair and blue eyes. He was the tallest of the trio. The middle one had a red cap over his dirty blond hair, and he had blue eyes. He had a red t shirt with a capitalized yellow A. He also wore sneakers. The smallest and slightly chubby one, had blond hair and green eyes. He wore a green hoodie and cargo shorts, and sneakers.

"No problem." The blue clad boy said.

"Are you ok?" The green clad boy asked, helping Xhiva up. "I'm really sorry about Nathan."

"Yeah that dude's a total douchebag." The red clad boy said. The blue boy nudged him and shook his head at him. Obviously those two had a love-hate relationship. The green boy was the sweet one.

"Allow us to introduce ourselves." The boy with the glasses said. "I'm Simon Seville, the smart one."

"I'm Alvin Seville." The red capped boy said. "The awesomest one."

"And I'm Theodore Seville." Theodore shook Xhiva's hand politely.

"Are you guys?" I asked before Simon answered.

"Triplets yes."

"Thanks." I said.

"Holla, my brother!" Alvin yelled out. I walked down to see Nathan picking on another kid. That did it. Getting stuffed into a locker and getting threatened with a splash of water, I could take. What I couldn't take was a bully picking on innocent human children. My eyes glowing red, my boxing, I charged at Nathan with a war cry.

What did I do? Let's just say I beat not just the shit out of him, but the organs as well. He wasn't dead. But eventually I got called to the principal's office.

"So just to be clear." Rita began. "You try to set a good example for me, yet you beat a kid."

"You saw what he did." I defended. "Picking on that poor boy. I thought if I could just stand up, things would be different."
"Xhiva." Rita said. "I understand what you're trying to do but violence is not the answer. This isn't Merman Training or your father's. You have to be more careful."

"And can I mention that the dude threatened me with getting wet and stuffed me in a locker, with my hands squished?" I asked.

Rita took a moment before saying, "I see. Tell me Xhiva, was beating up and threatening Nathan the right thing to do?"

I was stuck. So I gave her my honest answer. "Honestly Ms Santos. Ever since I got here, I don't know the difference between right and wrong anymore."

"I can understand that." Rita said.

"No." I said. "You don't know what it's like to suddenly doubt everything you've been taught, everything that you live and breathe. It's confusing me by the day."

"Really?" Rita asked. "When I met Harry Santos, I started to question the things that the pod taught us about humans. Even my sister and I had a serious argument about it. So Thalassa, my daughter, was born because even though I fell in love with a human, which was considered wrong, I did it because I knew it was right. Because I had listened to my heart."

I took in those words. Listening to my heart sounded cliché, but it just seemed right and vile at the same time. I was always taught by my mother to listen to my head.

"What do I do?" I asked her.

"Well normally, I would suspend you." Rita began. "But I have a better idea. You've heard of the lacrosse team right?"

"Yes." I replied.

"Normally the robotics club would be a good option, but since you have…passed their expectations, the lacrosse team should be good for you. It will give you a chance to get out more, make some friends, and even get some exercise."

"Well, I do well with a bo staff." I said. "So I should be good."

"Tryouts are…" Rita didn't finish because Zac had barged in.

"Sorry to interrupt guys." He said. "We have a problem." After Zac explained what happened, we all rushed to the junior lab. Ms. Trumble, the teacher, whose name I giggled at, was giving Rita a hard time over Mimmi. Kimi was taking the class and because of her getting nervous, she was sort of setting the table on ice. I walked over her and held her hand to calm her down. It was kind of cool, no pun intended. But unfortunately, Rita and Mimmi got splashed. Fortunately we managed to trace them to the field. And get them dry, by the skin of our noses.

No one's POV

Zac, Evie, and Xhiva led Mimmi back to the main locker area. Before Mimmi could even speak, Esmeralda had her arms wrapped around Mimmi.

"Are you ok?" She whispered.

"Esme I'm fine." Mimmi said.
"She's had a little adventure." Evie explained.

"Esme was really worried." Sirena said.

"Of course I was!" Esme exclaimed. She took one look at Xhiva and muttered, "Xiaohui and Agni. Who knew?"

Xhiva chuckled sheepishly.

"Esmeralda." Zac said. "This is Xhiva, he helped rescue Mimmi and Rita."

"Well." Esmeralda said. "It's an honor to meet you, mister…"

"Xhiva." Said merm friends greeted.

"Thank you for your help." Esme said. "We must be going. We shouldn't be here anyway."

"Not yet." Mimmi walked up towards Erik and talked to him for a bit before going back to Esme, who walked up to Erik and warned him not to let his curiosity get to his head, like a certain childhood incident that had put Ondina in danger.

Esme then drove Mimmi and Thalie back home. As soon as Mimmi got out of the car, Esme hugged her again.

"Tia Esme." Mimmi said. "I'm fine. You don't need to hug me again."

"Don't get used to it." Esme warned. "As soon as I'm done hugging you, you're gonna be in big trouble."

Mimmi gulped as Esme led her to the living room. Yep, Mimmi was in trouble.

"Of all the imbecilic stunts you've pulled in the 7 years I've raised you." Esmeralda began her lecture. "This was the most irresponsible! Do you know what could have happened if you had been discovered in your tail?"

"I was just trying to see how humans learned!" Mimmi defended.

"First of all." Esme said. "You could have just asked Thalie instead of following her in school. Second, land school is honeycombed with some of the most ways to get splashed."

"I'm sorry." Mimmi said.

"You could be in a tank right now Zoe." Esme said, looking her in the eye. "Ondina, could be in a tank! This isn't the sea. The rules are different. You have to be smarter than this."

"I just wanted to learn something new." Mimmi said.

"Oh you have." Esmeralda said, getting real. "And you know what? I've learned something new too! I have learned that you, are not responsible enough to take care of yourself, you are not mature enough to go out on your own, and regardless of you graduating Northern Mermaid School, you're still a child."

"Is that all I am to you?" Mimmi asked. "A child? I'm not my mom!"

"Zoe." Esmeralda said. "I already let your mother die, I can't afford to lose you."
"Esmeralda." Rita said. "It wasn't your fault."

Esme turned around and said to Rita, "Yes it is."

Even though Mimmi and Esmeralda had cooled off, Esme was still plenty mad that Mimmi's recklessness had gotten her splashed and nearly seen. So Mimmi felt better, when Esme grounded her for a week, instead of the rest of her life.

Raiden ended up joining the baseball team, Xandou joined the basketball team and Diablo joined the soccer team.

Later that night…

Xandou's POV

I met up with Helen on Mako. We ran around, played tag, and had a lot of fun. Finally we had a bit of a picnic on the beach.

"Is this your first time?" Helen asked.

"We don't really hang around with girls this much." I explained. "It's more like…gang activity."

Helen chuckled. "I meant, is this your first time eating a jelly doughnut?"

"Is that a bad thing?" I asked.

"You got a little..." Helen gestured to my lip, which I wiped the powdered sugar off.

"Xandou." Helen said. "I saw you today, and it looked like you didn't know where you were or who you were at the moment."

"I was just confused a little, but I'm ok." I covered up.

"No." Helen said. "My parents are British politicians, and your parents are criminals of the sea. But we're not automatically like them."

"I… kind of beg to differ." I said.

"Xandou." Helen said. "I can talk to you and I can tell you're not a criminal." We looked into each other's eyes, her bravery illuminated by the moonlight. "You wanna go for a swim?"

"Sure." I said. "But I need a moment." I took my pants off and revealed my swimming shorts.

Helen giggled. "Are those wheels on your shorts?"

I blushed a little. "Maybe." Helen took off her clothes to reveal a red swimsuit, which fit her body perfectly. Just the right curves. She ran in the water, her beautiful fin slapping the surface.

I sat on the beach, to think some things through with my baritone voice.

A million thoughts in my head
Should I let my heart keep listening
'Cause up 'til now I've walked the line
Nothing lost but something missing
I then thought about my parents and Chief Slade who were counting on me to set the path for future mermen.

I can't decide
What's wrong, what's right
Which way should I go

If only I knew what my heart was telling me
Don't know what I'm feeling
Is this just a dream?
Ah oh, yeah
If only I could read the signs in front of me
I could find the way to who I'm meant to be
Ah oh, if only
If only

Yeah

Am I crazy? Maybe we could happen
Yeah
Will you still be with me when the magic's all run out?

I then thought about Helen, who was making me feel this fire I never felt before.

If only I knew what my heart was telling me
Don't know what I'm feeling
Is this just a dream?
Ah oh...
If only I could read the signs in front of me
I could find the way to who I'm meant to be
Ah oh...
If only, yeah
If only
If only

I looked around for a bit to see that Helen wasn't coming back up. I was starting to get worried.

"Helen?" I cried out. "Helen!" I dived in the water and with my tail, I searched for Helen. I surfaced to see her surface to. "You scared me!"

"How?" She asked.

"I thought something happened!" I yelled.

"Yet you tried to save me." Helen mused.

"Do you thank me?" I said. "No. All I get, is soaking wet!"

"Xandou." Helen put her hand on my shoulder. "I know what I want. What do you want? What is right for you?"

I looked into her golden orbs, which were so beautiful, and thought this through. So I gave her an honest answer. "I don't know the difference between right and wrong anymore."
"Maybe I can help you." Helen offered. But then we heard a conch shell blow once. I knew what that meant. A search party for mermaids. I had to get Helen out of there.

"Helen, you've got to get out of here." I said. "Chief Slade's here."

"Why?" She asked. "Who is he?"

"I can't explain." I said to her. "I just need you to leave."

"Xandou." She said. "Promise me that you will think about this."

"I promise." And she left, the dangerous forces of the Ares Tribe.

Xhiva's POV

I was in the bathroom looking in the mirror. I had a lot to think about. What path do I chose? Would I be like my criminal parents? Or would I be my own person? I looked into the mirror and began to sing in my baritone voice.

Look at you, look at me
I don't know who to be
Mother…
Is it wrong? Is it right?...
Be a thief in the night?
Father…
Tell me what I should do

No one's POV

Grunts could be heard across the reef as Chief Slade of the Ares Tribe ruthlessly took down the opponents in his practice session. He was in the middle of sucking the water out of a prisoner, when a messenger interrupted.

"What is it?" He growled after he surfaced. A stoic merman treaded in front of him, shuddering in his mind that he was in the presence of one of the most powerful mermen to ever exist.

"It is as we feared Master Slade." The messenger spoke after he bowed. "Esmeralda Marino has arrived. Erik has failed to obtain the information. The playing field has shifted into the mermaids."

Slade thought for a bit before ordering the messenger, "Tell Agni to speed up the mutagen. It is time to bring the order of mermen into this chaos."

"Yes Chief." The messenger saluted before diving back in and swimming back to the Kanhoji's lab.

Slade smiled evilly. "It is time to finally increase my armies and get information." He turned around and with a single blow, killed his opponent, ending his session.

"My way."

No one's POV

Nathan Derell was at the mercy of the bleachers, scraping the thousands of wads of gum from them.
Rita Santos, the principal was smiling, for she had arranged this "community service'.

"Good work Nathan." She said proudly. "Only 10 more rows of bleachers to go," And she was gone, leaving Nathan to scrape more gum than he would remember.
Monkey Feel, Monkey Do

Rated K+ for some language.

Bold words in parenthesis are the lyrics to the song, "Munks on a mission" but I'm changing the "munks into punks".

No one's POV

Hundreds of people surrounded Kuroda Enterprises as the police surrounded the building, inside and out. The media was going crazy as they interviewed some of the people who got away. What had happened? The building was raided by the criminal organization known as the Kanhoji Cult. But no one knows that. They busted in the building, and took almost all of the 314 people working in total. Only 11 people escaped. They didn't destroy the building, but they had kidnapped innocent people. Including Tadashi and Kira Hamasaki, who were of course, the parents of Yukimi and Haru Hamasaki. When Kimi got the news, she was upset of course, but it Haru, the youngest of the Japanese family that was the most devastated. He had always looked up to his family as his heroes, but now that 2 of them were gone, he spent the rest of the school day crying. Kimi was studying when she heard what happened. The news reported that the most amazing thing about this was that this kidnapping spree was boldly executed in broad daylight. By the time the authorities had arrived there, they were too late.

Right then, the Hamasaki children and the 11 survivors of what the news dubbed, "The Trojan Kidnapping Horse" were being interviewed. Which meant TV. Normally, the 10 year old would have loved to have been on TV, but in this case, he was still crying, even on live TV. Kimi hugged him so many times. The survivors reported no one was killed by the men in black suits, but the entire building had lost the lights. At first, they all ruled it out as a power outage, but then they heard noises like men shouting orders and glass being shattered. The survivors managed to get out using the air vents. Kimi's friends were all there too, but just in case things got out of hand. They didn't want to interfere too much.

"I." Haru said, a little calm to the reporter. "Miss my mommy and daddy. I hope they come back."

"I hope they are alright." Kimi said, before walking away with her little brother. They were the most interviewed of all because their parents ran the company.

"You ok?" Xhiva asked Kimi, who in reply, nodded solemnly. Knowing that this one of Xhiva's chances to talk to his crush, Kimi's friends left the scene. He walked Kimi and Haru to the café where people asked the Hamasaki children if they were ok.

"Are you 2 ok?" David asked looking sad.

"Yeah we're ok." Haru said.

"I'll get you guys your favorites here." Carly said. "On the house."

"Thanks." Kimi said, smiling sadly. The two Japanese children sat down when Evie came up to them.

"Hey." She said. "Do you have any relatives here?"

"No, why?" Haru asked.
"Since you two are gonna need a place to crash." Evie explained. "How'd you two like to temporarily live in my house?"

"You'd do that?" Kimi asked.

"It's no problem." Doug McLaren said behind her. "Yukimi has become a friend."

"Will Thalie be ok with this?" Kimi asked.

"I already am." Thalie said out of the blue before whispering to Kimi. "Listen, I would have taken you in first thing. But you and Evie are...you know and it's too risky with your brother being a land boy. Evie can protect you two."

"My parents can't." Helen said. "My dad's a lawyer and my mom's on the police force. They would interrogate you and Haru ruthless."

"My parents..." Rose began. "They're still fighting, though I overheard them saying something about telling me something."

"What was it?" Kimi asked.

"I asked them that and they told me to drop it." Rose explained.

"We're really sorry." Helen said.

"It's ok." Kimi said, stroking her baby brother's shoulder, who was busy slurping a giant milkshake. "It's about time I have a sleepover in a new place. No offense."

"None taken." Thalie said. Then they all left the Japanese teens alone to give them space.

"Hey." Erik said, finally arriving. "I'm really sorry about what happened."

"Oh and you're also not sorry for being late?" Carly snapped.

"Excuse me for having sympathy, Morgan." Erik sassed back.

"Burn." Rose whispered to Carly. Yukimi and Haru went home soon and they got their stuff and headed to the McLaren house.

"I hope Haru feels better in a safe place." Mr. McLaren said.

"I'm sure he'll be fine." Evie said. Haru was napping to take his mind off of what happened. Kimi was just reading a book when she heard tapping on the window. She looked up and saw Thalie and the rest of her friends.

"Hey." Thalie said.

"You gonna be ok?" Rose asked.

"Yea." Kimi replied. "Evie says me and Haru can stay here as long as we want. But I will feel a lot better once I find the assholes that took my parents."

"Won't the police help?" Helen asked.

"They're trying everything." Kimi replied.
"Yukimi." Thalie said. "Haru. I promise you two, we will find your father."

"Thank you." Kimi said. "But it's not your fight."

"Kimi." Helen said. "We're in this together. We do what mermaids always do best, stick together. Friends forever?"

"Friends forever." They all replied. Suddenly, a voice sounded out as Evie and Haru were playing.

"That's right Evie." The imaginative 10 year old said out loud. "This yokai will steal your soul… THROUGH YOUR BUTT!"

"No!" Evie cried out. "Save me!"

Rose was on the floor laughing her brains out.

"Does he even know she's taken?" Helen asked.

"Through her butt?" Thalie asked, barely suppressing a smile.


A week later…

Haru Hamasaki paced around the room, studying his environmental science in his head. He had inherited some of the genes of the Hamasaki smarts. But whenever he studied, he couldn't help but think of his parents. So sighing, he sat back down and looked at a photo of his family.

"Hey Haru." Mr. McLaren said from the kitchen door.

"Hey, Mr. McLaren." Haru responded.

"Mrs. Johnson's in the café." Doug said. "She's wearing something super inappropriate for an 80 year old." Haru smiled at that. "Kimi said that always cracks you up."

"Haru?" Kimi said. "Since it's a rainy day, you wanna play some video games?"

"Sure." The two Japanese kids went upstairs, and played video games for a couple of hours. It was then that Haru asked his elder sister, "How did you find out about the news?"

Kimi sighed. "It went like this"

Flashback

One week ago…

Yukimi was in study hall when her phone rang. She went outside to avoid distracting the other students. Noticing that the caller ID was her father, she answered.

"Moshi Moshi?" She asked.

"Yukimi-chan." Her father answered through the phone, nervously. "Watashi wa ōku no jikan o motte imasen." (I don't have much time.)

"Otosan?" Kimi asked. "O genke desu ka?" (Are you ok?)
"Nanika ga shigoto, Yukimi ni kite imasu." (Something's come up at work, Yukimi.) Her father said. "Watashi to anata no okāsan wa tsumori shibaraku ie ni sa rete imasen." (Me and your mother are not gonna be home for a while)

"Wakarimasen." (I don't understand.) Kimi had started to get frightened, causing the bench she was sitting in to get frozen a little.

"Anata ga haru o mimasuto watashi ni yakusoku shite kudasai. OK?" (Please promise me that you will watch Haru. Ok?)

"Nani ga okotte imasu ka?" (What's happening?)

"I have to go." Her father said. "I promise I'll be back." The line then was cut to static as screams were heard

End of flashback…

"The minute he hung up." Kimi said, finishing her story. "I knew that they were in trouble. So I ran out the minute the bell rang to the building. By the time I got there it was too late. What about you Haru? How'd you find out?"

"The teachers told me." Haru replied. "Onee-chan? Mama to papa tsumori wa shinu sa rete imasu ka?" (Are Mommy and Daddy gonna die?)

"Otouto." Kimi said. "Watashitachiha shite iru tsumori sorera o torimodosu koto o yakusoku shimasu." (I promise you that we're gonna get them back.)

A few days later…

Xhiva's POV

I was out in the yard, practicing my martial arts. You didn't think me and my siblings were trained in just smarts did you? No, we were close to 10th degree black belts. After Diablo was done stretching, I began my move by doing a front crescent kick. He jumped up, dodging it but I flipped him. Unexpectedly, he jumped off my knees and backflipped in the air, landing smooth.

"Dude, what are you doing?" I asked. "You don't defend against Seo Nage with…backflips."

"Why not?" Diablo asked smiling. "Backflips are where it's at!"

"The best defense is to roll along my back." I explained. "Then take me to the ground and put me in an armlock! Unless of course I counter with an…"

"Look amigo." Diablo said. "You can't take the fire out of…" He did a back flip. "Dr. Flipp-enstein."

"I don't even know what that means." I said, exasperated. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Erik. Walking up to him, I asked, "Erik, what would you if someone tried to throw you at Seo Nage?"

"I'd kick his ass, that's what." Erik said.

"No I meant what move would you perform?" I asked.

"I don't know." Erik replied.
"Come on Erik." I said. "Don't you at least have a plan?"

"Xhiva." Erik said. "If you think too much about what's coming, you lose sight of now. You gotta be fully in the moment, so you can fight without thinking."

"Why would I want to fight without thinking?" I asked.

"Allow me to demonstrate." Erik said. "Prepare to defend against Seo Nage." Before I could blink, he had tackled me to the ground, showering me with a few punches.

"OW!" I said in pain. "That wasn't Seo Nage!"

Erik just laughed. "No, but you thought it would be. Now would you like to prepare against a headlock?"

"No." I winced. "I'm good."

"You know what could have worked there?" Diablo asked. "BACKFLIP!" I just rolled my eyes.

An hour later…

I sat in the café, working on my flow chart. It was my master plan. Well, number 25 of them. It was rare when it came to a master plan. I couldn't help but feel sorry for Yukimi. I honestly didn't know who would have the nerve to drag 2 civilian parents into this whole fiasco. In other words, me or Xandou had no idea who kidnapped all those people. Even though I wasn't supposed to save people, I had this feeling in my gut, that I had to take action. But mostly I was thinking of doing it for Kimi.

"What'cha up to Xhiva?" I heard Carly behind me. She was surrounded by Zac, Evie, Sirena, Carly, and Erik.

"Just putting the finishing touches on my master plan." I replied smugly.

"Your master plan?" Erik asked.

I finished drawing another line when I answered. "Yeah to get Kimi to hang out with me." The others just simply laughed. "Yeah, really feeling the love guys."

"Xhiva." Zac began. "You mean to tell me that you made a flow chart just to hang out with a girl?"

"I may not be an expert on boys." Sirena began. "But I'm pretty sure that's just trying too hard."

"Try this." Erik said. "Yukimi, do you want to hang out with me?"

"Yeah you see, it's not that simple." I said. "I gotta prepare for every possible response to maximize my chances of success."

"Again." Sirena said. "Trying to hard."

"Remind me to give this guy flirting lessons," Zac whispered to Evie. "Otherwise he's a lost cause."

"For instance," I explained. "If Kimi says she can't because she has homework, then I will enlist an informal study session and serve healthy brain stimulating snacks."

"What if she says she can't cause you're a total nerd?" Carly asked sarcastically.

"That's this thread here." I pointed to a line south. "I will list my many non nerdy qualities and
suggest activities that will highlight my coolness, such as skateboarding or shark wrestling."

"Have you even wrestled an actual shark before?" Carly asked.

Rolling my eyes, I rolled up the sleeve of my green hoodie on my right arm and showed them a bite mark. "I have wrestled a Great White before. But the bite? Not fun."

"Why would you even almost get killed though?" Evie asked.

"At the time I had lost a bet." I explained.

Suddenly Kimi burst in the café. "Guys!" With no time to spare, I hid the flow chart under the table. "You guys have to check this out!" She then opened her phone up to play a video of the latest news. A neurochemist, Tyler Rockwell had been reported missing. An interview with his colleague, Victor Falco showed that Rockwell's place was trashed and he was gone. The police still had no leads.

"So?" Carly asked.

"So." Kimi explained. "Everybody who was kidnapped in Kagaku Enterprises was either a chemist, technologist, or scientist. Including my parents. Maybe that's what happened to this Rockwell guy."

"Or there's a chance they may not be connected at all." Zac said.

"There's only one way to find out." Kimi said, not giving up. "We should go to that lab and check around it."

"Kimi's right." I said, believing her. "What's that? You're busy? Guess it's just the two of us, Yukimi." As I escorted her out, I looked back to the others and winked.

Erik scoffed. "I'll bet that wasn't on the chart." He got the chart from the ground only to see that even the idea of a secret mission was on there!

"It is." Sirena whispered.

"That." Zac whispered. "Is spooky."

We walked for blocks until we reached the building. When we stepped in front of the door, there was an electronic lock. I cracked my fingers and concentrated on the lock. In just nanoseconds, the door unlocks. "There isn't an electronic lock out there I can't crack."

"Smooth." Kimi said. I blushed a little. But when we got inside, the place was trashed, every inch was a mess.

Kimi shined a flashlight over it and said, "This place is a wreck. He must have been experimenting on animals."

We peered over an armrest chair and I whispered, "Either someone was up to some secret research or they were renting space for one freaky dentist!" We looked at his desk, drawer through drawer until I found a fake drawer bottom. I lifted it up to see a bottle of pure blue water and I whispered in awe, "Moon pool water."

"How did a scientist get his hands on moon pool water?" Kimi asked.

"No idea." I whispered back. "Stand back though." Over the years, I had developed a martial artist's sixth sense, I could sense the person behind me and when he was about to strike. With no time, I grabbed the person's hand and flipped him on his back. Kimi flipped on the lights and we both saw it
"Dr. Falco!" Her words, not mine.

"Who are you?" The middle aged Caucasian man exclaimed.

"Chillax." I said. "I'm not gonna hurt you."

"You already hurt me!" Falco exclaimed.

I got off him straightening myself. "I mean, anymore."

"We're here to help." Kimi said. Dr. Falco got himself seated as we asked him about Kimi's parents, as to sadly he replied, "I'm sorry, I wish I knew something about your parents. But I don't."

"So, Dr. Falco." I began, holding the canister of moon pool water. "What can you tell us about this?"

"Some shady cooperate goon paid Rockwell a lot of money to experiment with it." Dr. Falco answered.

"Was he wearing this symbol?" Kimi showed him a picture of a red valknut in front of an X in a black circle.

"Yeah." Victor explained. "He wore it on a pin." I nearly gasped in horror as that symbol, was the symbol of the Kanhoji. The symbol of my father. Now I knew who was responsible for the abduction of Kimi's parents. "I wanted no part of that stuff," Falco continued. "Who knows what kind of monstrosities could result?" I was a bit taken aback as I was used to being called a monstrosity my life.

"Is that what was in that cage over there?" Kimi asked, pointing to the busted wall cage. "One of his... "monstrosities"?"

"Can we ease up on the M word please?" I asked quietly.

"That's where he kept the monkey he was experimenting on." Falco said, grimly.

"Whoa." I said in awe. "It sure didn't like being locked up in there."

"Rockwell didn't treat it very well." Falco said.

"Maybe they didn't take Rockwell." Kimi theorized. "Maybe the monkey went beserk, busted out of the cage and dragged him off. Or worse."

We left the office and took a detour down the alley.

"How do you suppose we're gonna find Rockwell without any leads?" Kimi asked.

"Well." I said. "We'll have a little more info once we look at his flash drive."

"What flash drive?" Kimi asked.

I took out the indigo portable USB. "The one I swiped off his desk."

"Nice!" Kimi exclaimed impressed.

"Yeah." I said. "Keeping cool is the hallmark for…" I didn't get to finish because a man-sized
monkey, not a chimp, a monkey, jumped in front of us. He wore purple pants and what looked like, cuffs. He screamed at us in monkey. Kimi got in front of me and conjured a staff out of ice.

"Careful Kimi!" I screamed out. "That's a dangerous mutant!"

"That makes 3 of us." Kimi replied before attacking. I have to say, she was pretty good, even when her staff was knocked out and she threw some ice blasts, but she was then thrown to the side. It was my turn, I launched some attacks, but unfortunately, the monkey seemed to interpret my style and started to beat the crap out of me.

"I was just figuring out his timing." I said to Kimi, who was starting to get up. "He is gonna regret… OW!...that too…OW!...and a lot of regrets monkey." The monkey continued to beat the crap out of me, before Kimi and Evie stepped in and got the monkey's attention.

"It's ok." Kimi said.

"Everything is going to be alright." Evie said to the monkey. They all stared at each other in silence before the monkey took off.

"Are you hurt?" Kimi asked.

"Just my dignity." I said in pain. "And my internal organs." Evie got in her car, something she rarely uses, and drove first Kimi to her house and me to mine.

"Come on Xhiva." She said to me, carrying me. It kind of sucked that Kimi wasn't here, but Evie was a cool chick.

"What happened?" Xandou asked, once we went inside.

"Xhiva got beat up by a lab monkey." Evie explained. The boys shared a glance before Voltage took me.

"Evie." He said. "Can you get an ice pack?" I limped to the sea cave and sat down in it, allowing my tail to form. Something about merpeople that is not really known. We can heal about 7 times faster than a human. But only if we're in the water. My field may be technology, but my domain will always be in the water. Immediately, I felt the soothing saltwater heal my fractured ribs.

"Xhiva." Wolfboy said. "Are you gonna be ok?"

"Yeah." I replied. "Yeah, I'll be fine."

"In that case…" Speed Demon said, before all the boys burst out laughing. I flipped my fin in pure embarrassment. "You got beat up…by a monkey…in front of your GIRLFRIEND?!"

"She's not my girlfriend!" I exclaimed. "And that monkey was a vicious mutant!"

"Yeah." Voltage said. "I'm sure he gave you the cold shoulder!" And being the ignoramus muttonheads they were, they burst out laughing. "No wait, he needed to chill!" The other boys were on the floor, howling in laughter. My humiliation was saved by Evie walking in.

"No more winter puns." Speed Demon whispered to Voltage. Evie placed the ice bag wrapped in a towel on my head. The mere thought of ice reminded me of Kimi.

"Are you laughing at him because he's hurt?" Evie asked, a little angered.

"No." Wolfboy said. "We were laughing at him because his chance to impress a snowball went…
DOWNHILL!" Of course they were laughing. Evie muttered, "Boys are idiots."

The next day at school...

I sat in my science class, not really paying attention because I had pretty much known the entire goddamn lesson. My mind wandered to last night's mishap, and I still couldn't believe that even though I am a highly trained secret agent, and yet I was still beat up by a mindless animal.

Iyan ang iyong likas na kakayahan problema. (That's your problem genius.) Speed Demon's voice sounded in my head. Something about mer twins you should know. We have a telepathic link and we can communicate using that. It's like a walkie talkie but one that's in your head, literally. My brother was speaking Filipino. Sa tingin mo masyadong maraming. (You think too much.)

Katatapos ko lamang ay hindi maunawaan kung paano maaari mong labanan ang walang pag-iisip. (I just don't understand how you can fight without thinking.) I thought back.

Pagmasdan. (Observe) Before I could think back, a memory played in my head. It showed my sister training. She looked like she had a plan. But I knew better, she wasn't using her head, just her body. Tingnan? (See?) Kung akin at sis maaaring gawin ito, kaya maaari mong. Ngayon mahanap na espasyo sa iyong higanteng ulo. (If me and sis can do it, so can you. Now find that space in your giant head.)

Saved by the bell, I rushed out of the classroom and activated the twin link in Indonesian. Kenapa kau tidak memberitahu saya bahwa Ayah berada di belakang Kuroda penculikan foya? (Why didn't you tell me that Dad was in charge of the Kuroda kidnapping spree?) I thought to him.

Aku tidak tahu sampai sekarang. (I didn't know until now.) Xandou thought back. Aku tahu sebanyak yang Anda lakukan. (I know as much as you do.) Mengapa Dad akan membutuhkan sekelompok kutu buku dewasa? Jumlah pelanggaran. (Why would Dad need a bunch of adult nerds? Total offense.)

Nyata dewasa Xandou. (Real mature Xandou.) I thought. Anda yakin Dad tidak mengatakan apa-apa tentang rencana terbarunya? (You sure Dad didn't say anything about his latest plans?)

Xhiva, Anda tahu kode etik kembar. (Xhiva, you know the twin code of conduct.) Xandou thought back. Ketika saya tahu sesuatu, Anda tahu sesuatu. (When I know something, you know something.) Jadi apa yang Anda pikirkan adalah langkah berikutnya? (So what do you think is Dad's next move?)

I sighed. Saya tidak tahu saudara. Namun menurut air bulan kolam renang dan penculikan ilmuwan, itu akan menjadi sesuatu yang besar. (I don't know brother. But according to the moon pool water and the kidnapping of scientists, it's gonna be something big.) And I cut off the transmission.

I met the rest of the guys at lunch and I got to work on the notes I found from Dr. Rockwell. "Guys, I think I found something." The rest of the Blade Boys joined up with me. "These notes are hard to follow, but it looks like Rockwell was able to modify the moon pool water."

"Why would he do that?" Diablo asked.

"Apparently he thought he could use it as some sort of trans-mutation serum that would turn you into half of an animal, and give you temporarily psychic abilities." I explained.

"You mean that monkey was psychic?" Xandou asked.

"From the way the animal was described to me." Diablo spoke up. "It seems like he reads emotions.
After, according to Evie, he was only hostile when Xhiva was hostile."

"Yeah, well I'll be able to think friendly thoughts when I'm beating a little sunshine into him." I said, pounding my fist, and my eyes glowing red a little.

"Ok." Raiden said out loud, coming to a plan. "We need to track this guy down, before he attacks someone else. Let's spread out tonight all over the city and search."

"I'll take the roads." Xandou volunteered.

"I'll take the skies." Diablo agreed.

"I'll do the rooftops." Raiden said.

"And I'll take the car." I said. "Besides it's my turn."

Later that night…

No one's POV

We all spread out, each taking our assigned positions.

(There's something wicked out there. We feel it in the air. It whispers, "come and find me if you dare")

Raiden jumped from roof top to roof top, in pure trained athletic effort. He searched far and wide for the monkey. He had already found a half blood, how hard could a giant monkey be? Suddenly, he saw the monkey on the roof and raced towards it.

(We sense disaster lurking. Must save our neighborhood. This monster must be stopped for good.)

Xandou, using his natural super speed, raced on the roads. Fortunately, whenever he ran, the world felt like it was going slow motion, so he could see exactly what was going past him. But he couldn't see any trace of the monkey. But he saw a bit of it and raced towards it.

(We're punks on a mission. We'll keep on searching. Punks on a mission, whether by day or moonlight. Punks on a mission, we'll keep on working. Punks on a mission, making it safe out at night. (And repeat))

Xhiva speed in Erik's "borrowed" Volkswagen rental. And by "borrow", it was actually "steal". He cranked up the speed, but not up to Xandou's level of speed. So far, no monkey. But out of the back window, he saw the monkey and turned the car towards it.

(We know we're getting closer. We don't know what it's in store. But clues are leading to your door.)

Diablo had transformed into a hawk and searched far and wide for the monkey, suddenly, picking up a sight of the monkey on the roofs.

(We're punks on a mission. We'll keep on searching. Punks on a mission, whether by day or moonlight. Punks on a mission, we'll keep on working. Punks on a mission, making it safe out at night. (And repeat))

The boys all met up at local basketball court, where Zac was shooting some hoops with Thalie. They were just hanging out. Seeing the four merboys, they stopped and walked towards them The four
boys were having an argument. Obviously, the monkey had used his emotion manipulating to confuse the boys, one by one.

"What's going on here?" Thalie asked.

"We're trying to find a scientist." Raiden explained. "But we're now on a scavenger hunt finding his pet lab monkey." Behind Thalie, Zac was getting a tug in his gut, as he felt an energy surge near him. Xhiva and Xandou felt it too. Xhiva and Xandou's irises had turned red and were getting brighter when they stepped closer.

"Where are you going Zac?" Diablo asked.

"Do you feel that?" He asked.

"Yeah do you?" Xandou asked.

"There's something in the dumpster." Zac pointed to said dumpster.

"Yeah." Xhiva said. "I can sense it." The three mermen walked to the dumpster and lifted the lid to discover the monkey in the cage. Zac stretched his hand out to help, but the twins grabbed the monkey out and Raiden paralyzed it with an electrical stun blast.

"We got it." Diablo said in victory.

"Great." Raiden said. "We got the monkey, but we're not any closer to finding Dr. Rockwell."

The monkey roared in Zac's face as he leaned down. He didn't know it, but his irises had turned a royal blue, as he started to feel a bit of a connection form with the monkey's energy.

"Actually." Zac said. "We're a lot closer than you think."

"What do you mean?" Thalie asked.

Zac turned around, eyes still royal blue, which of course earned a gasp from each of the teens. "I think this monkey is Dr. Rockwell. And why are you staring at me?"

"I don't know." Raiden said. "Why are your eyes blue?"

"What are you talking about?" Zac asked. "My eyes aren't."

"Zac." Thalie said, taking out a mirror. "We are not kidding around. Your eyes are the deepest blue I have ever seen." Zac took the mirror, and stepped into the light, his new blue eyes widening to the size of dinner plates.

"Oh my fucking God." Zac started to hyperventilate, which caused some of the lights to flicker.

"Zac." Diablo said. "Breathe!" Zac calmed down, and his eyes returned to normal.

"I need to go home." Zac said turning to go home. The rest all went to Rockwell's office. Rockwell, the monkey was thrashing and screaming. Diablo tried to interpret what he was saying, but his words to the Latino merman sounded insane gibberish. Luckily, Dr. Falco strapped him down to a chair and injected in him, a sleeping chemical.

"There." Dr. Falco said. "That should calm him down a little. Poor Rockwell."

"Is there any way to get him back to normal?" Thalie asked.
Falco could only sigh in contempt. "I wouldn't even know where to begin. But I'll see if there's any way to give some semblance of a normal life."

Later, at the Fluctes House…

Raiden had Thalie, Kimi, Zac and Esme on Skype. Xandou was eating pizza, Xhiva was working on his laptop, while Diablo was playing Angry Birds.

"Sorry we didn't get any closer to finding your parents Kimi." Raiden said on his computer.

"It's ok." Kimi replied. "Everything we learned about your dad's work is another piece of the puzzle."

"Yeah." Thalie agreed. "But still, genetic research?"

"I agree." Zac said. "This is one weird puzzle, even for mermaids."

"What's weird is that your eyes change for some weird reason." Raiden said.

"Yeah Zac what was that?" Kimi asked.

"I am interested Zac." Esme finally said. "How did you know who the monkey was once? And what color did your eyes change?"

"I don't know." Zac said. "It's just I felt something pull in my gut. And I just got a feeling about who the monkey was, I could sense it. And my eyes, they changed to some sort of royal blue."

"A gut feeling and then your eyes change color?" Esme summarized, her face getting pale. "I gotta go." And Esme signed off, leaving us in confusion.

"What was that about?" Kimi asked.

"I don't know." Raiden said, closing the computer. Xhiva's reddish brown eyes were tracing the screen of his own laptop. "Hey Xi." Raiden said. "How come you're not eating?"

"What?" Xhiva's attention was brought back. "Oh I'm not hungry. Something's been bothering me. Falco said that Rockwell was experimenting on a monkey."

"And?" Diablo asked.

"According to these notes." The Hindi/Chinese merman explained. "He never had an actual monkey in his lab. He was just using samples of monkey DNA."

"We're still not getting you." Xandou said.

"If he never had a monkey." Xhiva began. "What broke out of that cage?"

"Must have been Rockwell." Diablo realized in horror.

"Which means Falco put him there." Xandou said.

"And he's been lying this whole time!" The merman twins finished in unison.

"Blade Boys." Raiden stood up, taking his leader position. "We have a mad scientist to stop tonight."

At Dr. Rockwell's laboratory…
Tyler Rockwell the mutant monkey slept peacefully in his confined chair space. Until he felt a needle pierce his temple and he shrieked very loudly.

"Oh stop struggling Tyler." Falco said coldly, as he dug the needle deeper. "You were always so dramatic." After what seemed like an eternity, he extracted the needle from the monkey's brain. But luckily, with a few modifications which took a few minutes, Dr. Falco had created a psychic-neuro chemical. One that he injected himself into his neck.

"Alright Falco." Raiden said. The four mermen stood defensively, each armed with a weapon. "We've had enough of your…"

"Do not say monkeying around." Xandou whispered into Raiden's ear.

"I wasn't going to." Raiden lied.

"Yes." Dr. Falco said cruelly. "You were." The boys noticed something different. Falco's eyes were bloodshot.

"It's over Falco." Xhiva said. "We know it was you who mutated Rockwell."

"I used him as a guinea pig." Falco said proudly.

"Well it didn't work." Diablo said. "You turned him into a monkey." The others just groaned and rolled their eyes at Diablo's antics.

"The psychic neuro chemical I extracted from his mutant brain." Falco explained. "Is changing me. Your minds are opening up to me."

"So this was your motive all along." Xhiva said, understanding.

"Of course." Falco said, darkly. "No man or merman can defeat you when you know his every thought."

That took the Blade Boys by surprise. They didn't expect Dr. Victor Falco to know about their real species.

"Oh really?" Xandou sneered. "Then you must know I'm gonna smack…"

"Smack the white off my lab coat?" Falco finished. "How humorous."

That ticked Xandou off. "Lucky guess!" He ran at his super speed but being psychic, Falco dodged his abnormally fast attacks.

"What's the matter Xandou?" Falco taunted. "Not good enough? No wonder your sister left you." Xandou nearly blinked back tears as he unleashed his sai. "You dare to speak of my sister?!" He charged and attacked. Falco grabbed a microscope and knocked him down.

Raiden put on his arm gauntlets and unsheathed the 13 inch thin blades. He charged and attacked, with Falco missing every strike. "If it isn't the little wannabe Consorzio merman. And the royal family spare. Always trying to be just like his big brother." Falco taunted. That riled up Raiden more as his gauntlets became charged with electricity.

"Shut up!" Raiden growled.

"So this is what your brother spent years protecting?" Falco said. "You actually call yourself the son of Caesar and Persephone Consorzio? What shame they must feel right now. You were always the
freak of the family, you know it. No wonder you let your mother lose her eye."

"DON'T YOU DARE DESECRATE MY FAMILY!" Raiden exclaimed, finally losing control and shooting as much lightning as he could at Falco. But he was expecting this as he grabbed a fire extinguisher and sprayed him in the face, clouding his vision and making him pop a tail. He was drained from all that energy so he was weak.

"How do we defeat a guy who reads minds?" Xhiva whispered to Diablo.

"Just fight without thinking." Diablo said. "Wait, how do I fight without thinking, and I'm thinking about not thinking!" Diablo was then knocked out by Dr. Falco using one of Xandou's sai. It was Dr. Victor Falco verses Xhiva Vali Tiraken.

"A man who can read minds is unstoppable." Dr. Falco said. "Once I dispose of you, no one will be able to stand in my way."

"We'll see about that." Xhiva said, taking out his portable naginata. He charged but missing Falco every strike he took. Falco then grabbed the steel end of the staff and flung Xhiva to the wall.

"I really have to admire those brain of you and your brother's, Xhiva." Dr. Falco said impressed. "The both of you come up with so many ideas. Too bad I can see them all coming, just like everyone has. Oh and by the way, do you really think you have a chance with Yukimi?"

Xhiva's POV

My blood boiled. The gloves were off. I could do this. I just had to fight without thinking. "No thinking." I muttered to myself. "No thinking." Concentrating hard, I looked for that tiny space in my mind. "Don't think, just do." And that's what I did. In fact, I didn't even plan on what moves I was doing because I had beat the crap out of him and the psychic chemical wore off. I stood proud.

"Whoa." Xandou said, sating with the rest of the Blade Boys.

"Xhiva." Raiden said. "Nice work."

"What did I tell you about those back flips huh?" Diablo bragged, holding the canister of moon pool water. "Pretty cool."

"Now that we have the ooze." I said. "Let's see what Falco knows about Dad' work." But when we turned around, Falco was gone!

"What do we do about him?" Diablo asked. We got Falco out and after getting him to trust us, we snuck into my dad's headquarters and managed to get on the helicopter. Xandou drove, of course getting to Melbourne as fast as possible. We landed on the highest building in the city and dropped him off. Rockwell landed safely. He looked at us for a bit.

"I'm no animal psychic." Xhiva said. "But I think he's trying to thank us." And Rockwell took off on his own life.

"Question." Xandou said. "If this guy reacts to angry thoughts, is putting him in one of the most crime ridden Aussie cities really the best idea?"

On cue car crashes were being heard. "I'm sure he'll be ok." Diablo said.

"Ish." Raiden finished.
The next day at the café…

Xandou's POV

I finished eating my snack when I saw Helen walk by. "Hey Helen." I called out to her. "You wanna hang out tonight?"

"Sounds great Xandou." Helen replied. "But I can't. I'm doing my martial arts training." Thinking quick, I pulled out on my phone the photograph of Xhiva's flirting flow chart. Don't ask why I took a photo of it.

"Maybe we can train together sometime." I said.

"Sounds great." Helen agreed walking off.

"See?" Xhiva asked next to me. "My flow chart is awesome! Who's da bomb? Xhiva's da bomb! That's me! I'm a genius!"

I groaned as I walked up to the counter where Zac was.

"Hey Zac?" I asked.

"Yeah?" He replied.

I cleared my throat as I asked,

"Why are girls so confusing?"

San Francisco Cemetery

Esmeralda's POV

I walked in the cloudy afternoon at the cemetery. It had been years since I had last visited. I was here, visiting an old friend. I carried in my hand, a white rose. As I arrived at the specific grave I was looking for, I blinked out tears. I clutched the rose in my hand saying, "Why did it have to happen?"

Flashback

15 years ago…

3 women were gathered at a café. One was a young Esmeralda, another was a young Persephone, and the third was a young NorthAmerican woman with stunning blue eyes. They all talked and laughed and shared jokes.

"It feels good to live like this." The North American woman said, sipping her water through a straw. "It feels normal."

"Ris." Persephone said. "I know you and your family never got the chance to live your lives out at sea, but just know we have your back."

"Yeah." Esmeralda said. "We have your back."
"Thanks guys." The woman said. Suddenly, they all heard fire truck sirens. They looked up and saw an orange light illuminating about 2 blocks away. Running towards it, they saw that the North American's house was on fire! People were fleeing from it.

Persephone ran to a running woman, and asked, "Are you ok?"

The woman coughed and said, "Yeah I'm ok, but the fire is spreading and there are some people still trapped." The North American woman focused on the fire and muttered a deathly scared, "Oh no." She tried to run but Persephone grabbed her arm and cried out, "Rissie, no!" She pleaded with her eyes, "Don't go!" The North American woman looked at the fire and back at her.

"My kids are in there." She said. "Someone's gotta do something!" She brushed off Persephone's hand and ran inside. Esmeralda and Persephone shared a glance before trying to run in too, but the entire block, exploded, sending them flying back. When they came to, they looked up and saw nothing but a fire, a fire that had taken their best friend.

"Ris!" Esmeralda cried out.

"Rissie!" Persephone yelled out. "Rissie!" There was no point in calling out anymore. The duo's best friend and her children were lost.

A week later, the funerals were held. After that, their friend J bid them goodbye at the San Francisco airport.

After that, he was never seen again.
A New Identity

Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, all Marvel fans, Kevin Eastman, Peter Laird, Mako Mermaids, and all fans of Mako Mermaids, THIS IS FOR YOU!

You will see why...

Suncoast High School

Thalie's POV

We were all in school, eating our lunch. It was a peaceful day. Of course, nothing had happened yet.

"Hey guys." Rose said, getting up. "I'm gonna go to the bathroom."

"Be careful." Helen warned.

"I'll be fine." She said. Rose got back 5 minutes later with a proud grin on her face.

"What's got you so happy?" Kimi asked.

"I just stopped Nathan from picking on another kid." She said twirling some air in her fingers. It took us a moment to figure out what she was saying. So we grabbed her by the arms and dragged her to an empty classroom.

"Please tell me you didn't..." I trailed off.

"I was invisible." Rose explained.

"You still used your powers in public?" Helen hissed, causing the chair she was holding to melt. "Of all the inane things mistakes to make... this was the worst!"

"I was trying to help someone." Rose defended.

"That doesn't mean you can risk exposure!" Thalie said. "Use your head."

"You know what we should also use?" Rose asked her body illuminating a little mist. "Our powers to help people."

"They're not powers." Kimi said. "They're aggressively abnormal physical conditions. And can you turn that off?"

Rose turning off her mist pouring looked at us with a glare. "What if we can't go back?" She asked.

"Rose is right." I said. "What if it takes more time to get you guys and Evie back to normal? Guys, we could be talking years."

Suddenly, the bell rang, signaling the end of lunch. As we left the room, Helen looked back and said, "Don't forget. We're here to get our lives back."


At Thalie's house...

Me, Kimi, and Rose just sat in the living room, when a beeping sound occurred. Kimi lifted her teal
cardigan to reveal her energy detector beeping with signals.

"My energy detector?" She asked confused. "This doesn't make sense."

"Didn't you say that was broken though?" Rose asked.

"That's the thing." Kimi explained. "It is, but I fine tuned it with magical energy, not something that starting to rise off the charts. Dumb thing's broken."

Kimi put it down, but Rosalina picked it up, having a feeling that her thing wasn't broken. Fearing what the other girls would say, she ran off.

"Uh." I said. "Where's Rose?"

"I placed trackers in each of our phones." Kimi said. "We should be able to find her." And we rushed out of the house, trying to find her. We ran past the cars in the city part of the Gold Coast. We lived on the more peaceful part of town. We pushed past crowds until we found her at an abandoned warehouse.

"Are you crazy?" I asked. "Running off like that?"

"I found the energy source." Rose said.

"I told you." Kimi said. "It's broken! It's not…." She took a look at it to see it was working fine, and she saw that the energy readings were off the charts. She walked towards the door and saw that it was padlocked.

"We could use the window." I pointed to said window that was open. Rose used her air powers to life Kimi and me up, but she had trouble getting herself up.

I'm fine." She said. "Just go, I'll catch up."

"Hurry up." I said as Kimi and me walked down. We were almost caught by a bunch of guys walking by. Knowing what to do, Kimi turned invisible. I did too as we walked by passing men quietly. We walked to a lab space where a bunch of people in lab coats were studying and experimenting.

"Those are the people in my parent's company that were kidnapped." Kimi whispered to me. We heard a noise as we walked to a canister of glowing blue green stuff. "Bio nuclear radiation? Someone's experimenting with human and mermaid DNA."

"Kimi look." I whispered, pointing to a plan wall. It contained a map of the city, photos of the Wolf Hotel, and equations. It even had a symbol of a trident.

"Guys?" Rose whispered from behind us, causing us to squeak and lose our invisibility.

"You gave us a heart attack." Kimi hissed.

"I'm sorry about that but now, that's the least of our worries." Rose said.

"Why?" Kimi asked. Just then, all of us felt a pain in my neck, and I began to feel weak.

"What was that?" Kimi asked, looking up to see a bunch of men in masks.

"That was just a neutralizer dart to shut down you powers for 30 minutes." A man said. In front of us, a wave of water rose. We didn't have our powers, which meant we might not have had 30
"Run!" Rose cried out to us. Thinking of no other way, we ran in every way out. But the water seemed to follow us. It was an endless chase until the water went underneath a panel and rocketed us on a catwalk. We looked up and saw a Hindi man who looked remarkably like Xhiva in a trenchcoat.

"Come on!" Kimi cried. "The window!" We ran towards it but saw men on our left and right slowly approaching us. The Hindi man who approached us still had the water beside him.

"On three!" I said to the other girls. "Three!" And with a leap of faith, we jumped out of the window. The fall seemed like it took forever but we landed from a 10 foot jump safely.

"Come on!" I said. "Let's get out of here! Hurry!"

Alright. Helen said. "Let me get this straight." We were all sitting in the café. "You found some mermen forcing some nerdheads to work on something that involves radiation, mermaid and human DNA?"

"That's pretty much it." Kimi said, slurping her milkshake.

"Come on guys." Helen said. "Why would mermen need DNA research?"

"This is the Kanhoji." I said. "They are quite unpredictable."

"That wasn't the Kanhoji." Rose said. "Did you see the trident symbol? The one with the helmet and sword in it?"

"Yeah Rose you may have a point." Kimi agreed. "I've done some research on mermen in Rita's grotto a while back and I've never seen anything like this before."

Just then, Kimi's phone rang. It had a video as a message.

"Something terrible is about to happen." A man said in the video. "I don't know what but it's important that you get out of the city as soon as you can, Yukimi. Save yourself. Remember, your parents love you."

"What was that?" I asked.

"I don't know." Kimi said. "But we've got to get out of here."

"I'm not going to run away like a coward." Helen said firmly.

"But you heard Dr. Chaplin." Kimi said. "Something terrible is gonna happen."

"Well whoever they are," Helen began. "And whatever they're planning, it can't be good. But we have to do something before it's too late."

"Right." I said. "So what do we do?"

"Isn't it obvious?" Rose asked. "We gotta stop them."

"But how?" Kimi asked.
"By using and doing what we do best." I said.

"Remember that suiting up montage in every action film?" Rose asked. "This is that scene."

We all got suited up in our black suits, black combat boots and weapons. I have the katana blades, Helen has her tonfa, Kimi had her hockey sticks, and Rosalina had her tessens.

"Are we ready?" I asked.

"Ready." They all said.

"Let's go kick ass." Helen said. And we raced out of my house to the warehouse. Unbeknownst to us, The Blade Boys and Erik were watching us from the garbage cans.

"What are they doing here?" Erik asked his brother.

"How should I know?" Raiden snapped back.

"We need to do something." Xhiva whispered.

"We can't put their lives at risk." Diablo said.

"I'll stop them." Xandou picked up his phone and dialed Rita's number. "Rita." He said, his voice carrying a heavy Chinese accent. "You daughter and her friends are in grave danger. Pick them up at the warehouse at Bay Avenue." He hung up.

We weren't at said destination because when we arrived, they were gone, along with the equipment.

"Where did they go?" Rose asked.

"They must have cleared up when you three showed up." Helen said. Kimi walked to an abandoned computer and turned it on.

"Give me two minutes." She said, hacking into the computer. "I got it. They're at the warehouse on Bay Avenue."

"Let's go." I said. We all ran out to the destination and saw a bunch of guards there. Kimi, thinking fast, froze them in place and we all went inside, to find nothing.

"I don't understand." Kimi said. "The computer data said that they were starting to build something right here."

"Helen?" I said. "You said you can sense heat right?"

"Yeah." She nodded.

"Now's your chance to use it." I said. Helen closed her eyes and concentrated. She felt the heat around her, but she felt some heat below them. She pressed her hands on the floor and felt some people move around.

"Are they near?" I asked.
"No." Helen replied. "They're beneath. There's some kind of secret base underneath this warehouse."

"Now the real question is." Rose began. "Where's the secret door?"

"Secret door?" Kimi asked.

"You see." Rose explained. "The centerpiece of any secret team, is a secret lair, which includes a secret door." Rose looked around and walked towards a wall and pulled on a bar, which cause part of the wall to slide over and reveal a stairway down. "It's always the lever wall."

"You've really outdone yourself Rosalina." Helen said high fiving her. We all then walked down, very stealthily though, to avoid any sign of getting caught. We walked in the secret dark base. It had a very war feeling to it. There were two guards in front of a high tech room. Helen knocked them out using her tonfa. As one guy was about to run, I kicked him in the crotch, knocking him out. In front of us was a computer with multiple screens.

"Kimi." I said. "Hack into the system and see what you can find out about their plot. Helen you're with me. Rose stay with Kimi."

"We're on it." Kimi said. Helen and I ran in the hallways and we came across a prison door. We looked inside and it held Dr. Chaplin.

"Dr. Chaplin?" I asked. "Are you ok?"

He looked up and asked. "Is Yukimi ok?"

"She's fine and so is Haru." Helen said. "They're trying to discover their plans."

"You mean they're still in the city?" Dr. Chaplin asked.

Helen smiled sheepishly. "That would be my fault."

"Helen." Dr. Chaplin said. "You are the most stubborn girl I've ever met."

"Yeah." I said, trying to pick the lock. "We've noticed."

Meanwhile Kimi was trying to figure out the codes. Rose had snuck off to a nearby lab. She picked up a test tube with a cork and swiped a sample of the finished chemical. Kimi looked back and saw Rose was there, smiling. Kimi then got her way in, looked at the plans and said under her horrified breath, "Uh oh."

"Since it's taking Thalie here forever to pick that lock." Helen snapped at me.

"I'm working on it!" I muttered.

"Maybe you can tell us what the hell's the deal with these people." Helen said to Chaplin.

"I don't know exactly who they are." Dr. Chaplin confessed. "They're keeping a good lid on themselves. They forced us to modify this type of water they called moon pool water."

"Why would they have that sort of water?" I asked.

"I don't know." Dr. Chaplin. "But they forced us to modify it with liquid radiation. It appears to be a mutation chemical of some sorts. I've never seen anything like this before."
"Now I see." I whispered to Helen. "They kidnapped all those people because they need human science as well as magic."

"Wow." Helen said sarcastically. "You figured it out." She turned to Dr. Chaplin. "How are Mr. and Mrs. Hamasaki doing?"

"They're fine as far as I know." Dr. Chaplin answered.

"What do they want this chemical to do?" I asked.

"I don't know." Dr. Chaplin said.

"Guys!" Kimi cried out bursting in with Rose. "They're making some sort of massive bomb! They're gonna use all of Queensland as the testing ground!"

"We only have 5 days!" Rose said.

"Oh, hi Dr. Chaplin." Kimi said smiling to said scientist. I finally picked the lock and Chaplin came out.

"Thank you." He said. "I don't know how I can thank you."

"Is there anyone else here?" Kimi asked. "Are my parents here?"

"No." Chaplin answered solemnly. "I'm the only scientist here in this base. I don't know where anyone else is."

Just then, the alarms sounded. They must have found out about the escape. We ran to the exit just in time and out of the warehouse. We heard some orders being barked on the far east side. They were coming for us.

"Dr. Chaplin." Kimi said to the scientist. "Get out of here, find the nearest taxi and get back home. I'll call you later. And don't worry, we'll be fine." Dr. Chaplin nodded.

"If you ever need me." He said. "You know how to reach me. And remember guys, I owe you a huge debt." He took off into the night. Just in time to be faced by men with water floating in their hands.

"So what's the plan?" Kimi asked. Helen grinned and said, "It's kick ass time." She charged and yelled out a battle cry only to be knocked off by a blast of force.

"Seriously what's the plan?" Kimi asked again.

I just narrowed my eyes and said, "Kick their ass."

"Right behind you!" Rose shouted in agreement.

"For real guys." Kimi asked one more time, annoyed. "What is the goddamn plan?!"

I used the water near the water tower to come to me and I used it roller skates as I splashed some of the mermen.

Rose used her wind powers phase through the floor and behind some mermen and used an air current to knock out some other mermen.

I glided on the floor, up the wall and struck a water blast that was gonna hit the guy in front of me,
but he ducked and hit Rose instead, causing her to lose control of the wind blast and it hit me, causing me to lose control of the water as we both got splashed and hit each other.

"HEY!" Kimi yelled out, drawing the mermen's attention. "Uh. You wanna dance mermen? Cuase you'll be dancing with this!" She showed her hockey sticks. "Let us go or you'll get a taste of this! And a little bit of that!" Water vipers attacked her, but she managed to deflect them with her hockey sticks. "Hey! I did alright! Is that all you got?" She was then lifted telekinetically and flung to the girls who had finished drying.

"It's back into the fire!" Helen exclaimed before she was thrown to the pile of girls. All hope seemed lost until all of the remaining mermen were knocked out and some tried to figt back against a person.

"Um." Rose said. "Thanks?"

"What are you kids doing here?" The man asked.

"Well I could ask you the same question." Helen said. "Except you're not a kid apparently."

"Nope." The man chuckled. "Let me help you up." The man stepped into the light revealing himself to be a somewhat middle aged person with blond hair and blue eyes. He wore a white shirt under a jean jacket, dark jeans and sneakers. "My name is Phoebus."

"I'm Thalie." I said and then gestured to the rest. "This is Helen, Rose, and Kimi."

"You need to get out of here." Phoebus said. "This is no place for mermaids like yourselves."

"You picked up on that huh?" Helen asked sarcastically.

"It was actually the tell tale signs of an Omega." Phoebus said. A gunshot was fired and Phoebus fell to the ground in pain. Blood was pouring out of his left shoulder. We looked up and saw some mermen with guns running towards us.

"I've always wanted to try this." I said, going to my last resort. "Get close to me." They all did, and with all my concentration, I used my moon ring to transport us about 5 miles away.

"Yes!" I said in victory. "It worked." Phoebus groaned and I quickly used my water powers to extract the bullet out of him. I used my moon ring to close his wound.

Kimi put her fingers to his neck and sighed in relief. "He's fine. That bullet didn't hit any major arteries, and he's breathing just fine."

Just then, a bright light appeared in front of us. The light died down, revealing it to be my mom's car as my mom stepped out.

"Girls?" She asked.

"No!" Helen hissed. "Get out of here!"

"What are you doing here?" My mom asked.

"Nothing." Rose tried to cover up.

"Why do you have an unconscious man with you?" We heard Xandou behind us.

"What are you doing here Xandou?" Helen asked.
"I was out on a swim when I heard a gunshot and I wanted to see what this was all about." Xandou said.

"Is that Phoebus?" My mom asked.

"You know him?" I asked.

"He's my friend." My mom explained. "We need to get him back to my house."

"Not until you tell us what's going on here." Kimi said. "What is happening? Who are these mermen? They're not the Kanhoji."

"We'll talk about it when we get home." My mom said.

"Ok." Xandou said. "I don't know what's going on here but… Shénshèng de gǒu shǐ!" We looked up to see a cargo box being levitated by the same Hindi man we encountered.

"Agni." My mom said. "I should have known he was working with Slade."

"Am I the only one seeing this?" Rose asked. Agni stared at us for a minute before dropping the box on us. I closed my eyes, waiting for the impact. But Mom and Xandou stopped it.

"Go!" Helen cried out, carrying Phoebus with Rose. Xandou grabbed me and Kimi ran to the car with Mom.

"What are you doing Xandou?" Helen asked.

"Saving your tail!" He said. As Mom started the car, more water rose.

"Miss Santos!" Rose warned. And Mom drove the car away from the warehouse as fast as she could.


"They're planning something." Kimi answered. "It involves a chemical and a bomb." Just then a mound of water was about to hit the car, but I pushed it back. Agni was on our tail, getting really close to us.

"That mask…" Rose said out loud. "That suit. We're under attack from a supervillain people! I mean, how cool is that? I mean it's scary, but how cool!"

Just as the chase continued, the car came to a halt. "Why are we stopping?" Xandou asked.

"The light's red." Rita answered.

"THERE ARE NO RED LIGHTS IN A CAR CHASE!" Xandou yelled as the light turned green.

"Why is he trying to kill us?" Kimi asked before asking the same question to Agni.

"It's classic." Rose said. "We've seen too much."

"Let's not jump to conclusions." I said, trying to be optimistic. "We don't know he's trying to kill us."

"CAR!" Helen screamed.

"HE'S TRYING TO KILL US!"
"Wait." Rose said. "Isn't that guy your dad Xandou?"

"Yeah." He replied. "He knows I'm here, he probably just doesn't care." Mom flipped a switch. "Did you just put your blinker on?"

"You have to indicate your turn Xandou." Mom said. "It's the law!"

Xandou's eyes turned a bright red as he said, "That's. It." Before I could register what had happened, Xandou was driving. A 15 year old Chinese/Hindi merman was driving. And at 90 miles per hour. "They don't call me Speed Demon for nothing!" The car approached a blob of water, but Xandou turned the car, bumping into the water and it flew up to a bridge.

"Stop the car!" Rose said. "I think we lost him!" But the car door opened and she almost fell out. But was saved by Helen and Kimi.

"We got ya Rose," Kimi said. "Please put on your seatbelt." The car continued going at dangerous speeds, even going over a rail line just as a train was arriving.

"Did we lose him?" I asked, as he was nowhere in sight.

"Look out!" Mom exclaimed as we approached a tunnel of water.

"Guys." I warned. "Hold on!" Xandou stepped on it.

"We're not gonna make it!" Kimi said.

"We're gonna make it." Rose countered.

"We're not gonna make it!"

"We're gonna make it!"

"We're not gonna make it!"

"We're gonna make it!" And the car burst out of the watery tunnel. "We made it!" The victory was short celebrated as the car dove in the water. It was a good thing we were all merpeople, or we might have drowned. Xandou swam away as we carried Phoebus, who was revealed to be a merman to the grotto.

"I told you we'd make it!" Rose said happily as we placed the blond merman on the couch.

"What is going on here?" Esmeralda asked as she stepped in. The minute she saw Phoebus, she gasped. Ondina walked in and nearly fainted.

"Is… is that?" Ondina asked.

"It can't be." Esme said.

"It is." Mom said, nodding.

"You know Phoebus?" Rose asked.

"Oh." Ondina said. "I see you've met my father."

"And my husband." Esmeralda, said, showing her diamond ring.
"What the…father?!!" Helen exclaimed. "Husband?! Dinie, you mean to tell me that this guy, who saved our asses tonight, is your old man?"

"Yep." We heard Phoebus who was getting up. "Look at this crazy small world we live in."

"Daddy!" Ondina said out loud, hugging him.

"Look at how much you've grown Ondina." Phoebus said laughing. He got up and hugged Esmeralda, who in return, kissed him.

"Phoebus." She said, her voice layered with a hint of anger. "A word. Please."

"Oh man." Helen said. "He's in deep shit."

"How bad could it be?" Rose asked.

"He's been missing from my life for 10 years." Ondina explained. "And from my mom's life too. And my mom is his wife."

"I take it back." Helen said. "He's not in deep shit. He's rolling in his grave." Suddenly, a loud SMACK! was heard all over the grotto. And then, "WHERE THE FUCKING HELL HAVE YOU BEEN PHOEBUS MARINO?!"

We all winced. "Yep." Mom said. "He's so dead, it's not even funny." Mom led us all out, except for Ondina to the living room. "Girls, what you witnessed tonight, was the work of the Ares Tribe, a merman tribe whose souls have been poisoned by the influence of a dark chief, Slade. Slade is a madman without conscience or mercy. He is the descendant of Triton himself. He is a skilled warrior whose cruelty is ever reaching, and you are just teenagers. He is an evil merman who is responsible for the raid against the Consorzio Clan. It is possible that he is responsible for the death of Erik's father himself. Men who kill without reason, cannot be reasoned with. I cannot allow you to let your lives go at his hand. So please, don't go against them. It is too dangerous."

"But what about his plans?" I asked. "Isn't it worth to try to save some people at least?"

"I am not willing to risk your lives, civilians, or my friend's!" And she left to go back into the grotto.

"She might be too late by the time she's ready." Kimi said.

"If she thinks that we're gonna sit by while they do something dangerous with only 3 people against an entire army of mermen, she's nuts." Helen said.

"So." Rose said. "Are we just gonna sit and wait for something to happen?"

"No." I said. "My mother is wrong. We have to do something. We're probably the only ones that can."

"We should talk about this someplace else though." Kimi said.

"Why are you smiling like that Thalie?" Helen asked me.

"Because fellas." I said. "I know just the place." I led them to a supplies closet.

"Ok Thalie, I'll bite." Helen said. "What are doing in a janitors closet?"

"Guys." I said. "I'm about to take you someplace, until a few weeks ago, even I didn't know existed. I've been keeping it clean and operating though."
"Yeah." Helen said. "Clean as a bunch of dust on a broom. Listen ginger, Xhiva and Xandou's lunatic dad just tried to kill us. I'm not in the mood for any jokes." I smirked. I pulled a fake broom lever and the wall opened up to reveal an elevator.

"A secret elevator?" Kimi asked.

"Commando mysterioso," Rose said in awe. "I didn't even know that was there."

"There's more to it than an elevator." I said proudly as we stepped in. It was a glass elevator that took us down to a tunnel. On the right side was a dead end with a bench. I flipped a switch and the lights came on, illuminating the entire tunnel.

"The left side goes to street level." I explained.

"What's going on?" Kimi asked.

"Friends." I said. "Welcome…" I pulled a lever and the wall opened. "To the Secret Sanctum."

The room was an underground secret lair. It had a couch in the middle of the floor with a TV. In the far back, was a corridor of rooms. To the left was a closed massive room that led to a lab. To the right, was a square pool with a tunnel entrance that led to the seas. The entire lair had dark blue roofing and flooring and white lights. To the right also was a room above the pool, and next to it, was a kitchen. It also had a little walkboard. (Basically, it looks like the lair from the 2012 TMNT series. Look it up in google images.) Next to the pool was a spiral staircase that reached a catwalk above and another entrance. Next to the staircase, was a tire swing hanging from a rope.

"Th…Thalassa." Kimi said. "This is your…sub basement?"

"I thought your mom was kidding." Rose said.

"Look around." I said. Kimi rushed to the lab and looked inside.

"Guys!" She exclaimed. "This has human and mermaid chemicals and equipment!"

"Did you know there's a catwalk up here?" Rose asked from said location. 'Aweosme!"

"I'm just speechless." Helen said. "I can't move."

"Come on!" I said to the others. "I haven't shown you the best part!" I led them to my favorite room: The Dojo. It's true. There's a dojo underneath my house. And it was huge, real huge.

"You've got to be kidding me." Helen said. There was an actual Weeping Willow tree in the left side in a protected field. On the concrete floor were red and gold mats. On the walls were every weapon you could imagine. There was a shelf on the north side with a bunch of pictures.

"You've got to be kidding me." Helen said. "How did your mom get all this space under her house?"

"Because this place used to be a World War 1/World War 2 bunker." I said.

"So this is where she got all those weapons from." Kimi summarized.

"Now what are we gonna do?" I asked as we all sat down.

"Isn't it obvious?" Rose asked. "We gotta stop Slade."

"Stop him?" Helen asked. "We don't even know exactly who he is."
"He's a way bad dude." Kimi said. "That's all we know."

"But what about that chemical they're making?" I asked.

"I don't know." I said. "We don't even know what it is."

"I know a way we can find out." Rose chimed in, holding up a test tube bottle of the glowing blue/green chemical.

"You grabbed a sample?" Helen asked.

"Yep." Rose said.

"Rosalina." Kimi said, beaming. "You are a genius!" She hugged Rose, took the chemical and rushed to the lab. Kimi came out 5 minutes later with a terrified look. "Guys. This is even worse than we thought. This chemical he's making, it's not like anything we've ever seen!"

"What is it?" Rose asked.

"I think he's making some sort of moon pool water based radioactive mutagen." Kimi explained.

"If a human absorbs it, he or she will turn into a merperson." I said with realization.

"And he's putting it in a bomb on the Q1 building because Queensland is the testing grounds. All the civilians are his guinea pigs!" Rose exclaimed

"So he's getting more numbers in his armies by forcing humans to become another species." Helen said. "It all makes sense."

"You said we have 5 days right?" I asked, an idea forming in my head. Rose nodded. "Good."

"How is that good?" Rose asked.

"5 days." I explained. "Gives us enough time to get ready for the fight we have coming against the tribe."

"Prepare how?" Kimi asked. "You forget that mermen can control water and them controlling water, plus us being their enemies, equals us having a huge disadvantage."

"Kimis right." Helen said. "Our first fight tonight ended up with our asses being kicked, and practice to beat them would take, I don't know...forever?"

"No." I said. "No no no. I just need to look for a new direction." I looked in the pool and I had the idea. "Got it. I'll fight these guys, without getting wet. We just need to upgrade the weapons." I looked back at them and said, "Actually, if we're gonna stop these guys, we need to upgrade...who we are."

"Wait." Kimi said putting her hand up. "Upgrade who now?"

I walked towards my friends who were sitting on the couch. "I think you know what I mean Kimi." I said. "I think you know what I mean."

Rose was smiling a lot. "Ok, I like where this is heading!"

"We can't go against the Ares Tribe!" Kimi said getting up. "Look Thalie, we want to stop them but we're just...children."
"No." I said bravely. "You can be…way more."

There was a pause before Helen got up and said, "We were given these powers for a reason. Let's do this."

"I'm in." Kimi agreed. We all stood up, facing the lab.

"Can you feel it?" Rose asked. "You guys, do you feel this? Our origin story begins."

What she said was right. We were about to take a step into a path that would change our lifestyle forever.

"WE'RE GONNA BE SUPERHEROES!"

I stood in front of my team drawing the plan on the chalkboard.

"Remember." I said. "We only have 5 days until they launch the bomb on Queensland. We stop the bomb, and they can't mutate the faction, game over."

"How are we gonna do that?" Helen asked. "You're forgetting that we're mermaids and we can pop tails if we get wet."

"That's why I called Dr. Chaplin and asked him to help us." Kimi said. "He was serious about his debt."

"But first things first." Rose said, pulling out her sketchbook. "If we're gonna fight the bad guys, we're gonna have to do it in style." And she showed us her drawings of us. Some of them were good, some of them horrible but we found the perfect drawing of us. That'll be revealed later.

"Great." Helen said. "But we're gonna need better, stronger, and more powerful weapons."

And we got to work.

(They say we are what we are. But we don't have to be.)

I studied my abilities for a bit and how I can use them in combat.

(I'm bad behavior but I'll do it in the best way.)

I studied with Helen, the aggression of fire and what weapons suited each of us.

(I'll be the watcher of the eternal flame. I'll be the guard dog of all your fever dreams.)

I studied with Rose and Kimi the design, science, and style of the weapons and suits.

(OOooooooohhhhh. I am the sand in the bottom half of the hourglass. I try to picture me without you but I can't.)

Kimi and I were in the dojo testing out her weapon, all of us and Dr. Chaplin spent 5 hours working on. It was a long steel hockey stick infused with moonstone. There were little pads on where the hands were supposed to go. These pads had moonstone in it that could take Kimi's energy from her hands and transfer it to the heel. At that point, the cryo energy becomes a ball of icy energy, waiting to be unleashed. The hockey stick was powered by Yukimi herself.
Kimi placed her hands on the pads and focused her icy energy into the enhanced weapon. The stick started glowing teal in the moonstone parts. At the heel and toe of the hockey stick was a glowing ball of teal light. Even from a mile, you could feel it's coldness. After about 34 times of trying to control the ball, Kimi managed to shoot it at a wooden statue. The statue was completely frozen.

Kimi’s light brown eyes widened. It had worked.

"I…” She said in surprise.

"YOU DID IT!" I exclaimed, hugging her.

Kimi's weapon was ready. All that remained was the suit to protect herself.

(Cause we could be immortals. Immortals. Just not for long, for long. And live with me forever now and pull the blackout curtains down. Just not for long, for long. And we could be imooooorrrrtaaaaall-immortals, imooooorrrrtaaaaall-immortals!)

Kimi left the dojo and this time, it was Rosalina and I in the dojo testing out her weapon, all of us and Dr. Chaplin spent 2 hours working on. It was her pair of tessen with moonstone strands on the handles. They were large black fans with a pink shining metallic rose in the middle. These fans were now upgraded to take Rose's energy from her fingertips and transfer it to the fan itself. At that point, the wind is unleashed at Rose's command. The war fans were powered by Rosalina herself.

Rose took the weapons and focused her aero energy into the enhanced weapon. The fan's rose started glowing pink. After about 4 times of trying to control the air, Rose managed to slice a wooden statue.

Rose's brown eyes widened. It had worked.

"I… did it" She said in surprise.

"YES!" I exclaimed, hugging her.

Rosalina's weapon was ready. All that remained was the suit to protect herself.

We walked out of the dojo when we saw Helen heating her tail up. Kimi walked out of the lab carrying a roll of paper.

"Let's take care of that shall we?" She asked, revealing the blueprints of her latest idea. We all smiled at what it was.

(Sometimes the only pay off, for having any faith, is when it's tested again and again every day. I'm still comparing your past to my future.)

We were in Dr. Chaplin's office working on our latest marvel. Watches with moonstone that would act as a water body shield. It was the perfect way to keep merkind safe. Chaplin knew what kind of stone it was, and what properties it held. I had a feeling he knew who used them but he didn't say a word. He called it a trade secret.

The watches we were making came in thin watches with each of our colors. On top of where the clock was supposed to be, there was a black screen that was linked to a computer so we could know where each of us was. Kimi had the keyboard.

But here's the shamalan twist: On the bottom of the clock, was a half a moonstone and the other half was Addar stone. With a little spell from the moon ring, I had tweaked each of the watches to make
the watches a body water shield whenever it was worn by someone.

As we put them on, Rose asked if we should give one to the others, especially Evie. But Helen pointed out with her sarcasm that people would get suspicious if they saw a force field protect them from water. Plus it would be important to maintaining our secret identities. Whenever water tried to touch us, a body suit like force field would activate, protecting us from a single drop. I had reminded Chaplin to install a switch.

We then asked Dr. Chaplin to dump a bucket of water on all of us. Chaplin didn't ask why, as if he already knew what we were. But he then said he wouldn't say anything. We all closed our eyes, bracing for the inevitable uneasiness of water being dumped on us. But we weren't feeling any tingling in our bodies, none of us had tails. Instead a puddle of water sat around us and we didn't pop a scale.

"Guys," Kimi said. "We just cracked the secret of not getting wet."

"YES!" Rosalina exclaimed. "High five!"

(Cause we could be immortals. Immortals. Just not for long, for long. And live with me forever now and pull the blackout curtains down. Just not for long, for long.)

I was now in the dojo testing out my weapon. Well one of them. I had swiped a katana fit for me off the wall. What I was testing, was something entirely new. I wore arm bracers on top and bottom of my forearms. They all had a water long water container with water in it. After stumbling over what to do, I then realized that where there is movement, there's water, where's there's rhythm and action, there's water. It hit me like a brick wall. All I had to do, was dance. Playing a song in my head, Set It Off from Descendants, I started to move fast in tempo with the song, moving the water, that was already uncapped in a motion. It felt like this was right, that dancing was the way to fine tune the element of water. When the song ended in my head, I had already commanded the water to go back in the containers. I grabbed my katana blade and did a few forms before putting it back in its sheath.

My weapons were ready. All that remained was the suit.

(And we could be imooooorrtrrrrtaaall-immortals, imooooorrtrrrrtaaall-immortals! Imoooooorrrrrrrrrrtaaall-immortals, Imoooooooorrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
guards. We also had helmets that corresponded to our colors. Regular body suits would simply not do. I looked in the mirror and applied my makeup. It was a hint of silver eyeshadow, a little mascara, and some red lipstick. Taking one last look in the mirror, I walked out to see the other girls' shadows. The hallway dark, to surprise all of us.

"Are you guys ready?" I asked.

"Yep." They all replied.

"All right guys." I said, placing my hand on the light switch. "Get ready to meet... Mako Mermaids, 2.0!"

I flipped the switch and we all stared in the mirror to find four different people staring back at us. We all had similar features. We all had silver shin guards, kneepads, hand pads on top of our hands, elbow pads, toe pads, and shoulder pads. On our palms was a black carbon button that when we pressed slid out of the way to reveal our palms, to use our powers. When we pressed a button near the large opening, it closed. All of our hair was in a bun. We all had a belt that had our walkie talkies, phones, money and shuriken. We all wore black combat boots. We all wore our black body suits. Our watches were hidden in the black sleeve gloves we wore. But each of us had our own individual tastes.

On top of my black suit, I wore on top of it, a royal blue short sleeved midrift t shirt, on my waist, was a royal blue waist sash, covering my belt. On the left side of my waist, the rest rested perfectly as a single cloth. I wore gloves that had the water containers attached to them. They were underneath my bracers. I carried in my arms, a royal blue motorcycle helmet that had a blue tinted visor, that covered my face, so no one would recognize me. The shell part was a deep blue. There was a switch that allowed the visor to move out of the way to let people see my face. On where my moon ring was, was a Pilkington case that was covered by a carbon fiber case. Strapped on my back, was my katana.

Helen wore a red sleeveless shirt with black claw marks on her torso. She wore red bell bottom pants that had black accents in them. Her belt was a spiky fashion and had all the stuff needed. On the bottom arm bracer of her forearms, were the new tonfa in cases. She wore gold eyeshadow as well as red eye liner. She wore brown lipstick. Her helmet was a red with a red visor. On her helmet were spikes in a straight line, from her temple to her spine. The soles on her boots had rocket fillers for our surprise.

Yukimi wore on her black suit, a cyan midrift jacket. Unlike the others, she wore long cyan sleeve gloves. And she didn't wear combat boots like Helen and I, but she wore underneath her padding, knee high cyan boots. Up to her knee, covering her kneepads, was the boot's pointed edge. Her belt contained of some more technological stuff. Her helmet was a cyan color with a cyan tinted visor. She had an antenna fashion on it that bore a very similar fashion to Honey Lemon's from Big Hero 6. They were cyan with white. She wore light blue eye shadow and a lot of lip gloss. Strapped behind her back, was her hockey stick.

Rosalina had the girliest fashion out of all of us. On her body suit, was a sleeveless tight pink dress that reached her waist, where her belt was. Like Helen, her weapons were stored underneath her forearms. Her pink dress had a bit of glitter in it. Like Kimi, she wore a sleeve glove of a different color and hers was magenta. She wore heels on her combat boots, that were pink. She wore pink glittery eyeshadow, mascara, and pure pink lipstick.

To put our new looks in one word would be…

"We look amazing!" Rosalina exclaimed.
"We look badass!" Helen agreed.

I led them to the dojo where I set up a tall wooden block. "I want to show you guys something." I said opening the black case of my moon ring. I concentrated on it's power and the enhanced light burst out of the ring and disintegrated the wood.

"Impressive." Helen said sarcastically. "Your ring went from a piece of jewelry to a rocket."

"Oh believe me." I said. "You ain't seen nothing yet! But you might want to turn invisible first." We all did. Our way of turning invisible was different than most merpeople. Kimi looked like she was turning to ice before disappearing. Rosalina looked like she was evaporating before disappearing. And Helen's body looked like it burst into flames before disappearing. We walked out of the Lair, quietly to the roof.

"Ok." Helen said. "I'll bite. What the hell are we doing on the roof?"

"Well guys." I said, conjuring up a board of water. "Are you ready to fly?"

"No way!" Rose exclaimed.

"How can we fly?" Kimi asked.

"For now you're all gonna hold onto me when I take this board in the sky." I explained. I got on the water board, and the rest of the girls got on behind me. We all put on our helmets and turned visible.

"I fail to see how this will help us get to places." Kimi said.

"I fail to see how you fail to see that it's fast." Helen said.

"You've been spending too much time around Xandou." Rose quipped, earning a glare from Helen.

"Let's go!" Helen said. Lifting the board and all the extra weight, was a bit difficult, but I managed to get us off the roof. But I managed to send us flying all over the city. We were all clinging for dear life, before I commanded the water to pick us up.

"Steady guys." I said, giving each girl a mini board of their own. "Let's just take this slow." Rose screamed as we came close to hitting a bus. I rocketed us up in the sky.

"Too much thrust." Kimi was muttering. "Too much thrust. TOO MUCH THRUST!" But I lost control as we started falling down on the rail line. Kimi grabbed all of us and with her ice powers, she made a landing strip on the edge. Luckily, the train that was about to hit us, passed in a blink.

"Oh man!" I said, out of breath. "Maybe... enough flying today. What do you say?"

"I say that this is getting fun." Kimi said.

"Which means what?" I asked, fear creeping in my voice.

"It's time to put our skills to the test." Helen said.

"No." I said. "I mean we just started and I don't want to take anyone to the hospital yet."

"Too bad." Rose said, before pushing me off. I free fell to the water screaming, "GUYS!" Just as I was about to crash on the water, on instinct, I flicked my wrist and I didn't crash. I opened my eyes to see that a wave formed underneath my feet. I was literally riding the waves. "YES!" I screamed with pure euphoria. "Whoo!"
I looked to the left and I screamed out, "ROSALINA! YOU'RE FLYING! YOU'RE LITERALLY FLYING!" My Latina bestie was zooming in the air with no parachute or jet pack.

"I TOLD YOU I COULD DO IT!" Rose yelled back in joy. I looked over and I saw Helen using her tonfa and her boots as rockets with her powers as fuel. Kimi was literally skating in the air, freezing the air she was walking on in ice. When she stepped away, the ice melted. But the strange thing was that she was skating at the same speed as we were

"How are you going so fast?!" Helen asked loudly.

"I don't know!" Kimi answered.

"Whatever you're doing, don't stop!" Helen said, propelling her rocket boots. I fashioned myself a board made of water and we all flew in the city. We zoomed past cars, trains and even passing people. We each performed a bunch of flips and loop de loops. It was exhilarating to be in the air like this. We went inside a tunnel and waved to a bus driver. We were just in the skyscraper part of the city when Helen tapped me on the shoulder. I looked to her and she pointed to us in the glass panels of an office building. Staring back at us, were people who were willing to rise to the challenge. People who were gonna make a change. There was no denying it. We were the first superheroes. We flew faster, jumping buildings and hopping from roof to roof. We all made our grand finale by leaping off a roof of a hotel and rocketing up to the sky, we raised our hands and we unleashed a blast of our powers into the sky, ending in a firework that rained down snow and droplets of water.

"YES!" I yelled in victory. We flew to Skyline Tower and landed on the roof, looking at the busy city. We could not register what had happened. It was like we were living a dream, or a Marvel movie. I couldn't believe that we had just flown. We just pushed the boundaries of mermaids.

"Wow." Kimi breathed. "That was...that was..."

"Sick?" I asked.

"Yep." Kimi answered, bumping my fist with hers.

"It's official." Helen chimed in. "I am never taking the bus again."

"I can fly." Rose said in shock. "I can actually fly!" To prove her point, she started floating off the roof and hovered back to us.

"I'm so proud of you!" I exclaimed hugging Rose.

"Guys." Kimi said. "I hate to break up the euphoria here, but we have a bomb to stop in 20 minutes."

"Way to ruin the moment ice breath." Helen muttered.

"Helen's right guys." I said firmly. "We need to go now." We flew to the Q1 building roof when Helen stopped us.

"Guys." She said. "Before we start our battle, I'd just like to say that in all my time being friends with you geeks, I don't think I could have asked for more awesome friends. Whatever happens to us, we'll always be best friends, no, we'll always be sisters."

"Me too." Each of us chimed back.

Rosalina stuck her hand out. "Friends forever?" She asked.
We all put our hands out, and chimed, "Friends forever."

"Let's do this!" Kimi whispered. And we silently flew to the Q1 building where the final adjustments of the bomb was being placed. It was a very high tech massive bomb. Tons of the blue green mutagenic radiation was swirling inside. I gave Rose a signal to move and she did, creating wind that knocked the guard out from behind the bomb, where the control panels were.

"Nice." Helen complimented.

"Alright Kims." I said. "It's up to you." Kimi removed the lid to reveal a control panel of wiring. "Uh oh." She said in dismay. The buttons and labels were written in strange coding. It looked like Braille.

"Uh oh?" Helen asked irritated. "Kimi, you said you knew how to do this!"

"I didn't anticipate a design this ancient and complex guys." Kimi retorted.

"They-they're freaking mermen!" I exclaimed. "What did you seriously expect? A big round ball with a lit fuse that said bomb?!!"

"No." She answered. "But this…"

"Boy I sure hope this argument goes on until the bomb actually goes off!" Helen snapped sarcastically while bonking Kimi's head. Kim examined the machinery.

"Careful." Rose said, earning a glare from Kimi.

"Watch out for those wires." Helen warned.

"You guys are seriously not helping!" Kimi hissed. She continued to study the technology.

"Um Kimi." I warned. "You might want to speed it up. I don't know how much time we have."

"I cannot work with all this pressure!" She exclaimed.

"Uh." Rose said. "That's gonna be a bit of a problem."

"Why?" Helen asked.

"Because of them." Rose pointed upward to Dan Cradford and Xever. Kimi stayed behind to work on the bomb.

As Dan and Xever charged, I blocked a kick from Xever. "You guys picked a really bad time for this." I said.

"Oh sorry for the inconvenience." Xever snarled. "When would you prefer to breathe your last breath?"

He landed more strikes on me, which I used my katana to block. "If that thing goes off, it'll wipe us all out!"

Helen continued battling Xever while Rose and I fought Cradford.

"Yo Nerdhead!" Helen shouted. "Can you pick up the pace? We're dealing with a couple of nutjobs here!"

"TOJIKOMERU!" She yelled in Japanese, meaning shut up.
Xever kicked and kicked at Helen and Dan Cradford against me and Rose.

"Down to two wires." Kimi said, looking over the wiring. "Green or gold?"

"Go for the gold!" Rose yelled before getting punched in the face. Kimi struggled before shrugging and cutting the golden wires, stopping the bomb.

"I…just…stopped a bomb." Kimi breathed. "I JUST STOPPED A FUCKING BOMB!" She raced up to help Helen. As the battle continued, the two thugs had been driven to the edge of the Q1.

"Well it seems that you've lost." Helen remarked. "Lay down your weapons. You don't have a choice in the matter."

"In that case." Kimi said, blasting them off the building and letting them land softly on snow in a nearby hotel. But our fight was not over. We were then blasted back by a wave of force and surrounded by mermen agents of the Ares Tribe.

"Fire up the bomb!" One of them shouted. As we fought them, Kimi cried out, "We only have 5 minutes to stop that bomb!"

"I'll take it!" I said, knocking out a merman behind me. There was a vile in a merman's hand. I froze it and it disappeared, forming an idea in my head. "Did you say this moon pool water comes from the South?"

"Yes." Kimi answered.

"Get behind me!" I yelled out as I unleashed a watery force that knocked all of them out, giving us time to plan.

"New plan guys." I said. "Forget these goons. Kimi, you and I will freeze the chemical. It vaporizes in cold air."

"Now that is a plan!" Kimi exclaimed.

"Helen, Rose." I told to said people. "Can you give us some cover?"

"Like ya need to ask." Helen replied.

"Let's do this!" Rose shouted before we all resumed battle. Helen and Rose were fighting the reinforcements, while Kimi and I rushed to a backup control panel for the bomb. Kim worked her tech magic to create holes for us to slip our fingers in.

"Thalie, let's ready our energy." Kimi said, with us focusing on our freezing magic. "NOW!" And with a flash of blue and cyan light, the chemical illuminated with glowing ice before disintegrating. The bomb was fully deactivated. We ran over to the girls who had already taken out the reinforcements. Just to be sure, Helen set the bomb on fire before Kimi froze it.

"So to sum up." I said. "We kicked the butts of the Ares and Agni's top henchman, while diffusing a bomb, and saving the city."

"Yeah we're not kids." Helen agreed.

"We're just that good." We high fived and cheered before a dark voice sounded.

"You're skills are impressive." The voice sent us chills up our spines for it was a voice so evil, no amount of humanity was in it. We behind us and saw a tall man decked in silver armor and wearing a
three pronged helmet, resembling a trident. His arms were decked with blades. Just by looking at him made me think, Oh shit! "But they will not save you."

"Oh fuck." Kimi said. "Do you think that's... Slade?"

"Well it's definetly a Slade." Helen snapped.

"There is undoubtedly a fascinating story about how there are 4 Omega mermaids in one place." Slade said, menacingly as he slowly walked towards us. "Perhaps I will let one of you live long enough to tell it."

"You're gonna have to catch us first." Rose said bravely. "Hit it!" Just as I was going to use my moon ring, Slade used a powerful telekinetic wave to send us nearly off the tallest building in Australia. Luckily we stopped just in time.

"Ok that's it." Helen snarled before charging at him. She attacked him but he just deflected her attacks before sending her flying at a power grid, electrocuting her.

"HELEN!" I screamed in horror as I watched Helen be electrocuted. I charged at Slade with everything I had but I was kicked back.

"Thalie!" Kimi cried. Her face turned into a scowl before she used her hockey stick at him. But he grabbed the end and used it on her, freezing her.

Rose used her tessen to send a wind slice at him but he grabbed it and used it to send her flying off the building.

I landed my water on him, knocking off a bit. Rose flew back up and punched him.

Meanwhile Helen lay near the power grid, struggling to get up. Kimi raced towards her and asked, "Helen, you ok?" Helen smiled and said, "I am now."

Back to the fight, Slade had used my water to hit me back, and throwing me back near off the building. The same happened for Kimi. Just as Slade walked towards us and unsheathed his blades to make a final move, Helen jumped on him and landed a few punches but she was thrown off his back and was about to be killed when Rose lifted him up with her air enhanced telekinesis. She tried to paralyze him with his own oxygen but he sliced a pole nearby, and when Rose tired to run, it almost crushed her. It wasn't a large pole, but it was still enough to take her down. We used every ounce of strength we had to lift the pole up and Rose got up.

Slade was in front of us ready. But so were we. Yes were battered, bruised, wounded and in a lot of pain. But we weren't giving up. It may have been our first fight, but it looked like it was the fight to the death.

Slade unsheathed his blades and we charged at him. But he knocked the stiffing out of us with his blades. We were lucky he didn't cut off our limbs. I made one last strike but he cut his blade deep in my ribcage.

I hissed in pain as he grabbed me by my throat and lifted me up.

"Tell me where the Khatha twins are and I promise your demise will be swift." A third blade came out and was about 10 centimeters from my neck. Bracing for the pain, I closed my eyes, and wished I was away from him. I didn't know it but my body had turned into a puddle of water and then back into me.
"WHAT?!" Slade roared. I gasped looking at my hands. Sure they were bleeding, but I saw myself in one piece.

"Thalie." I heard the others gasp. I limped towards them and held Kimi.

"Get us out of here." Helen muttered.

"Couldn't agree more." Rose gasped. Using the last on my energy, I used my moon ring to flash us to Mako.

We didn't land on the island itself but we landed in the moon pool. As soon as we got in, the pool itself glowed and before I knew it, water encased us and I felt like I had slept like a baby.

"What?" Kimi asked.

"What just happened?" Rose and I asked.

"I don't know but let's get these suits off." Helen said. We swam back to the lair and got dry.

"How did you find this place?" We heard Phoebus ask behind us. We looked up and saw my mom and Esmeralda with him.

"What are you doing here?" Helen asked.

"I could ask you the same question." Esmeralda said.

"I can explain." As we got dry, we went to the couch and explained what happened, and everything including the battles we had. The three adults looked at us in shock.

"You four have no idea how lucky you are." Phoebus said.

"I think we define that word differently, Mr. Marino." Helen retorted.

"Few have ever faced Slade and survived." Esmeralda pointed out.

"He was just so fast." Rose said.

"It's like he was beating us mentally and physically." Kimi said.

"You were right Mom." I said. "We shouldn't have faced him. But at least we stopped the bomb."

"That I am proud of." Mom said. "But don't be fooled yet. The bomb may be stopped, but Slade is not one to give up so easily."

"I just don't understand how the moon pool made us feel better." Rose said.

"It was the moon ring and the island itself." Mom explained. "It sensed you were hurt and the moon pool's healing properties saved you all."

"But enough about us." Helen said. "What is this place?"

"That is a story for another time." Phoebus said.

"And where have you been?" Rose asked. "Why did you leave your family?"

"He lost his memory in the raid." Esme explained. "He spent all these years recovering every piece and these last 3 months trying to find us. I still feel like a bitch for slapping him."
"Don't sweat it Esme." Phoebus said. "I kind of deserved it."

"Guys." Kimi said. "We should go, we need to check on something." We left the lair and flew to the Q1 building where police were dismantling the bomb. Everything was safe.

"Guys." I said. "Let's go home."

A massive cleanup continues today at the Q1 building. Rumors are still flooding in about a group of unidentified individuals who prevented what appeared to be a terrorist attack. The whole city of the Gold Coast is asking, "Who stopped this bomb and where are they now?"

Kimi put down the newspaper on the table. We all were in the café. Things were getting back to normal for now.

"So." Rose said. "Hoping to see Raiden Thals?"

I blushed while eating my croissant.

"You guys." I said. After our battle, we had started to become closer than before. We started to become like sisters.

"We need to go." Evie said from behind. As we left for school, I gave Evie a hug.

"Why the hug?" She asked.

"I'm just glad everyone's ok." I said. "Bye." The school day went by fast as we talked more with each other. But we didn't bring up our superhero thing. Helen and Rose started getting along as we all did with each other. Kimi suggested that we have a campfire at Mako.

Later in the grotto...

No one's POV...

Phoebus paced around the grotto. He stopped by earlier to pet Poseidon. He enjoyed that cat but he never came close to Mochi.

"Phoebus." Esmeralda said from behind him.

"Hey Esme." He said. "Pós eínai Ondina?" (How's Ondina?)

"Eínai mia chará." (She's fine.) Esme replied in Greek. "Tha prépei na léme ta korítsia ti méros eínai kai poios ánike stín?" (Should we tell the girls what that place is and who it belonged to?)

Phoebus thought for a minute before answering. "Vlépontas póso pígan mésa sto ktírio Q1, Ísos tha éprepe na to párei argó." (Seeing how much they went through on the Q1 building, maybe we should take it slow)

"Ti thymásai apó tìn oikogéneia Khatha?" (What do you remember about the Khatha family?) Esme asked her husband.

His face took a sad look. "Loipón ... Ítan mia oikogéneia. Mia oikogéneia pou échas tì zúf toús stí fótiá." (Well...it was a family. A family that died in the fire.)

"Ti kai an den eínai nekrós?" (What if it isn't dead?) Esme asked.
"Einai apithano. Ola chati. Perezas akomji 5 mnes psachnei gia to syzygo tjs." (That's impossible. Everything was lost. I even spent 5 months looking for her husband.) Phoebus said to his wife.

Esme pulled out a photo and said, "Den einai ola chati kan sti fotia." (Not everything perished in the fire.)

Phoebus took the photo and saw two teens circled in red pen. Two teenagers who looked a lot like two of his deceased best friends.

"Afto den borei na einai alithin." (This can't be real.) He said.

"Einai pragmatiko." (It is real.) Esme replied. "Alla den xeroun poioi einai." (But they don't know who they are.)

"Prepei na tous poume?" (Should we tell them?) He asked.

"Pros to paron, den yaparchei." (For now, no.) Esme said. "As apla parakolouthoun ek tou synengys tous." (Let's just keep a close watch on them.)

At Mako Island…

Back in Thalie's POV

We sat around the campfire, sharing good stories. We had a few laughs here and there.

"How did it feel to be a superhero?" I asked them.

"For one, I'm just glad I didn't wear a cape or underwear over my clothes." Rose replied, earning snickers from all of us.

"Agreed." Kimi said. "It felt like I was taking science and magic to a new level."

"I felt like a badass." Helen said.

"Helen you always feel like a badass." Kimi quipped.

"What about you Thals?" Rose asked.

"To be honest guys." I said. "It felt terrifying and exciting at the same time, it's hard to explain."

"It's a shame this was a one-time thing though." Kimi said despondently.

"You don't mean that?" Rose asked.

"Rose." I said. "We're leading double lives here, but superheroes? It just wouldn't work."

"Balancing mermaids, school and superhero shit?" Helen asked. "I want to take it, but I'll go with what you guys think is right."

"I'm gonna miss wearing this helmet." I said.

"Me too." Kimi agreed.

"Me three." Helen said.

"Same here." Rose said.
Just as we got, the fire started to glow blue and it roared, flames shooting up and out of the flames was my dad's ghost.

"Dad?" I asked.

He simply laughed. "I gave you quite a scare didn't I?"

"A scare?" Kimi asked. "Mr. Santos, you almost gave us heart attacks!"

"Sorry." He said. "But girls you can't back out on this. This is what you signed up for."

"Dad." I said. "That was a onetime thing."

"Ladies." My dad said. "Mako is in need of a new generation. The city is in need of a new generation. Heck, even the world needs a new generation. Crime and evil has run rampant in the seas and in land. Justice needs to be restored. And you girls are a group of individuals who are stronger together than you are apart."

"Superheroes?" Helen asked. "I'm in."

"Each of you have strengths and weaknesses. But you're greatest strength is when you stand as one. Alone you're all vulnerable. And that is why your friendship is one of the strongest to exist." He turned to Rose. "Rosalina Paola Gomez, you have a free spirit and a kind heart. And that is the glue of this team. But you also have insecurities in you. Remember Rose, you have friends here to support you. Be free, like the wind." He turned to Helen. "Helen Paddington Carter. Your strength and loyalty are a key part of any team. It's what motivates them to rise to the challenge. But you let the strength you have turn into anger, which can get to your head. You must learn to focus your anger into your fire. Be fierce, like the fire." He turned to Kimi. "Yukimi Susan Hamasaki. Your intelligence and problem solving skills are a vital part of this team. You always look for a solution to any situation and you always manage to lead your friends into a way around a snag. But you rely too much on your mind. So you forget that there's so much to you than your brain. Be strong like the ice." And finally, he turned to me. "And Thalassa Isabel Santos. You have raw potential that you have yet to uncover, and your bravery is what guides you and your friends to victory. But you tend to go to rash impulsive decisions that can lead to trouble. You tend to be a bit of a perfectionist. You will realize this in your life. But your dedication to rise to the challenge is why you must lead this new team of heroes. It will not be easy and the road ahead is full obstacles. But remember that you four are special and there's no greater power than friendship, family and love. Take out your elements." We all conjured out our powers on our hands. "I, say your name." We all replied, saying our name. "Promise to fulfill the duties and responsibilities as a superhero." We all repeated. "And I solemnly promise to never reveal my identity unless it is by accident or there is no other way." We all repeated. "You are all a new original team of heroes. Good luck." He floated towards me and hugged me. "I'm so proud of you Thalassa." He whispered. "I love you too Daddy." I said, before he vanished and the fire turned back to normal.

We all just stood there for about 10 minutes before Rose said, "That was deep."

"Yeah." Kimi said.

"I can't believe we just took a job." Helen said.

"Guys." I said. "Whatever eats at us. We get past it. We rise to the occasion because we're a team. And we've got a job to do. The world needs to be protected. Remember, we're not gods, just people. But we have to use our powers with great responsibility and this is it. Sisters forever?"
"Sisters forever." Helen agreed.

"Sisters forever." Kimi said.

"So, just to be clear." Rose said. "We don't have to worry about how much sleep we're gonna lose?" We all laughed. "Cause we're gonna lose a lot of sleep!"

"We'll find a way." Kimi said.

"Ok." Rose said. "Sisters forever."

"Let's suit up." Helen said. "We've got patrol to do." We swam back to the lair, got our suits and make up on. We snuck to the roof when Mom cleared her throat.

"Girls no." Mom said.

"Ms. Santos you don't understand." Kimi said.

"I do, and it's too dangerous." Mom retorted.

"We took an oath." Helen backed up.

"I was afraid you did." Mom said. "Thalassa, you must not do this. What if you meet Slade again?"

"When he shows up, we'll be ready." Rose said.

"You can't beat him." Mom said. "Not after last night, he's stronger than any of you."

"Yeah he is." I said. "But he's not stronger than all of us. Look, the power of the moon gave him his powers, but it gave us all of ours too. Even yours Mom. This is who we are now, maybe this is who we're meant to be. We started something, we're gonna finish it."

"I just…" Mom said. "I don't wanna lose you again."

"Mother." I said. "We're ready for this. I'm pretty sure Aunt Nerida said this to you when you left the pod for Dad. He sacrificed his life to save the future. Don't put it in vain." Mom looked at me, with tears forming in her eyes.

"Come here all of you." Mom said. The rest of the crew joined me and my mom in a group hug. "From when I met the three of you, I knew that you would be destined for great things. Even when I met my daughter all over again. I was a fool and I was so afraid to let you go. All you need to see is that your true power lies in believing in one another. And don't worry. I will not tell anyone, including Zac of your new identities. Now go, save the world."

"Guys." Kimi spoke up. "We have activity from Hell's Angels on Blocker."

"Let's go." I beckoned the team. I looked back at Mom and I said to her, "I love you."

"I love you too." She said. We all put on our helmets and we took off into the night sky.

We raced and jumped cars and buildings in the city. It felt good to be out there, on the thrill of adventure. I used my water board over cars and busses. Sometimes I would jump off of it to run on busses.
We didn't set out to be superheroes.

Rose flew like a jet, performing flips and somersaults in the air.

But sometimes life doesn't go the way you plan.

Kimi skated on the air at the speed of a cheetah. She enjoyed the thrill of it.

The good thing was, we all wanted to help people and put crime to justice.

Helen rocketed in the air, but stopped to run on cars and walls.

And that's what we're gonna do.

We all flew at the same time. If there was a camera, we would all be facing it. Kimi was next to me on my left, Helen was on my right, and Rose next to her.

Who are we?

WE'RE THE SIREN'S CREED

Play Immortals by Fall Out Boy for ending credits

Here's the after credit's scene…

Rosalina's POV

I looked at a photo of my dad in my house. "Dad." I said. "I just wish I could share my accomplishments with you. You mean so much to me. I've always felt a distance what with you being in Mexico all the time. I just wish I could…" I didn't finish because I had unknowingly pressed a button on the picture frame. The wall slid open to reveal a computer room with suits worn by El Toro, Mexico's famous vigilante. I looked at the suits and I realized that my father had a connection with El Toro!

"Rosalina." I heard a man from behind me. He walked into the light and it was my father. "Daughter."

"Dad?" I asked. He picked up a t shirt from an El Toro suit.

"I wear em front. I wear em back." He recited our mantra.

"I go inside out." I said along with him. "Then I go front and back! DAD!" I hugged him tightly as he did to me.

"We have a lot to talk about."
Temper of Fire

Thalie's POV

It had been only 2 days since the Ares' attempts to mutate the city and possibly the world was stopped. Diablo, being the comic gook fanboy he was, said he'd keep a lookout for crimes happening across the city. We were on the roof of some apartment building keeping a watch for the guys who were about to bust in a lab.

"Anything?" I asked Kione.

"Nothing yet, Amitaf." Kione replied. Oh I guess I should explain the strange names. Since being superheroes was part 2 of our secret identities, we had voted to take up names. I became Amitaf, Kimi became Kione, Helen became Lizira, and Rose became Quetzal. Pretty cool names right? Kione/Kimi was looking through a telescope and fiddling with her black padding. Quetzal had convinced her to switch her color to black because she said that cyan and silver would clash.

Speaking of fashion and style, Rosalina decided to have a logo for the Sirens Creed. It was a large crescent moon behind an X figure of an olive branch and a bundle of arrows. We all put it on the suits we were wearing now. We all had it on our belts in the center, on our t shirts, except for Kione and Lizira. Quetzal had it on her dress as a silver glittery broach. I had it as a silver T shirt design.

Behind me, Rose/Quetzel was sitting with Lizira/Helen and was poking her until Lizira grabbed her hand and made her body heat rise, slightly burning her hand from the inside. But Quetzal was ok.

"Guys." I hissed at them. "When vigilantes are on surveillance, they are supposed to be silent!"

"Sorry Ami." Quetzal said. "I'll scream quieter." Quetzal poked Lizira again before she grabbed her arm and flipped her over. And then she got up.

"Amitaf, we're wasting our time!" She groaned. "No one's gonna show up!"

"Have a little patience will you?" I asked.

"Trust me guys, those Hell's Angels are gonna show up." Kione said proudly. "I've got reliable intel."

Lizira scoffed. "Intel?" She asked. "You mean... Xhiva told you."

"You mean your boyfriend?" Quetzal asked mischievously.

"He's not my boyfriend Quetzal!" Kione snapped while all three of us shared a look of "yeah right." "He's a boy who's a friend, who has in depth knowledge of the criminal underworld and we're gonna stop them!"

"Or we'll just sit our here for absolutely no reason!" Lizira exclaimed.

"What the hell's going on here?" An angry man sounded from the door of the apartment building shack. He looked to be in his 50's with an obese figure, greasy hair, and a large boil on his nose. "What are you brats doing, playing dress up?"

"No sir." I said, trying to diffuse the tension. "We were just filming a movie."

"Which one of you prissy ham shanks busted my satellite dish?!" The man pointed to said dish that
was broken.

"Ham shanks?!)" Lizira exclaimed angry.

"I don't even know what that means." Kione said, scratching her head.

"Me neither." Lizira said, readying her fire. "But I don't like it."

Before she could make a move, I grabbed her arm. "Let's go."

As we started to walk away, Mr. Jerk decided to make things even worse. "That's right ya spinless princess! Listen to yo mommy!"

"Hey!" Lizira exclaimed, her hands on fire. The padding and clothes didn't burn because all the suits were fireproof. "Watch your mouth Cracker Boy!"

"Oh no!" Jerkman mock cried. "I didn't know you were a human barbeque grill!"

"Human barbeque grill?!" Helen was close to getting him, but the three of us stopped her by grabbing her arms. But we didn't stop her mouth. "I'm not taking this from some greasy pit stained slob with a combover!"

"You calling me ugly?" Mr. Jerk sassed back. "Seen a mirror lately circus whore?! You want a piece of me?!"

"When I am done." Lizira said, her eyes glowing a bright gold. "A piece of you is all that's gonna be left!" A gunshot was heard and we pulled Lizira back in time for the bullet to miss her. We looked at the person firing and it was a bunch of

"Hell's Angels!" I said.

"Holy Toledo!" Jerkman cried.

"Way to blow our position Lizira." Kione hissed at her.

We charged at them, each of us knocking them down. Lizira ran up, jumped high and kneed the guy she was fighting in the head. I did a flip and performed a crescent kick on a guy's neck. Quetzal cartwheeled and used her tessen to sweep away a person. Kione ducked the guy firing bullets and used her hockey stick to strike him away.

But a gun fired, and it hit Lizira's watch and she got blasted with one of my water attacks. Before something could be done, she popped a tail.

"Keep going Kung Fu fishies!" The man yelled waving his phone. "This is pure gold!"

"We're not fish, idiot!" Lizira yelled, already having gotten dry.

"And it's not kung fu!" Kione yelled.

"Uh guys." Quetzal said. "He's got us on video!"

"Not for long he doesn't." Lizira said before charging at him. But before she could even think of a move, Jerkman closed the door.

"I'm gonna make a fortune off of this!" Jerkman yelled. Just then, we heard sirens.
"Police are en route." Kione said.

"We have 30 seconds." Quetzal said.

"Let's move." I ordered.

"Wait!" Lizira said. "We have to find that dick and break his phone, and his face!"

"Another time Lizira." I said. "We gotta go now."

She groaned before we all jumped the roof and flew back to the Lair.

In the Lair…

We told Mom what happened. To say she was pissed was an understatement.

"Not only did you alert the criminals." My mom said, pacing. "But your watch gets broken, you get splashed, and you get caught… on video!"

"Rita." Helen said. "He was the angriest, nastiest guy you've ever met!"

"Except for you." Kimi whispered to her friend.

"You should have heard the insults this guy was throwing at us." Helen complained. "They were so…insulting!"

"Oh." Esme said. She was cleaning up the lair. "I didn't realize that he said mean things. So of course you had no choice but to jeopardize your mission!"

"Yep." Rose whispered. "Definitely Ondina's mother."

"You guys are mermaids." Esme said. "We work in secret on land. This becomes difficult if there is proof of us in high definition!"

"Look." Helen said. "We know where this guy lives. All we need to do is find him and shake him until the tape pops out."

"Oh there's no tape." Kimi said. "Video phones use flash memory…" She was cut off by Helen's penetrating glare. Our helmets were off so she could see it.

"Anger is self destructive." Rita said wisely.

"I always thought it was others destructive." Helen muttered.

"Helen Carter!" Rita exclaimed. "Stand up." Helen rose, nervously.

"You're dead." Rose whispered.

We left to go to the dojo where the three of us circled Helen with little blasts of our power.

"Evade the blasts." Mom said from behind the black teen.

"No problem." Helen said proudly.

"Begin!" Each of us fired our blasts at her but she missed, ending in a flip. "Stop! Again, instead this
time, you three, insult Helen."

We all gasped. "Wait." Kimi said. "You want us…to insult her?"

"Yes." Mom said.

"And she can't fight back?" Kimi asked again.

"No." Mom said.

"I'm feeling good about this plan." Kimi said, smiling wickedly.

"Begin!" We all circled her, thinking of good insults. But deep down, we were hurting of even hurting our best friend.

"You move like a bloated buffalo!" Rose taunted, sending a blast of wind. But Helen dodged it.

"I do not!" Helen retorted.

"And you're always whining!" I said, unleashing some water. "Poor me. Nobody understands me!"

"You don't keep your back straight when sitting!" Kimi exclaimed firing an ice blast. "And you're ugly!"

"And gassy!" Rose yelled, firing some wind.

"Stop it!" Helen shouted.

"Oh you talk so tough." I taunted. "But inside, you're just a scared little baby."

"Who needs her bottle?" Kimi sneered.

"And her diapie changed?" Rose asked.

"What's the matter Helen?" I asked. "Gonna cry?"

"I." Helen said through gritted teeth. "Am. Not. Gonna cry!" At that point, she was already wet and bursting in flames. Then she got dry and stood up. "You know what?! Fuck this! This is cowshit!"

She walked to Mom and asked, "The point?"

"Enduring insults is one of the many methods of being a warrior." Mom explained. "Understood?"

"Yeah." Helen snapped.

"You must get that video back." Rita said. "Using reason not force."

We flew to the apartment building where we met the guy and we saw him walk out talking with someone on the phone.

"That's right." He said to his buddy on the phone. "I swear on Christ's grave that these kids are fish people and they know kung fu. You can't tell me that's not worth something!" Just then, we landed right in front of him. "I'll call you back." He hung up. "Lay one finger on me, and I'm calling the cops."

"We're not gonna hurt you." Lizira said, biting down her urge to tackle the guy.
"So what do you want freak?!" The guy exclaimed.

"We got off on the wrong foot last night." Lizira said trying to be nice. "Some things were said and well… we would just like that video back." I nudged her in the arm. "Please?"

"What are you gonna give me for it?" The guy asked.

"Give you for it?" Lizira asked surprised.

"Well I figure I've got you over a barrel." The guy explained. "So you've got to make it worth my while."

"Oh I'll make it worth your while." Lizira said, flames starting to build around her. "I WON'T TAKE YOUR HAND AND SMASH IT AGAINST THE…"

"Ok!" I said, stopping the fight. "Ok! Thank you Lizira. I will take over." I turned to the guy while Lizira was steaming. "So what are you looking for?"

The guy pondered for a minute before saying, "A cool mill ought to cover it."

I nodded in understanding. "A cool mill of what exactly?"

"A million dollars." The guy answered casually.

"We don't…have a million dollars." I said really unsure.

"Would the gold coins in your mom's place work?" Quetzal whispered. "I mean we gotta pay him something."

"I can make serious money off this thing." The guy said, waving his phone. "And if you don't want to pay, I'll hold onto it until someone else does."

"That's it!" Lizira stepped in front of him and looked at him in the eye. Even through the helmet, the guy could practically feel her burning glare. "Hand over the phone or so help me I'll kick your stinking bum all the way to Sydney!"

"Guys!" Kione cried. "The Angels!" A white van was coming close to hitting us. "Lizira!" Rose pushed her out of the way to avoid the car hitting her.

"Let's not let this one get away." Kione said firmly. Lizira fired a wave of fire, knocking the van down.

"Well." Lizira said. "That was easy." But then the Angels got out, firing their guns. Luckily, Lizira's watch was fixed. "Oooookay?" And we charged into battle.

I used my water to knock out a guy after I sliced his gun. Quetzal flew up to a woman and performed a side kick on her. Kione froze the bullets being fired in midair and created an icy wave to make the guy slip and then freeze him. Lizira punched a guy with her flaming fists. Turning around, she saw Mr. Jerk reach for his phone.

"Oh no you don't!" She yelled.

"Lizira what are you doing?" I yelled, blocking a guy. "Get back here!"

But Lizira just ignored me and marched to the guy. "We've got unfinished business! You give me that phone RIGHT NOW!" But the van started, too late for the duo to make a move.
"Lizira's in the van!" I yelled as we flew towards it.

Lizira/Helen's POV

I use my basic martial arts to beat some of the goons inside. Though I may have kicked one in the balls. I turned to the video taking douchebag and said to him, "Let's get out of here!"

"Forget it!" Douchebag sneered. "You loser salmon don't wanna buy my video, maybe these guys will."

"Lizira!" I heard Kione cry from behind. "Get out of there!"

Fuming, I picked up the guy by the shirt. "Listen you tosser! We're not losers and we're not salmon!"
But an Angel must have recovered because before I knew it, I was thrown out of the van.

We all groaned getting up.

"Nice going Liz." Amitaf said.

"What did I do?" I stood up to the blue clad superhero.

"What did you do?!" She exclaimed. "You left the three of us in the middle of a fight to yell at somebody. We could have stopped them, but thanks to your temper, the guy with the tape…"

"Again, technically it's a…" Kione began but was cut off by Amitaf.

"Is in the hands of Hell's Angels!" Amitaf continued. "Now how are we supposed to find them?"

"Look!" Quetzal pointed to a trail of oil. "The truck's leaking!"

"Alright!" Amitaf said in excitement. "We can follow the trail to their hideout."

"And then we'll beat some creeps!" I said proudly. But Amitaf put her hands on her hips. "What?"

"We are going to beat some creeps." She said. "You on the other hand, are going home."

"What?!" I exclaimed. "Are you kidding me? Come on you two. Are we gonna let Ami power trip like this?"

It took a moment for Kione to speak. "I think she's right."

"You need to control your temper." Amitaf said. "Until then, we just can't trust you."

"Sorry Liz." Quetzal said sadly as the flew away. I flew to the docks, dove in and swam to Mako. I surfaced in the moon pool to see that no one was there. Perfect time to try to blow off some steam.

"Who does Thalie think she is?" I asked myself. "So what if I got a temper? I'm still the best fighter we got in fact if anything, my anger makes me a better fighter! I just wish someone would understand that."

"Oh I do." I heard Zac from behind me. I turned around to see him smiling.

"Seriously." I said. "You need to knock or something."

"Helen." Zac said swimming to the ledge and sitting down. "Let me tell you a story."

I groaned. "Blakely. I'm not in the mood for a story."
"Too bad." Zac said. "You're in need of one. You remember last year about the trident and me and Cam…"

"Yeah yeah yeah." I said. "I know what happened."

"Can I finish?" Zac asked. I sighed allowing him to continue. "You remember I put it away. But after Thalie destroyed it, Cam insulted me in front of my girlfriend. He called me many things. I felt I could not let those insults go unanswered so I pushed him and punched him. I lost my temper. And over the next period of days, our starting rivalry turned to hate. Until Cam made his move and our friendship ended."

"But." I said shocked. "It wasn't your fault. Cam insulted you. You had no choice."

"No choice?" Zac asked. "I could have chosen to ignore him, but I let my damn pride get the best of me. It was me who made his words into knives. If that's the choice I made, what will you make?" I swam back to the reef to think this through. What was I to do?


No one's POV

At a warehouse…

3 figures, in different colors flew in the air. One of them was actually flying, the other was using a water board to lift herself, and the last one was skating on the ice created in the air. They stopped at the dumpster near the destination.

"We're here." Kione whispered to her buddies.

"Are we gonna do this without Helen?" Quetzal asked the others.

"We can do it." Amitaf said.

"I don't have a good feeling about this." Quetzal said. "Let's go anyway." The three superheroes flew to the roof and entered through a window panel.

"Spiders." Quetzal whispered once they entered. We walked down the stairs until we reached the room where we saw the Jerkman was tied up. The members of Hell's Angels were discussing what to do with him. While he was trying to sweet talk his way out of this one, Quetzal used her wind powers to pull him towards them.

"We're gonna get you out of here." Amitaf whispered to the guy.

"What about my phone?" The guy asked. sHE shushed him in response. "Don't shush me! I ain't leaving here without my phone!" Unfortunately the Angels heard them so the readied their guns.

In fear, Kione asked, "Remind me why we have to rescue this guy?"

The superheroes went into battle fighting the guys. They were close to winning when they heard a scream turn into an inhumane one.

"Hey Two-Ton!" One of the Angel's shouted to a large man. "Check out what that is." Two-Ton went to the place where the noise came from. After 5 seconds, the guy was thrown back, knocked unconscious.

"I don't like the sound of that." Quetzal said. Stepping out of the darkness was a giant spider with red
and blue accents. "I don't like the look of it either!"

"What did you do to me? I'm hideous!" The spider spoke. It was the Jerkman but his voice carried a rough edge to it.

"Don't worry." Amitaf said. "The four of us can handle him."

"Um Ami?" Kione asked. "This might be a bad time to point this out but you sent one of the four of us home."

"And right now, I wish it was me," Quetzal said terrified.

"This is your fault!" The Spider yelled. "I'm gonna rip your heads off!"

"Would it help if we said it was an accident?" Quetzal asked. She got a roar in response. "So I'll put you down for a no?"

"Alright guys." Amitaf said, readying her water. "Prepare to dish out the mighty wrath of justice!"

"Seriously?" Kione asked. "Just yell get him."

"Get…" Amitaf didn't finish because she was thrown back against the wall. The spider jerk smiled. Kione charged towards it, ready to freeze it but the spider used it's long giant legs to push her back. The same happened for Quetzal. Amitaf tried a sneak attack but the spider sensed her and kicked her away. Quetzel used her wind to literally blow him away.

"Is that all you got?" She asked. In response the spider spit out acid that melted the floor in front of her. She gulped. "The answer I was looking for was yes."

The girls tried every attempt to beat him and not get acid on their bodies. What they didn't realize was that the floor they were now standing on was already hit with acid, so the floor fell, taking them with it.

"We're no match for Arachnitor!" Quetzal said.

"Arachnitor?" Amitaf asked.

"Well he's a spider and he's a guy so I thought…" Quetzal explained before being cut off by Kione. Arachnitor landed in front of them, they tried to fight by going around him but he kept going in their way at an abnormal speed.

"This bug is fast!" Amitaf exclaimed.

"Yeah spiders aren't actually bugs, they're…OW!" Kione didn't get to finish because she was grabbed by one of Arachnitor's hairy tentacles and was flung toward the wall.

"Playtime's over brats!" Arachnitor shouted. He spit acid at them and he mad ehis way slowly to finishing them off.

"Wow." A voice sounded from above. "And just when I thought that this guy couldn't look any worse."

"Lizira!" The three mermaids shouted. Lizira jumped, did a flip and landed perfectly.

"Well I say you have been punished long enough." Amitaf said proudly. "Come and join us."
"Hey." Arachnator sneered. "It's the Kung Fu fish with the flaming gloves."

"Hey it's the stupid loudmouth who's about to get his butt kicked." Helen sassed back. Arachnitor spit acid at the three mermaids and they landed on the floor in the next level.

Kione groaned and looked at her feet to see a plastic floor covering what looked like a reject batch of the transmutation serum that was used in the bomb. "Uh, let's not fall through this floor, ok?"

"Dance for me fish!" Arachnitor sneered, shooting acid, missing Lizira. "Watch me turn your friends into fish fries! I'll serve them up with your salad tongs!" Arachnitor created a web and ziplined down. But Lizira caught it in time and cut it, giving the mutant spider a hard landing. He stood up and it was now Lizira and Arachnitor, face to face. "Isn't this cute? Little girl thinks she can stop me. What's that? Are you too scared to upset your mommy?"

His words were ignored by Lizira's breathing technique which allowed her to calm down. "Like a fire, in a kindle." She was ready. She ran up to the spider and shot fire at him. He stretched his legs out and when he spat acid, Lizira used his leg to cover her.

"That's some move for a kid." Arachnitor said. The rest of the team jumped down, joining their friend.

"We're not just kids or fish." Lizira said proudly. "We're mermaids." They all battled him until Kione and Lizira punched him and swiped him down with their weapons. His phone lay there until Lizira stepped up and incinerated it with her rocket boots.

"No!" Arachnitor cried. "My phone!" The Sirens Creed surrounded him. "You brats are going to regret this." He climbed out of the warehouse and escaped in the city's boundaries, leaving for anywhere but there.

In the café…

Thalie's POV

"I know a nice black widow that would have been great for him." Kimi said, sipping her water.

"Good work guys." I said. "Helen I just want to say…"

"You don't have to apologize." She cut me off.

"What are we gonna do about Arachnitor?" Rose asked.

"I'll just get some of that reject batch and get to work on a cure." Kimi said. "I'm just glad that the video of us is destroyed."

"Guys!" Carly said. "You need to see this!" We went up to her computer and saw the news.

"A report of, get this, superheroes in the Gold Coast. Don't believe me? After lab security reported a robbery, the police recovered this along with the chemicals returned. A picture was shown of the logo of the Sirens Creed on a shuriken. "For Channel 10 news, this is Brian Fox signing off."

In just seconds, the entire café was abuzz with the news. Theories were going off about who the superheroes were. But we knew better. We went outside to get some quiet.

"So I guess it's not a problem if our group is shown?" Rose asked.
"As long as there's no tails involved, it's cool." Helen said.

"I guess." I said. We looked out into the sea on the railing before Helen said.

"Damn I love this job!"
No one's POV

At the Fluctes House…

In the workspace of the Tiraken twins, Xandou was fixing up scooter at high level speeds with Xhiva helping him with the programming.

"Tapā'īṁ pakkā tapā'īṁ samaya Xandou yō dauḍa banā'una gonna chauṁ?" (You sure you're gonna make this race in time Xandou?) Xhiva asked his brother in Nepali.

"Kunai vikalpa milyō." (Got no choice.) The Chinese/Hindi merman teen said in reply. "Tyō dauḍa mahinā lägi buka gari'kō cha. Ma gonna mērō sthāna gumā'una chaina chu. Tapā'īṁ malā'i pēcakasa hāta sakēna?" (That race has been booked for months. I'm not gonna lose my spot. Could you hand me the screwdriver?)

Xhiva handed his brother said object and said, "Yahām. Tapā'īṁ arkō ēka skēlapēla cāhincha bhanē, kismata bāhira hunuhuncha." (Here. If you need a scalpel next, you're out of luck.)

The Asian twins laughed, before Xandou knocked over a glass figurine of 3 dolphins over off the stack of books but Xhiva used his telekinesis to stop it in midair.

"Oh phew." Xandou said. "Tyō ghaniṣṭha thiyo." (That was a close one.)

"Sāvadhāna rahanuḥōs." (Be careful.) Xhiva said. "Tyō Sis hāmīlā'ī dinubha'kō antima upahāra thiyo." (That was the last gift Sis gave us.)

"Dhikkāra cha." (Damn it.) Xandou muttered. The twins grabbed Xandou's scooter and took it outside.

"Tapā'īṁ pakkā pitājī garēkō chaina gonna pattā?" (You sure Dad's not gonna find out?) Xhiva asked his brother.

"Ma tapā'īṁ assure sakchan, yō ēka sīrṣa gōpya illigal dauḍa cha. Ra yō pani Bejihng mā chaina." (I can assure you, this is a top secret illigal race. And it's not even in Bejihng.) Xandou assured his brother. And Xandou took off on his scooter to Sydney.

At the Café…

In Rosalina's POV

I was serving a dish when I heard Sirena's awesome voice. Then came the sweet talk out of those two lovebirds.

"If you two were any sweeter I'd have to slap a health warning on you." I heard Carly say.

"Yeah." I said. "You two would get in a romantic comedy, without even trying!"

"What about you and Diablo?" Carly asked mischievously. I just turned away and blushed.

"What about me?" Diablo asked coming up.
"Could you two take this out to Evie's dad's boat?" Carly asked. "Me and Rose are completely flat out."

"Where's Erik?" David asked.

"Apparently the Consorzio elder's a no show." I said.

"Again?" Davi asked taking the boxes.

"It's a half hour late so you guys are gonna have to moter." Carly advised.

"Sorry I'm late." We all heard Erik. "Let me take that."

"No you help Carly." David said. "And Erik, lift your game ok?" And the lovebirds left with Carly slapping a towel on his hand.

"Yeah Erik." Diablo said. "Lift your game."

"Calla't." (Shut up.) Erik muttered in Catalan.

I went back to the kitchen to work on the next order. I wasn't the only cook in the "mermaid family". After agreeing to stay here for the time being, Esmeralda had gotten a job at a restaurant called Four Winds. She was offered a job at the café but she declined saying to leave it to the kids. I began to sing in my mezzo voice to help pass the time.

Be our guest! Be our guest!
Put our service to the test
Tie your napkin 'round your neck, cherie
And we'll provide the rest
Soup du jour
Hot hors d'oeuvres
Why, we only live to serve
Try the grey stuff
It's delicious!
Don't believe me? Ask the dishes!

That's when Diablo came in and resumed the song but in a rap version.

They can sing, sing, sing, they can dance, dance, dance!
After all, Miss, this is France!
And a dinner here is never second best
Go on, unfold your menu
Take a glance and then you'll
Be our guest
Oui, our guest
Be our guest!

I chuckled, sprinkling some flour in the bread pan. "Didn't know you saw that movie." I said.

"You'd be surprised what I have seen." Diablo said. "But I have seen crazy things."

"You're full of surprises aren't you?" I asked.

"If it gets cold." He said. I laughed. "I'm full of stuffed…stuffiness."
I just laughed. "¿Dónde se encuentra con estas ideas?" (Where do you come up with these ideas?)

"Tengo un montón de espacio vacío aquí." (I've got lots of empty space up here.) He answered.
"Aquí es lo que me refiero. Podemos añadir algo al cuarto de baño de la cafetería: oro sólido... papel higiénico." (Here's what I'm thinking. We can add something to the cafe's bathroom: solid gold...toilet paper.)

I just howled with laughter. "¿Tiene ideas extrañas, sabe esto?" (You have strange ideas, you know that?)

Diablo chuckled. "No tan loco como su idea de que puede volar." (Not as crazy as your idea that you can fly.)

I froze in my tracks. "Bien que puedo hacer algo y algo no puedo." (Well I can sort of do it and I sort of can't.)

Diablo nodded with one of his perfectly arched eyebrows raised. "Seguro."

Going back to my cooking, I let out a breath of relief. One of the downsides of a superhero life added to my mermaid/human life, you had to double the lying.

In the city…

Helen's POV

I walked down the city blocks when I got a call on my phone. Taking a look at the callerID, I saw it was Xandou.

"Hi." I said, answering it.

"Hey." His voice sounded.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"I'm on my way to a secret race in Sydney." Xandou answered.

"And by secret, you mean illegal?" I asked.

"Oh Helen you know me so well." Xandou said with oozing sarcasm.

"Is that why you called me?" I asked. "To test your bragging rights?"

Xandou laughed. "No you bitch. I was thinking."

"Well that's dangerous even on your standards." I said, earning a laugh from both of us.

"We're always at school together." He said. "We never get to spend any time, alone. If you want to."

I paused to think. "Xandou Keith Tiraken. Are you asking me out? Like a date?"

"Not like a date. A date." Xandou said. "And I guess I am."

"What do you even wanna do?" I asked. "Swim?"

Xandou laughed. "No. I was thinking we could go roof hopping late on a school night? When I get
"Sorry Xan I can't." I lied. "I've got a test on my katas and my sensei's very strict on punctuality."

"I understand." Xandou said. "My mom was the same. Some other day."

"Yeah." I said. "We'll work something out." I hung up, with ice gnawing my heart. The price to pay for being a superhero, you had to lie with the people who lied with you.


Kimi's POV

I walked down the dock when I saw David talking with Evie and Sirena.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Kimi!" David cried. "You're not gonna believe what I saw. I saw a mermaid! An actual real life mermaid!"

"Are you sure you didn't see a person in a costume?" I asked, trying to lie.

"Exactly!" Sirena said with Evie nodding.

"No." David insisted. "That was no costume. The water was clear as day."

"I'm not so sure I can say the same about your sanity." I said.

"Yukimi I'm not crazy." David said. "Mermaids are real and I'm gonna find more."


In the café…

Thalie's POV

David was rambling about his mermaid sighting.

"What's David going on about?" Xhiva asked me sitting down.

"He saw a mermaid in the water." I said.

"Wow." Raiden said sarcastically. "That's not news to freak out of."

"Raiden." Xhiva said. "What happened?" He asked me.

"I don't know." I said. "But let's not get all upset, I'm sure it was just an accident. It's perfectly normal…"

"Normal?" Xhiva asked, his eyes turning red. "What do you know a fuck about normal? What does anyone in this town know about normal?"

"Xhiva you better back off." Raiden said.

"Dude." Xhiva continued. "We act normal. I wanna be normal! The only normal one here is Cam and he's past puberty!"
"Lucky." Raiden said. "I meant about being normal. And well, so is my brother." Raiden commented.

"For a 16 year old." I said.

"I'm/He's 18." Raiden and Erik said in unison. Xhiva and I stiffened out giggles.

"And you both say you're not brothers." I said.


Zac's POV

In the park…

Evie told me what happened. Turns out that her dad lost his watch, which was a last gift given to him by Evie's late mother.

"We're gonna get the watch back before he gets back." I said. "But we're gonna need help." I sent a text to Diablo, Thalie, and Xhiva.


Raiden's POV

I watched Xhiva and Thalie leave with a smile. I couldn't help but wonder what it was that caused them to go.

"Está bem." (Ok.) Ondina said in Portuguese, sitting next to me. "Nós temos um grande problema." (We've got a major problem.)

"Meu irmão wimped em nadar com você?" (My brother wimped out on swimming with you?) I asked.

Ondina rolled her eyes. "Não. David está dizendo a todos o que viu." (No. David is telling everyone what he saw.)

"Ninguém vai acreditar nele." (No one's gonna believe him.) I said back.

"Eu sei." Ondina said. "Mas ele está chamando a atenção para nós." (But he's drawing attention to us.)

I sighed, not thinking of that part. "Então, o que você acha de fazer?" (So, what do you say we do?)

"Fale com ele." (Talk to him.) Ondina said. "Convencê-lo a deixá-lo cair." (Convince him to drop it.)


Diablo's POV

Me, Thalie, Zac, and Xhiva were all spread out looking for Mr. McLaren's watch. I had transformed into a bottlenose dolphin to use my sonar. It was a very fuzzy so I couldn't really pick up a thing. Xhiva was using his technopathic powers to try to locate the watch. While Thalie and Zac relied on their own mer-stincts. Yes, that's an actual word. We all surfaced to a dry Evie who was waiting for us.
"It's not here." I said transforming back into my regular merman self.

"It's gotta be." Evie said.

"Let's try again." Thalie said diving down with her surrogate brother. The rest of us followed. We searched for about 5 minutes. But nothing. Not even a glint of metal.

We surfaced. "Nothing." Xhiva said.

"The tide's pretty strong so I'm guessing it's been pulled along the marina." Zac theorized.

"Go." Evie said. "I'll meet you all at the café."

10 minutes later…

We were all dry and I kept tugging on my usual orange cap as we went inside the café.

"It's hopeless." Evie said sadly.

"Eves." I said. "Relax. We're gonna find it, and we still have time."

"15 hours at estimate." Xhiva piped up. We walked to the table holding Ondina, Mimmi, and Raiden.

"Don't say anything I feel bad enough." Evie said.

"Don't sweat it." Raiden said, patting her shoulder. "You can always feel like a living hell. It's kind of your own fault after all."

"Raiden." Zac warned. "You're really not helping. Now shut it."

"Don't worry." Ondina said. "Me and Raiden here are taking care of it." The European duo nodded at Erik who then took David to the cool room. Rose went in there too. They came out a few minutes later both Erik and Rose shaking their heads no.


No one's POV

In the park…

Phoebus, Esmeralda, and Rita were walking together. Phoebus was on the left, his wife was on the right and Rita was in the middle.

"I can't believe that someone with a big mouth saw one of us." Esme said fuming.

"You once got tangled in fishing net and a fisherman saw you." Her husband reminded his wife. "You're still lucky that Nerissa found you."

"I was 13." Esme complained.

"I don't think we can stop Sirena from telling David the truth." Rita said. "She's his girlfriend and she hates lying to him."

"She can't." The Greek merman said. "No one can know."

"Maybe Sirena should tell him." Rita said. "He'll keep our secret."
"Oh yeah, like he's keeping one now?" Esme asked sarcastically.

"Cam's known about us for ages and he hasn't said anything." Rita said. "My late husband is another example. And David is way more reliable."

"Land people don't know about us." Phoebus reminded his friend. "Keeping that secret is a merperson's greatest responsibility. It's what's kept us safe for centuries."

"Don't say anything." Esme said. "If everyone keeps quiet, he might forget about it."

Ondina's POV

At the beach...

Unfortunately, my mother could not have been more wrong. David got ridiculed by Carly and Joe, his brother in the café and now David's gone off.

I walked my childhood sweetheart, Erik saying, "Hi."

"Stai cercando contento." (You're looking happy.) He said to me in our common tongue.

"La mia giornata è sempre meglio." (My day just keeps getting better.) I said back sarcastically.

"Sirena vuole raccontare David tutto." (Sirena wants to tell David everything.)

"Non pensi lei, vero?" (You don't think she will, do you?) The Italian former prince asked.

"In questo momento, non so cosa pensare." (Right now, I don't know what to think.) I answered. "Tutto quello che volevo era per ottenere il nostro ritorno a casa. Non avevo idea cosa otterrebbe questo complicato." (All I wanted was to get our home back. I had no idea things would get this complicated.)

We looked out into the sea, when Erik spoke up. "Hai bisogno di respirare." (You need to breathe.) He took my hand which made me a little giddy inside. "Andiamo, le cose andranno meglio quando ti rilassi." (Come on, things will be better when you relax.) I held his hand tighter as we dove into our natural habitat. We raced in the sea, seeing each other. It had been a long time since I had seen my childhood sweetheart. He used to be a little scrawny when he was a kid. But for some strange reason, in all the years that we had been separated, he had gotten a lot muscular, almost like his father. I remember his father had quite a build, not a lot of it, but just enough to be desirable by a lot of people. My father told me that a lot of mermaids flirted with Caesar. But his eyes were only on Persephone. I still remembered the kindness that his mother showed. My mother told me that she has never seen Persephone get mad or yell. Except for one or two times. Whenever she got mad, her motherly rage could equal a mad mother dragon. Now, when I saw Erik, I couldn't help but giggle inside. Erik had gone from adorkable to dashing.

Erik's POV

As we played tag, I couldn't help but smile at how much she had grown. She had also been scrawny with those adorable freckles lining every inch of her face. She was cute back then but now she was exotic just like her name. The sun caught in her golden curly hair, the light captured in her eyes, it just made my hormones fly, and I was already past puberty. But strangely, when I first met her when I was 6, I had developed a crush on her. Man Dad would never let me hear the end of it. He used to make me sit through his stories about him and Mom. Though Mom would pay him back by telling me and Raiden embarrassing stories about Dad as a teenager. Ondina made me smile and just the
thought of her being dead almost killed me. Raiden was the only thing keeping me going through all these years, even on the streets and in that horrible Ares Tribe, so named because of it's brutality.

I couldn't let Ondina find out I was raised by the one thing she hates. She would leave me forever. Or worse hate me. But then, I had to get information out of her on Mako Island. It was one of the faster ways to complete this mission. Believe me, I have made friends with mermaids to get information. Like Mimmi for example. I was torn. I couldn't let down all those mermen, but at the same time, I couldn't let Ondina find out.


Kimi's POV

I walked up to the roof, carrying ice water. No, not that kind of water. Water that was really cold. I handed one to Sirena saying, "Once upon a time, getting a drink was just about getting a drink. Now it's about not getting wet."

"When I used to live in the pod, I never had to lie." Sirena said. "Here I do it all the time."

I sighed in contempt. "I know. I hate keeping things from my 10 year old brother. It just makes everything so awkward."

"Do you think you'll ever tell him?" Sirena asked me.

"Sometimes I want to." I answered. "But then I think about everything I put at risk if I did. Do you think you'll tell David?"

"I'm sure we can trust him." Sirena explained. "He cares about me, he'd never do anything to put me in danger."

"Do you really know him that well?" I warned. "I'm just saying, what if he can't help himself?"


Phoebus' POV

I sat with my beautiful wife in the teen's hangout. It had been the first time I went there. I was looking through the menu thinking on the job I had gotten here. Oh you thought my knowledge was just magic did you? I voted to stay here for about 2 or 3 years. I had gotten a job as a math teacher at a middle school.

I heard the chairs move and I looked up to see Rita's daughter and….JACOB?! My breathing hitched as I saw a shadow of one of my best friends.

"Is that who I think it is?" I whispered to my wife.

"At first I thought it was." She replied back. "And no, that is Zac, and no, not Zac his son. At least I don't think he is."

"Can you two stop whispering?" Thalie asked. "You kind of look conspicuous."

"And my sister says that I'm a bad liar." Zac agreed.

I raised an eyebrow. "Your sister?"

"We're foster siblings." Zac explained sitting down.
"So." Thalassa said. "Welcome to the Ocean Café."

"Looks pretty nice." I said. "Back in Europe, the café's are a little less high tech."

"So how are you a math teacher if you're a, you know what?" Zac asked.

I cleared my throat as I began to explain my origin. "Unlike most…men like me, I was born in a city. Athens to be specific. My parents divorced when I was 3. I did receive an education in my heritage, but I was then discovered to be a math whiz. After I graduated high school, I set off on my own with my friends. We had quite some adventures. I swear Zac, you look just like one of my friends. A clone actually. It's terrifying actually." We all just chuckled. "I met Esmeralda at Carnival in Brazil when I was 16. 5 years later, I married her in Notre Dame Cathedral. A few months later, Ondina came into the world and I guess you guys know the story later on."

"Sounds like you and your friends were really close." Thalassa said kindly. I smiled knowing the truth. I missed my friends dearly. My best friend died 10 years ago when his sons were just kids. And Mimmi's father had been missing for the last 15 years. Persephone was missing as well. And Nerissa, she also had an untimely death.

"I'm gonna prove that mermaids are real." We all heard David announce to a blond waitress.

That took the quartet by surprise and alarm. David explained his purchase of a high tech briefcase with underwater cameras, that transmit real time images back to the briefcase computer.

"That looks like a pretty expensive set up." Phoebus said. "Are you sure that you can afford that?"

"If I can get a picture of a mermaid, it'll be worth it." David said. The quartet looked at each other worriedly. Thalassa left the café to search for the others, and to make sure that they were all accounted for.

"No chance of getting your dad's watch back now." Zac whispered to his girlfriend, who was now sitting with us. "Not without ending up on the internet."

"Dad's gonna still be expecting me to dive with him to get it back." Evie said.

"What if you tell him that you've developed an allergy to seawater." Esmeralda suggested. "And you can't dive?" The two teens looked at my wife with a "seriously?" look. "Well I don't hear you guys coming up with anything."

Just then, my godson Raiden came in. "Good, you're here." Evie said. "Where's your brother?"

"Why?" He asked.

"David's trying to get a picture of the mermaid." Evie said. "He's set up a whole bunch of underwater cameras."

"He went swimming with Dinie." He explained, worried.

My blood ran cold. My own daughter was out there, unaware of the danger that was upon us. Looking at Raiden in the eye, I asked, "Where?"

Raiden looked behind me and pointed, "There!" We jumped up to see Erik and Ondina appearing to have a mental conversation. If there weren't cameras, I would be a little bit in father protective mode.

"It's all in the memory card." Esme said. "We're blown."
"Does anyone know where Xhiva is?" Zac asked.

"No time." I said to him. David tried to move past us to get a look at the cameras, but to his misfortune, there was nothing. When he left, Raiden was smiling in triumph, holding the fried memory card.

"No one goes in the water until we sort this out." He said, in a very leader voice. "As of now, we are on official lockdown." I had never seen Raiden act like a responsible leader. Apparently he did it, when it was up to him.

"But where are we gonna sleep?" My goddaughter asked.

The next morning…

I woke up in Rita's entrance pool. It was a bit tight but sleeping right next to my wife was worth it. I had longed for all these moons to see my beautiful wife, I remembered how the love of my life captivated me in Carnival, with her gypsy dancing, so flawlessly. Slinking an arm around her tail, I placed a small chastise kiss on her neck.

She moaned waking up. She opened her eyelids and she let me see her mesmerizing bright emerald green eyes. "Nice alarm clock." She said. "Kissing me."

I chuckled. "Eh bien, je l'ai vu comme un moyen idéal pour obtenir ma femme parfaite mise en place." (Well I just saw it as a perfect way to get my perfect wife up.)

She laughed, blushing a bit. "Même si vous avez récupéré de votre perte de mémoire, vous êtes encore tout à fait le flirt." (Even if you have recovered from your loss of memory, you're still quite the flirt.)

I laughed. "Vous savez que je suis plus que cela." (You know I'm more than that.)

"Vous aviez raison." (You're right.) Esmeralda said. "Vous n'êtes pas juste un flirt. Tu es mon flirt d'un mari. (You're not just a flirt. You're my flirt of a husband.) Unable to resist, I pulled her closer to me and we embraced in a passionate kiss. As we broke away, she asked in Italian, "Sei sicuro che non avremmo potuto appena preso i bambini al Lair?" (Are you sure we couldn't have just taken the kids to the Lair?)

I chuckled. "Ho appena Visita il loro dolore di dormire in gambe come una esperienza di apprendimento." (I just view their pain of sleeping in legs as a learning experience.)

Right on cue, Ondina came in and asked, "E per "esperienza di apprendimento", vuoi dire tortura?" (And by "learning experience", you mean torture?)

We all laughed. "You know what I say about learning Ondina." I said, hearing Esmeralda, go "good grief." I cleared my throat so I could have the attention. "He/I believe/s in learning on the job." Me and my wife said in unison. I looked at her pouting.

"What?" My wife asked. "Your father used to say that all the time." She said to Ondina who laughed and left. I scowled in embarrassment. "Remember the time Nerissa tried a human bed for the first time and she complained through the day?"

"Yeah." I said, grimacing back to the memory. "If Nerissa were here, she would kill you for that. I still remember her saying, "When we find my moon ring, remind me to kill you!""
Erik’s POV

At the café…

I started working at my shift when I saw Zac, my brother, Cam, and Diablo come in. The Latino merman had called us in for a meeting. He said we needed to talk about David knowing that our kind's existence. Well not genderly, specific. I walked to the table where the other boys were sitting.

"We have to put a stop to David." My brother said in a leader voice I rarely heard him use. I felt pride in my chest for hearing my brother talk like that. "Before it's too late. We need a plan and fast."

"Anyone got one?" Zac asked.

"I've been thinking…" Diablo said before being cut off.

"Forget it Diablo." I said. "There is no way you are talking us into another one of your idiotic schemes."

"His plans don't go well?" Cam asked me.

"They always either end up in someone getting a tail or something blows up." I warned him.

"Amigos." Diablo said. "Unlike most of my so called, idiotic schemes, this is one that's gonna work."

"Let's hear it then." Zac said.

"David wants to see a mermaid right?" Diablo asked. "So, why don't we, show him a mermaid?"

"And where are we gonna find that?" Cam asked. "Dress up some sorry sucker in a mermaid costume?" I looked at my brother and Zac and we each shared a strikingly identical mischievous smile that screamed, "uh oh."

"Why are you three looking at me like that?" He asked. I just wiggled my eyebrows.

Later that day…

I was on my way to meet Ondina. I couldn't help but chuckle at how ridiculous Cam looked in his mermaid costume. Raiden told me in our native tongue that he was going to require years of therapy after seeing that. I looked around and I saw Ondina sitting in the park bench. I joined her, wrapping my arm around her torso.

"Eu ainda não posso acreditar que você tirou isso fora." (I still can't believe you pulled that off.) Ondina said to me in Portuguese smiling.

I chuckled. "O mundo está cheio de muitas surpresas." (The world is full of many surprises.) I said back. "Há muita coisa sobre nós que ainda não sabemos, é melhor manter a mente aberta." (There's a lot about us that even we don't know, it's best to keep an open mind.)

Ondina flashed her gorgeous smile at me. "Talvez um dia você e Raiden vai encontrar a sua mãe." (Perhaps one day you and Raiden will find your mother.)
"Espero que você esteja comigo quando eu faço." (I hope you're with me when I do.) I said to her.

"Eu acho que há uma boa chance de eu serei." (I think there's a good chance I will be.) And without warning, Ondina pulled me in for our first kiss. It felt…magical. There was no other way to describe it. I loved her, and I would do anything to protect her.

Even if it meant keeping the truth from her.
Thalie's POV

I walked to my foster home, carrying my school stuff for that day. I knocked on the door to be greeted by my foster mother.

"Thalassa." Lauren said. "You know when we said you could stop anytime, we also said you could just walk in. This is still your home if you want it to be."

"I know Lauren." I said smiling. "But still, it's polite to knock."

She chuckled. "Come in." I walked in through the front door of the Blakely's. Not much had changed in the house.

"Where's Zac?" I asked, noticing he wasn't there.

"He's in his room." Rob said from behind me. "And it's good to see you."

"It's nice to see you again." I said.

"Would you like breakfast?" Lauren asked.

"No." I said, walking out of the house to the backyard to Zac's garage. I knocked on the door to get, "It's open."

I opened the door to see my foster brother working on his laptop. "You said you would be ready." I said.

"I'm just finishing my English assignment." He said.

"Uh." I said. "You've had a whole week to do that."

"I know." Zac said. "I work better when I'm panicking."

"Well, you might wanna hurry up." I said, checking my watch. "Me, Evie, and my mom have this meeting with the new director of the marine park."

"What for?" Zac asked.

"Mom's persuaded him to sponsor a new marine biology elective." I explained. "Evie's writing an article, encouraging students to sign up."

"And you're there because?" Zac asked me.

"Mom wants me to go because she said I should." I put my fingers up, making quote marks. "Represent the student body."

"Good luck surviving that." Zac said sarcastically. I gave him a little glare. "I am done." Zac closed his laptop and got ready. "Any ideas what this guy's like?"

"Judging from the number of degrees he's got, he's probably a trazillion years old." I said.

"Trazillion." Zac groaned. "Is not a real number."
I mock scoffed. "Is too. The International numbers league just declared it."

"And that is not a real group." Zac said.

"Is too." I retorted. "The international leagues League just declared it...just now." With Zac laughing and ruffling my hair, we trekked to Suncoast High School. I wanted to bring up the superheroes mentioned in the news the other week, but I decided to lay low. It would only be a matter of time before Zac would get suspicious. That and figure out our identities.


At Suncoast high school...

We arrived at our destination without any problems. I went to my mom and Evie who were being greeted by this middle aged man.

"Ah." He said. "So this must be your daughter. I can certainly see the family resemblance."

I shook his hand. "Hi." I said. "I'm Thalie. It's nice to meet you."

"It's a real pleasure to meet you and your mother." He said. "I'm Dr. Ross."

"This is Evie." My mom said. "She'll be writing an article on the program."

"Sorry guys." David arrived. "I had to charge the batteries and then I forgot to put them in."

"Good day." Dr. Ross greeted.

"This is going to be so great Dr. Ross." Evie said excited. "I cannot wait until next term."

"And neither can I." Dr. Ross said. "Principal Santos, why don't you bring the students for a tour this term? Break the ice so to speak?"

"When did you have in mind?" My mom asked.

"How about tomorrow?" Dr. Ross asked.

"That's very short noticed." Mom said, confused.

"I'm sure the students won't mind." He said.

"Try and keep us away." I said proudly.

"Alright." My mom said. "Let's head to my office and we'll sort out the details."


At Mako Island…

In Esmeralda's POV

We surfaced in the moon pool, gathering the seaweed needed for our potion.

"Vous jamais dit que ce serait si difficile à trouver." (You never said this would be so hard to find.) Sirena said to me in French. Over the years I spent in the Mako Pod, I had the privilege of teaching European languages to the mermaids. Sirena just happened to be one of them.
"Je suppose qu’il est moins fréquente dans les océans Pacifique." (I guess it's less common in Pacific oceans.) I said.

"Je l'espère, nous avons assez." (I hope we have enough.) Sirena said.

"Devrait y avoir beaucoup." (Should be plenty.) I said. "Maintenant, tout ce dont nous avons besoin est l'ingrédient secret : l'extrait de méduses." (Now all we need is the secret ingredient: Jellyfish extract.)

"Et ... où allons-nous obtenir?" (And...where are we going to get that?) Sirena asked.

"Nous trayons méduses bien sûr." (We milk jellyfish of course.) I said.

Sirena looked like she was going to scream. "Mais elles piquent!" (But they sting!)

I smiled deviously. "Voilà la partie amusante." (That's the fun part.) And we took off, with Sirena looking like a deer in headlights.


Thalie's POV

We kept walking, with me making sure no one got wet, Evie was making sure that she got as much information as possible. But things got a little tight for me when Dr. Ross showed signs of him being interested in my mom. I kept my eye on him at all of the times we were together.


The next morning

In the grotto…

That day was the day that Dr. Ross was going to show us the tour of the marine park. I wore a green and white tanktop, jeans and flip flops. I had my hair in a pony tail.

"Looks like you girls have been busy." My mom said, putting on one of her earrings. Me getting my ears pierced? Forget it!

"We made skin lotion." Sirena said pointing to the green goup in the bowl.

"It's an Irish mermaid recipe." Esmeralda said proudly.

"You've been to Ireland, Greece, Portugal, and Italy?" I asked.

Behind me, Phoebus laughed good heartedly, patting my back. "Don't be ridiculous." He said. "We've been all over the world!"

Ondina groaned. "Daaaad! Not more ancient history!"

"Ondina." Esmeralda said. "I will tell you this: One day, you're going to be thanking me and your father for boring you with ancient history."

"Mother!" Ondina exclaimed. "Must you do this?"

"It's a parent thing." Rita said smiling. "One day maybe you will do it. I am going to be outside all morning at the marine park, maybe I should try some." She got a bit on her hands and rubbed them
"You want some?" Mimmi asked.

"No I'm good thanks." I said.

"Mimmi." Phoebus said. 'You ready?"

"Yes." She nodded excitedly.

"Where are you going?" Ondina asked.

"My godfather is taking me to go shopping." Mimmi explained.

"I could show her the kelp vines." Phoebus said. That means, show her the ropes, in mermaid slang.

"Have a good time elsker." (A.N FYI, elsker is Norwegian for "Love") Esmeralda said, walking up to him and the two mer adults giving each other a quick kiss. "Oh and Phoeb? Please try not to make a scene."

Her husband groaned. "Lose a mermaid who doesn't know anything about land one time, and you just can't let it go, can you?"

"Hmm let me think." Esme said in mock puzzlement. "No, I won't."

"Let's go, Tio Phoebus." Mimmi said, bursting with excitement.

He sighed with contempt. "Alright Mimmi."

"And remember, don't eat the scallops!" Ondina said.

"Alright!" He said. "Alright!"

"I repeat." Ondina said. "Do not eat the scallops!"

"I'm going." Phoebus said. Outside of the closing grotto door, Mimmi asked her godfather, "You're gonna eat the scallops aren't you?"

"Yes." He quickly answered. Mimmi could only roll her eyes. She hadn't known her godfather for long, yet he felt like family to her, just as Esme had been.

"This is lovely." My mom said. "Well done girls. Clean up while I'm gone. Thalassa, come on."

"Bye." I said, leaving the grotto.

"You sure you don't want to try some?" Esme asked teasingly.

"How could I possibly put this without breaking my own mother's heart?" Ondina said sarcastically. In response, Esmeralda lightly tapped her daughter's nose with her brush that was still filled with moisturizer.

"Aww." She cooed. "You look younger already!"


At the marine park…
All of us arrived at said destination. The juniors and sophomores were split up into two groups. Dr. Ross' friend, Dr. Rao led the sophomore class to the inside aquarium museum. As we peered at the fish swimming inside, Helen came beside me with Rose.

"Now I know what they feel like." Helen said.

"Being in a tank?" Rose asked.

"No." She said. "I meant when they're swimming."

"Hey where's Kimi?" I asked.

"Over there, talking with some guy." Rose pointed. Kimi was standing at some aquarium talking with a guy.

"Ok, so she's having a conversation with some guy." I said nonchalantly.

"Apparently, someone's not taking a liking to it." Helen pointed to a very stiff Xhiva standing at the tank next to us. His fists were clenched and his eyes were flickering from their normal reddish-brown to a glowing red.

"Someone's peanut butter jealous!" Rose sing songed.

"I've heard of that guy." I said, getting a good look at the guy. "He's Dr. Ross' nephew. He's the most obnoxious boy I've ever met. He had him waiting at his office. I think Raiden was close to electrocuting him."

"Why was Raiden there?" Helen asked.

"He got into trouble again." I said.

Esmeralda's POV

"Y at-il une recette irlandaise ou française pour se débarrasser des algues tache?" (Is there an Irish or French recipe for getting rid of seaweed stain?) Sirena asked as we were scrubbing the stain.

"Je sais quelque chose de l'Autriche qui permettrait de se débarrasser de la table." (I know something from Austria that would get rid of the table.) I said jokingly.

"Quelque chose me dit que Rita ou Thalie seraient pas apprécier cela." (Something tells me that Rita or Thalie would not appreciate that.) Sirena said. Behind me, Ondina made the creepiest giggle I have ever heard. "Wasn't that funny." Ondina continued laughing like she was high on vodka.

"You know." I said. "Instead of laughing, you could actually help."

"I didn't make the mess." Ondina said in a childish tone. "So there." She finished with a raspberry. She got up and looked for something.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Not telling." Ondina said, sticking out her tongue.

"Ondina?" Sirena asked, baffled.
"No!" Ondina yelled throwing out stuff. "I can't find it!"

Xhiva's POV

As I watched the fish swim in the tanks, I couldn't help but feel jealous at the moment. Of all the things I wanted to do during any day was swim. Hey, the sea is my home. Well, part time anyway. Me and my siblings used to have competitions. Those fish have what I don't: Freedom. I've never had the chance to be out there on my own until now. Now I have a chance to be... a normal kid. All I've wanted was to be just like everyone else. I had to try to be my own person before it's too late. I heard some giggling behind me. I turned around and saw Kimi talking with some pompous boy. Apparently he made some joke. My fists clenched as I saw people talking with one another. Xandou and the rest of the Blade boys were the only friends I had. When my sister left, it was hard because Xandou was the only one there for me. My whole life, it seemed I was destined to be the kid who was too smart for his own age. Xandou wasn't there.

"Hey." I heard Raiden walk beside me before speaking in Latin. "Quid facitis quod sola pisces maris? Continet intentum." (What are you doing being a lonely fish in the sea? Pun intended)

"Sum denique." (I'm fine.) I said in Latin. "Indica mihi Raiden, quid a me ad iracundiam provocaveritis merboy similis tui faciens in marinum parco?" (Tell me Raiden, what's a rebel merboy like yourself doing in a marine park?)

"Mea mater Gallina fratris fecit me venire." (My mother hen of a brother made me come.) Raiden said. "Bisaraha." (Arabic for "honestly.)

My ears perked up hearing the Arabic word. "You speak Arabic?" I asked in English.

"Yep." The Italian merman said proudly. "Me and Erik lived in Jeddah for about 18 months... on the streets."

"At least you had freedom." I said sadly. "And got to make your own choices."

Raiden scoffed. "You're complaining? You weren't the one who had to go hungry for weeks sometimes! You weren't the one who dodged the police when you stole only a loaf of bread. You don't know what it's like to stare at the rich houses and know you deserve more. To be called, "street rat.""

I sighed. I never realized that the Consorzio brothers were once living on the streets in one of the most dangerous cities. "I guess you're right. And I don't even speak Arabic. But why are you really here?"

"Because tech kid." Raiden's voice took an impersonation of Jack Nicolson. "If you wanna court the little lady you gotta be a straight shooter do you got it?"

"What?" I asked.

"I'm here to help you with your little chick problem." Raiden explained.

"I don't have one." I said. "I'm perfectly fine."

Raiden coughed and I swear to this day I heard, "Denial." "Xhiva, that guy is no good for her. I've seen obnoxious boys but he's close to that Achmed jerk we once encountered in our time in Arabia."
"I'm not jealous!" I tried to cover up.

Raiden slapped his forehead. "By Allah, Xhiva. I've seen you look at her. You're totally into her."

"Well yeah." I said. "She's smart, cool, confident, and nice."

"C'est l'amour." Raiden said.

"Please tell me you're not gonna lecture me on girls." I groaned.

"I wasn't going to but that is a great idea!" Raiden said. I could only pray to God that I would survive this one as he dragged me to the boys bathroom.

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Esmeralda's POV

I watched with confusion as my 17 year old daughter with the mind of a 10 year old dance her way dressed up through the grotto.

"Ondina!" Sirena said stopping her. "Are you alright?"

"I'm not Ondina." She said. "I'm Princess Ondina. Ruler of all the seas in all the world. And I proclaim you my handmaidens. Esmeralda and Sirena." She tapped us with a brass spoon.

"Why is she acting…"

"Silence!" Ondina cut Sirena off. She pointed to her. "You will brush my hair and you will rub my feet."

I scoffed. I may be her mother, but there was no way in Hell I was her servant. "No I won't."

"Obey," Ondina said. "Or I'll scream." I paled, fear rushing through my body as I remembered those horrible times.

"Go." I put my hands over Sirena's mouth.

"We'll do what you say." I said. "You really don't want to hear her scream. Trust me."

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Thalie's POV

My friends were with me watching the dolphins when I got a phone call from my brother. "Be right back." I said, going to the corner. "What's up?" I answered.

"Uh, Thals?" A very hesitant Zac spoke. "You…kind of need to get here."

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"Uh…." Zac's voice said. "How do I make this not sound awkward?"

"Make what sound awkward?" I asked. "Zac Blakely what's going on?"

"Look Thalie just get over here." Zac said.

"Where are you?" I asked.
"At the kids park." He said.

"Why would you be at a kids park?" I asked confused.

"The kid part is part of the problem." He said, hanging up. I rolled my eyes and I went to my friends to tell them where I was going and I left, not aware of the weirdness that was to come.

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Esmeralda's POV

I rubbed the ever stinky feet of my daughter. I'm sorry but it was completely true. Apparently she inherited her grandfather's stinky feet. Accodring to my husband, his father had pretty bad trout smelling feet.

"Your hands are dry." I looked up to my daughter. "Use some of my lotion."

I scoffed. "Your lotion?"

"Yes." She said. "My lotion."

"I don't think so missy." I countered.

"A handmaiden does not contradict a princess." Ondina said.

"Ok maybe I let her spend a little too much time around Erik." I muttered. "If it's you're lotion, when'dya make it?"

"Last night." Onidna explained. "I used up all of yours so I made more. See? You're wrong and I'm right."

My heart was beating in my chest. I hoped it didn't mean what it meant. "Ondina." I warned.

"Say it properly!" Ondina said. "Princess Ondina of all the seas."

"Princess Ondina of all the seas." I said, with Sirena mocking her in the back. I had to summon every ounce of restraint I could muster, just to keep from laughing.

"Yes?" She asked.

"When you made your lotion, did you use this?" I gestured to the vial of jellyfish extract.

"Don't remember." She quickly said.

"Try." I beckoned her.

Ondna took a moment before saying, "I might have."

"How much?" I asked.

"I'll tell you." Ondina smiled cunningly. "If you catch me first!" She tried to run but Sirena caught her.

"How much?" I asked one more time.

" Lots!" Ondina exclaimed before bouncing away.
"I think I get it." I said, finally realizing the situation.

"When I get it, I'm not gonna like it am I?" Sirena asked.

"If you use too much jellyfish extract." I explained. "It doesn't just make you look younger, it could make you act younger."

"Is she gonna be like this forever?" Sirena asked.

"It's hard to say." I said before understanding the dangers now. "Sirena, Rita used some!"

"I'll stay with Ondina, you go and save Rita." Sirena said.

"No I'll stay you go." I said.

"You sure you can handle this?" Sirena asked.

"I raised Mimmi and Ondina together." I said. "I can handle anything."

Thalie's POV

I walked to the kids park noticing the juniors tour group. I moved closer to my friends and my brother to listen to what they were saying.

"Now I'm really worried." Cam said.

"Of course you're worried." Evie said. "It's not like her to act like this."

"No." Cam said. "I meant about how much Thalie is gonna freak."

"I'm gonna freak about what?" I asked. All heads of the quartet turned to me. "OK. I'm here. What's the problem?"

Erik grabbed me and pointed to my mom. "That's the problem!" My eyes widened in horror as I watched my mother act like an extra hyperactive child.

"Ok. I see your point." I whispered to Erik who in turn, nodded in agreement. I walked with the junior tour, just to keep an eye on my very high mother. Seeing my mom act not her age? Kind of… disturbing. Before I even knew it, my mom was gone. Cam, my brother, Erik, Evie and I went to the side to talk.

"Hey Santos." Cam said. "You wanna tell me what's going on?"

"Don't ask me." I said. "All I know is that my mom's literally not gonna control herself."

"Did she eat something?" Evie asked. "Did she use anything that was bad?"

I nodded. "Yes she used…hold the phone." I got out said device and dialed Esmeralda's number. "Esme." I spoke. "I know you're a little busy right now but do you know why my mother is acting like a child?...yes she used the lotion I saw her use it…What do you mean Ondina screwed it?…Oh. Is there any way to reverse it?...What do you mean you…oh forget it."

"What's going on?" Zac asked.
"My mom used this moisturizing lotion that's supposed to make you look younger but because
Ondina messed it up it's making the user act younger." I explained.

"Well then it's clear what we have to do." Erik said in a brave tone of voice. "Thalie, Evie and Zac.
You 3 will go find Rita. I'll be here with Cam, keeping the distraction."

"Let's go." I said, taking off with the others to find my mother. I had never heard Erik talk like that. It
was like he was born a leader. Well he kind of was. He is or was a crown prince of a mer clan.

"Zac." Evie said. "If you were your step-mother, where would you be?"

"Umm." He said thinking. "Knowing her by now she would probably go somewhere that reminds
her of the sea to calm her down. But she wouldn't be that naive to go in a pool in public…would
she?"

"The rocket ride." I said. "She liked the rocket ride." We raced to said destination and we didn't find
any trace of her.

"Can you use your moon ring to track her?" Evie asked me.

"What's the cardinal rule of being a mermaid on land?" I reminded her. The rule was this: Always
restrain from using your powers in open spaces and without the option of a door. Even when you're
wet.

"Where's Rita?" We heard Sirena behind us. "We need to get her out of here."

"I know." Zac said. "She's been acting like a child. And I know why."

As we left the kids park to search for my mom, I said out loud, "I just hope that Esmeralda's having
more fun than we are."

More ironic words had never been spoken.

Esmeralda's POV

If you thought I was having fun playing parent, you were sadly mistaken. I loved being a mother and
I love my daughter, but having the mind of a child inside of a teenager? Not the kind of parenting I
had signed up for when I got pregnant.

"Where's handmaiden Sirena?" I heard her ask, entering the grotto. "She hasn't finished brushing my
hair."

"She had to go and get something." I lied. "A surprise." One thing I could not teach Mimmi no
matter how hard I tried, was good lying skills. But it's not really her fault. I still kind of blame her
father.

"I love surprises!" She exclaimed. "What is it?"

"Silly Ondina." I said. "If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise, would it?"

"You're very clever handmaiden Esmeralda." She said. "But you're not very beautiful." If she wasn't
under the influence of too much of the extract, I think I probably would have grounded her. "I'm
going to put lotion on you."
"Wouldn't you rather play a game princess?" I asked.

"Yes." She said. "But I can't play with you."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because." Ondina said. "You're not dressed properly. Put this on." She shoved in my arms an ugly pink dress.

"Princess." I warned.

"Put it on or I'll scream." Ondina said thorough. Looking at her, I wondered where she got this nature from. She wasn't as spoiled when she was an actual child.

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Thalie's POV

We walked about every nook and cranny about the marine park. But so far, nothing.

"This place is huge." Zac said. "We're never gonna find her."

"Don't give up Zac." Evie said to my surrogate brother.

I then heard some dolphins clicking. I stopped to translate in my head. "Wait." I said. I then got the message clear. There was a dolphin having a very friendly conversation with my mom. "There!" I pointed to the direction. We ran to my mom who seemed to be enjoying herself very, very much.

"Rita!" Zac whispered to his stepmother.

"Hey!" She exclaimed in a childish voice. "This is my friend Heidi. But her real name is…" She finished with a dolphin click that translates to Leah. Leah dived down under the water with Mom waving her off.

"Mom." I said. "Get out of the pool."

"No." She laughed.

"Rita please." Sirena pleaded.

"Catch me!" She dived down.

"We're gonna have to go in." I said.

"What else can we do?" Sirena asked. Mom came back up and stuck her tongue out. But then she blinked her eyes as if she was waking up from sleeping.

"What am I doing in here?" She asked in her normal voice. She looked down and realized that she had a tail. "Oh no."

"The jellyfish extract must have worn off." Sirena noted.

"Quick, get out before someone sees you!" Zac said.

"Dr. Ross said he was coming to the dolphin tank after the aquarium." I said.

"I'll go." Evie took off. I used my moon ring to make all of us invisible to those who saw us. We had
successfully got my mom dried.

"What happened?" She asked. I quickly explained to her what happened and boy was she mortified. We walked to the dolphin aquarium where Heidi/Leah performed amazing tricks with boundless confidence. Both classes were star struck. Next to me, I saw Xhiva talking with Kimi, both looking like scientists and friends at the same time.

"So." I asked Raiden who was right beside me. "How did it go between them?"

Raiden only laughed. "It went like this."

Flashback…

No one's POV

"So what are you really doing?" Xhiva asked Raiden.

"You see." Raiden began to explain. "Girls. They're a very confusing species. They operate on strategy. So in order to get one, you need to understand them. First Kimi's personality, then her looks. You've already explained her personality and her looks now you need to just try to be nice and a friend. And not a nerd."

"Raiden." The Hindi merman said to the Italian merman. "If Kimi didn't get some of my nerd suave, she'd laugh at me."

"A woman appreciates a man who can make her laugh." Raiden said smiling. "Xhiva, all joking aside, you need to be yourself."

"Ok." Xhiva straightened up. "I gotta be cool, smooth, suave." He fixed his hair, by ruffling it, and put away his glasses.

"Don't fuck it up." Raiden said, leaving the boys bathroom. Xhiva went outside to talk to some people when he saw Jessica being chased by Hartley, Dr. Ross' nephew.

"Stay away from me!" She exclaimed.

"But sweetheart…" Hartley said slurring. Obviously he was drunk. "Don't you want to have some fun?" He then made the grave mistake by grabbing the poor girl's butt. Red filled Xhiva's vision as his eyes glowed a bright red and he ran to the pervert and knocked the living daylights out of the human. He continued doing so until a hand grabbed his fist. His glowing red eyes met Kimi's cyan eyes. She was mad alright. She was mad that that Xhiva couldn't control his rage.

"What are you doing?" Kimi asked, her cyan eyes turning back to light brown.

"I…" Xhiva said.

"Let's talk." Yukimi led the technopathic merman to a nearby closet. Closing the door, she began to speak. "Xhiva Tiraken. What in God's green one are you doing?"

"Kimi, I… just got mad and felt that the guy deserved it." Xhiva said quickly.

"Xhiva I understand what you're trying to do." Kimi said. "You want to help people but like it or not, you're just like your brother. You both have aggressive strength and what makes you two different, is that you contain it so much, it pops out like a soda bottle."

"That's what I do." Xhiva said. "I keep my emotions under lock and key."
"That's really not the way to go." Kimi said. "Xhiva, you can't keep pushing people away like your brother." She took his hands and looked him in his reddish brown eyes. "Let me help you. I guess you don't really have that many friends."

"Not since my sister left I've never had any female friends." Xhiva admitted.

"What happened to your sister?" Kimi asked quietly.

Xhiva took a few breaths before saying, "She left without saying goodbye."

"I'm so sorry." She said, cupping his face, which made Xhiva blush a little. He was growing accustomed to having a great friend like Yukimi Hamasaki.

"Let's start over shall we?" He asked. The two Asian scientists spent the rest of the tour looking at the aquarium as the tour guide led them on.

Yukimi couldn't help but feel safe in Xhiva's presence. To her, Xhiva may have been an uber nerd, with a bit of a temper flare, but he was also a kind boy who just needed a boost in his self esteem. Her heart began to flutter whenever she saw him. She began to feel like a true friend to Xhiva after all the time that they have spent together.

Xhiva couldn't help but feel happy when he was around Yukimi. To him, Yukimi may have been a biologist in training, with icy powers and an icy sass streak to go with it, but she was also an uncommonly clever girl who always found a solution to any problem. She was also a girl who understood just how he felt when he was in school. Intelligence can sometimes be a curse. They didn't ask to be born the way they were born, but there was nothing they could do about it, except be the close friend that they were. It had only been almost a month since they met, but he felt drawn to her. With new friends in a new environment compared to the one he had been raised in, he felt… free.

End of flashback…

"And that's pretty much it." Raiden finished the story. I could only laugh.

"Raiden what are you now, matchmaker?" I asked.

He just laughed. "No I'm just that cool."

I scoffed. "Talk about ego."

He shrugged. "Eh it runs in the family."

As we boarded the bus, we sat in the same seat. Xhiva and Kimi did as well. When their hands inadvertently landed on each other, a small spark came between them. Kimi fell asleep on Xhiva shoulder and Xhiva caressed her arm, smiling.


Esmeralda's POV

I did some game with Ondina but then she got tired.

"Oh I'm hot I'm going for a swim." She said, moving but I stopped her.

"No Princess." I said. "It is time for your nap."
"But I don't wanna nap." Ondina whined. "I wanna swim!"

"The water's too cold." I said. "You'll get a chill."

Turning around, Ondina made her way to the table. "If you let me go…you can have some of my lotion." She turned around slowly walking towards me like a predator stalking it's prey, but with messed up lotion.

"No thank you Princess." I said politely.

But Ondina resisted me. "But it'll make you beautiful." She coaxed.

"No I don't want any." I fell onto the couch before I knew it.

"Why not?" Ondina asked. "What's wrong with it?"

"Nothing." In a flash, Ondina painted the brush on my nose with the lotion.

"Now you'll be beautiful."

I couldn't believe I was defeated by my own child. My flesh and blood. Before my vision began to haze, I couldn't help but think of one word: SHIT.

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Out of the grotto…

"Today could have been the end of us." Rita scolded her students walking down the hall. "You girls need to be more careful with your potions."

"I'm really sorry." Sirena said.

"Don't sweat it Sirena." Thalie said. "At least no one saw a tail."

"But what about those pictures David took?" Zac asked worried.

"I just told him Rita and I had set them up." Evie explained. "To show how much fun learning can be."

"Hey guys." They all turned around to see a smiling Mimmi and a very guilty looking Phoebus.

"You ate the scallops again didn't you?" Rita asked shaking her head.

"Yes." He said.

"You never change do you?" Rita asked.

"I eat our dinner because I was desperate, one time people." Phoebus whinned.

"Don't blame him." Mimmi said. "My goddaddy has shown me all sorts of wonderful things, like elevators and…"

"Ok." He said, putting a hand on her shoulder. "Take a deep breath."

Mimmi did so and asked. "So did anything…happen while I was gone?"
The rest of us laughed. "You could say that." Zac said prompting more laughter.

Sighing, Thalie put a hand on her forehead, leaning against the wall. "Guys, I know I'm probably gonna regret asking this, but can this day get any weirder?"

"Let's find out shall we?" Evie asked pulling the secret lever. The door opened to reveal an empty all but voices carried out. Childlike voices that were speaking Portuguese. To translate, they were fighting over who was going to be the princess.

"Should I have asked?" Thalie asked paling. They all went down to see the Portuguese women arguing in said language.

"Do I wanna know what they are saying?" Evie asked.

"To be honest, it's actually better if you don't know." Phoebus said, shaking a little. "My wife cursing I can expect but my daughter?"

"Let's let the ladies solve this one." Rita said. "It'll wear off anyway. Anyone for tea?"

As the group was chilling, Thalie spoke up. "This has to be the weirdest day of my life."

"It could be worse." Sirena said. "We could have heard Ondina scream."

Mimmi and Phoebus took looks of horror. "I hope not." Mimmi said.

"Her tantrums could rival even a banshee's wail." Phoebus said, gesturing to his ear on the next part. "I've still got a few ringing in here."

The rest of the day ended with nothing weird going on except for the Portuguese duo being absolutely mortified.

Thalie lay in her bed, saying to herself.

"What a day. That was wild."
A Trip down Memory Lane

(The Tale of Phoebus Paul Marino)

The Greek 37 merman stood on the roof of the Santos household. He was so close to getting a rental beach house, he could taste it. Normally he would have gotten an apartment, but the living conditions would be a bit catastrophic. He sighed, remembering how he met the love of his life.

Carnival, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

A 15 year old Phoebus walked in the festival with his 2 best friends by his side.

"Well there's a lot going on here." His friend Jacob noted.

"Agreed." Caesar said. "There's always a surprise on land."

Just out of the corner of his ear, he heard some music. He excused himself to go to the music. What he found amazing was not the musician, but the girl dancing. She was a 15 year old Romani girl with deep tanned skin, curly raven hair, and the most blazing emerald green eyes.

"She's single just so you know." A Canadian woman spoke next to him. She had a light tan, sky blue eyes and chestnut hair.

"Oh no." Phoebus said awkwardly laughing. "I'm just amazed how well she dances."

"Esmeralda is quite the dancer." The Canadian woman said. "I'm Persephone."

"Phoebus Marino." The blond merman said shaking her hand. He didn't realize it but at that moment, Esmeralda saw him and smiled.

End of flashback…

Phoebus still stood on the roof contempt with the life he had. He was so happy that he had taken that journey and made the best friends anyone could ask for. He had everything he could ever want. A loving amazing wife and a beautiful daughter. But unfortunately, there was a price to pay and losing his friends was that price.


(The Tale of Helen Paddington Carter)

Helen woke up, getting on her martial arts uniform when she got a call from Kimi.

"Yeah?" She answered the phone.

"Robbery at the convenience store on Brand Street." She said on the phone.

Helen groaned. "I just got up. Can't the cops or the rest of the Creed get this one?"

"Helen, you're the closest to that street." Kimi answered coldly. "And when you hear tomorrow on the news about that poor little old lady getting robbed…"

"How the hell do you know it's a little old lady?" Helen asked.
"Please." Kimi said. "It's always a little old lady."

"Ok. I'll go." I said, putting on my watch. Dr. Chaplin, Kimi, Rita, and Thalie had modified the watches to use magic to modify the suits as some sort of microtech. When a certain is put on, a red/blue/cyan/pink light glows on the watch and the suit comes out of a compressed compartment, and the suit in the light, has some sort of nanotechnology that literally jumps on you and puts itself on you. That part is done by magic. The entire process literally takes about 6 seconds.

So I turned on the watch, a red light glowed and before I knew it, I was wearing my suit, makeup and weapons. I was ready to go.

I jumped out of the window and flew to the scene of the crime. In just seconds, I set fire to the wheels, got the guy in the police station. Luckily no one saw me. I called Kimi with my helmet comm link and said, "No little old lady!"

As I flew in the air, feeling the heat of the air being absorbed in me, my mind traced back to how I became a martial artist.

Flashback…

9 years ago

London, England

The 6 year old Helen sat in the principal's office bracing for the lecture she was going to get from one of her parents.

"I appreciate you coming down here Mrs. Carter." Headmaster West said. Helen tugged the plaid skirt of her school uniform.

"What's this about?" Mrs. Carter asked, sitting down. "Has Helen done something wrong?"

"This child was being bothered by Josh." Mr. Rand said. "And she's a disruptive influence."

"She says." Helen muttered. "And for the record, it's Douche Josh."

"Helen!" The black detective scolded her daughter. "Continue."

"Joshua was bothering Helen by poking her in the head." Mr. Rand explained. "I'm sure I warned him along with Miss Carter to stop. But then, like a fire had ignited, Helen jumped up and tackled him. Joshua is fine, just a broken arm."

"I suggest we have Helen Carter suspended." The headmaster said. "She is moving away after all."

"Way to rub salt in the wound." Helen said out loud.

A few weeks later, Helen moved from England to Australia.

"Helen." Mrs. Carter said, moving the boxes to the house from the moving truck. "That was the third time this month you've been sent to the office. We need to find a better outlet. A more…constructive outlet."

The young black girl scoffed. "Maybe I could, if you would let me go for sports."

"Honey." Her mom said. "You know why we can't do that."
"I promise I'll control myself." Helen tried to plead. "I'll only be the best by a tiny bit!"

Her mother scoffed. "Helen Paddington Carter. You are an incredibly competitive girl! And a bit of a show off. The last thing you need is temptations."

"You always say to do your best." Helen complained. "But you don't really mean it. Why can't I be the best I can be?"

"Right now honey." Her mom said. "We're in a new place and to fit in, we've got to be like everyone else."

"But who we are makes us special." Helen said.

"Everyone's special Helen." Her mother said.

"Which is another way of saying no one is." Helen muttered. She would later meet a lovable group of friends who she would later in her life call sisters.

End of flashback…

As Helen flew back home and changed out of her superhero suit, she laughed in joy about having such amazing best friends. If they didn't come into her life, she would have been well…a tosser. (A.N British slang for idiot.)


(The Tale of Rosalina Paola Gomez)

Rosalina swam in the beautiful reef, feeling free. Of course, the air is where she felt free most. She deserved to be free, after all that goes on in her home. Rosalina was born in Australia of course when her parents started having disagreements. Years later, they divorced. The real reason, was because Rosalina's mother was a drug addict. One night when she was 6, her mother passed out from drugs and left the stove on. The stove was too high, there was no lever and her father, Francisco was out. He came back later to save his daughter just in time. He sent his wife to a rehabilitation center and divorced her. It was really hard for Rosalina until she found 3 friends who came from different places, who made her feel like she had light. That's why she smiled and joked so much. It was mental Advil for her sadness and anyone's sadness.


(The Tale of Diablo Quasimodo Nagual)

The young merman swam through the far reef. He didn't transform into any animals that time. He felt like the form he was born in was more ok. But being a type Alpha morpher, he could understand animals. He said hi to some fish here and there. But he wished Rosalina was there. Just as a friend to race like they used to do when they were 11. They would always have friendly contests. He stopped swimming, and lay down on a nearby coral garden. He closed his eyes as he remembered the day he met one of his two best friends.

Flashback…

5 years ago

Rosalina was busy reading a book when a breeze blew her back a bit. She turned around on instinct and saw behind the fountain, the cutest boy she had ever seen. He was a Latino boy, with caramel
colored skin, perfectly arched eyebrows, messy uncombed hair that made him devilish looking. He turned his head to look in her direction but a jet of water from the fountain erupted and concealed him. Rosalina looked around but didn't see the boy. She was about to fall in the fountain when she felt a pair of arms literally swing her off her feet and into his hold. She looked up and her heart was beating as she took his features in. He had bright orange eyes, like a wolf’s eyes and a smile that screamed mischief.

"Cool headband." He spoke in a South American accent. "I'm Diablo."

"Ola." Rosalina said, not knowing what to say.

"Sólo iba a conseguir una galleta." (I was just going to get a cookie.) Diablo said. "¿Cuidado conmigo?" (Care to join me?)

"Uh Si." The stunned Rosalina said. "Soy Rosalina." And the Spanish duo took off, on the start of a beautiful friendship.

End of Flashback

Diablo smiled as he was grateful to have such a great friend like Rosalina. But she just as good as Lyla.

Flashback…

3 years ago

He had transformed into his merman self when he bumped into someone. It was a girl with medium blonde hair and hazel eyes. She tried to swim away but then realized that her tail was stuck in rocks. Thinking quick, Diablo moved them away with a slap of his fin. The girl turned to him in surprise.

"You saved me?" The girl asked in surprise. "Why?"

"Because you probably wouldn't have done the same." Diablo said. "I'm Diablo."

"I'm Lyla." Lyla shook his hand. "You can't be here."

"I know." Diablo said, hearing some mermaids coming up. Thinking quick, he transformed into a dolphin. As the mermaids surfaced.

"What are you doing?" An older mermaid asked Lyla. Diablo in dolphin chat lied to them saying he was a lone traveler, which was rare for dolphins. He had told his name saying that it was something a human named him. The mermaid bought it. Lyla and Diablo began to see each other and become good friends. After Lyla left the Pod in the South Pacific, he and Lyla managed to stay in touch. Lyla had become like a lifelong companion and the same could be said for her and Diablo.

End of Flashback

Diablo looked around the reef, wondering where Lyla was and what she was doing.

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(Non-Extracted Text)

Nerida swam with the pod, trying to keep the little ones under control. Seeing those children reminded her of her dear niece, Thalassa. It pained her everyday of what she did. She spends every day with her niece trying to make it up.
Flashback…

11 years ago

When Thalassa was born, there was a debate on when she would get her tail and when. Nerida, not believing that she would be human for some part of her life tried to get the tail out of her. Or at least the powers. Technically for the average mermaid, you have until you're 5 to show your powers. But Nerida wouldn't wait. She tried multiple times to show Thalassa's powers. But when Rita, her sister found out, she wasn't pleased.

"Give me my daughter." Rita said, over the grotto pool.

"We were just swimming." Nerida tried to explain, holding the four year old.

"Mommy!" The four year old said. "Dolphins!"

"I heard." Rita's glare continued. She scooped up Thalassa with towels in her hands and looked at her sister in disbelief. "I wasn't sure she was safe around other mermaids in the pod, but now I'm not so sure she's safe around you."

"Rita." Nerida said but was cut off.

"What was it you said?" Rita asked. "Human, mermaid narwhal? That it didn't matter?"

"Rita I know it's in there." Nerida said.

"In 2 days, we're boarding the plane back to America." Rita said. "You may have let humans into your life, but I don't think you've let them into your heart."

The flight that they took was the same flight that killed Harry and almost killed Thalassa.

End of Flashback

Nerida blinked tears, remembering. From that day of the plane crash, she swore she would do anything to make it up to her sister's family.


(The Tale of Jacob and Nerissa Khatha)

Jacob and Nerissa Khatha were a couple who was on the run from the Ares Tribe for months. Nerissa thought that a new place would help her husband protect her children. But by the time they got to this part of the sea, there were already some mer people there. And they had so many eviction judgments against them, almost no would let them stay at least for one night. They spent some time looking for places to live in the sea.

Flashback

17 years ago

In the coast of Chile, was an island and that island hosted a tribe of mermen who through persuasion let the family stay for 2 nights.

"How soon?" Nerissa asked her husband. They were both sitting on the ledge of the moon pool, while the baby Zac and Zoe were playing.
"In two days." Jacob replied. "That's the next full moon at the latest."

"Did you tell him about our kids?" Nerissa asked.

"Yeah he knows." Jacob replied. "Why don't we get…"

"I'm not gonna get her again." Nerissa cut off her husband. "We've done this enough to her and to
the rest of our friends. They don't need to know things have gotten this bad again."

The night they were thrown out because they had been told that Slade had closed their position.
They immediately evacuated and found themselves in the oceans near America.

"What did they say?" Nerissa asked.

"They said that they can't let us stay anymore." Jacob said. "That's literally not what they told me
first."

"You know what J." Nerissa said. "I should have never asked. We don't need to sink to that level.
We still got our pride. We just got to keep looking that's all."

There was silence before Jacob told his wife the thing he had been hiding. "Ris, you might wanna
start getting the kids clothes."

Nerissa looked at her husband in confusion. "What are you talking about? We don't wear clothes in
the sea."

"We're not gonna stay in the sea." Jacob explained. "I found us a place. On land. In San Francisco."

Nerissa scoffed, not believing her ears. "What?" She asked her husband in disbelief.

"Ris, I can't do this anymore." Jacob said.

"You don't mean that Jake." Nerissa pleaded. "We're gonna get back up you know that."

"We don't have any place to be safe." Jacob said. "And when the kids wake up what are we gonna
feed them?"

"We'll find something." Nerissa said. "But don't talk to me about sand dollars. That's one thing I will
never do. But why J?"

"I'm just tired of being on the run like an animal." Jacob said.

"Jake where's your faith?" Nerissa asked. "We just have to keep looking and hoping. The sea is
where we were born, it's where our children were born and it's our home."

"Rissie." Jacob said. "But the sea is not gonna be so loving and always protect us. Rissie, I know
you're trying to keep the heritage of our children alive. But there are some things that must be
sacrificed."

End of Flashback…

But unfortunately, 2 years later, there was a fire that broke in the Khatha apartment. Jacob was on a
business trip then. He rushed to get back to his wife and his children. But by the time he got there, it
was too late. Jacob was so broken, he spent 2 weeks locked up in his room. It was one thing to lose
your wife, but to lose your wife and your children in the same night and not being able to help, that
broke Jacob. The last place anyone saw Jacob before he disappeared was the San Francisco airport.
Esmeralda cooked dinner for the family, hearing some of the girls chit chat. Esmeralda chuckled. After all these years, she still couldn't believe that her daughter survived that first year.

Flashback…

17 years ago…

Baltic Sea…

Esmeralda was screaming in agonizing pain. It was a good thing the Polish pod agreed to give birth to a baby mermaid. His wife nearly died the day Ondina was born. The way the couple would hear it later, it was a collision course of everything going wrong at the same time.

"Phoebus go!" Esmeralda screamed. "Don't leave the baby alone!" Understanding, Phoebus swam out of the moon pool to his newborn daughter, but fought against pod members who were restraining him. But even then, Esmeralda wasn't thinking about herself.

He heard his wife cry out, "What's wrong? Why can't I see my baby?! Why can't I see my baby? Why can't I see her?"

A few hours later, Ondina was saved by the healers.

"Your daughter was born with Fire Fever." The healer explained. Esmeralda was out of labor and was now treading water with her newborn daughter sleeping in her arms. Her husband was beside her, his hand on his wife's shoulder. "It's a rare thing for a newborn to be born with fire fever. Though I kind of wish that this…merman was born with it."

Hate flashed in his eyes but he didn't say a word. "Tell me what that means." He said.

"Well I'm seeing a traitor of my kind and a…"

The healer was cut off by Esmeralda. "My husband meant our daughter." She said putting emphasis on every word.

Anger filling her eyes, the healer continued. "We managed to save your daughter, but there's a chance she'll have a relapse sometime in her late teens."

"Why?" Esmeralda asked.

"It's a genetic trait. If there is a chance that one of either your ancestors had the disease…" The healer continued rambling. What she was saying? Those were all just fancy words for "we don't know how to fix what's going on with your baby."

End of flashback…

From that day on, Esmeralda swore that she would protect any children in her sight no matter what.
clan is a rare monarchy that lives in peace ruling over mermaids and mermen. The last of them, the Consorzio Clan ruled for centuries since 512 AD. Its ruling family, the mer House of Consorzio ruled the entire Mediterranean Seas. King Caesar and Queen Persephone were the last rulers of the European Clan. The clan had united countries consisting of countries on the coast of the Mediterranean: Portugal, Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece and Turkey. But the capitol of the clan was Zannone Island of Italy. There were 500 merpeople in the clan. 100 for the north, south, west, east, and center. Zannone was the capitol island where the central moon pool was and it was where the top 100 mer people lived, including the Royal Family. Erik and Raiden lived there of course. It was where they were born. They had quite a tale, the two brothers. One that ends too soon. Perhaps you would like to hear the story?

11 years ago…

In the vast sea of the Mediterranean, there was a beautiful island of Italy. Zannone Island. It was stunningly magnificent with geological and Roman architecture infused in it. In the caves, there were literal Roman temples. It was just amazing to even live in. Even the moon pool in Zannone had Roman columns surrounding it.

A young 7 year old merman woke up and looked at the sunrise of the morning sky. The young prince looked like, well…a prince. He had some sort of royal armor for signification. It was some sort of Egyptian torso armor. But it wasn't too much. There were straps of tight well bound seaweed with some gold plating on the strapping. In the middle was a lightweight but real gem. It was a teal turquoise stone in gold plating. On his arms were gold gauntlets with small turquoise gems in an X motion. It was real treasure, gold and jewels but it was enchanted to feel like it was nothing. He was a bit scrawny for his age. Who was he? He was none other than Crown Prince Erik Alexander Consorzio. He yawned, stretching his arms and tail. He swam to his the Royal Chamber, reserved for the Royal Family of course, but first he went to check on his four year old brother Prince Raiden Antonio Consorzio. He wasn't wearing his body armor because it was placed somewhere. Sleeping in royal garment would be a bit uncomfortable. He was sleeping in the children's bed. Smiling, the 7 year old merboy swam to his parents.

"Dad! Dad!" Erik called out quietly in Italian. "Vieni papà, dobbiamo andare! Svegliare!" (Come on Dad we gotta go, wake up!)

He swam to his sleeping father, King Casear who was next to Erik and Raiden's mother, Queen Persephone. But his father didn't wake. "Dad! Dad!"

He repeatedly kept saying, "Dad, Dad" While Persephone said to her sleepy husband, "Tuo figlio è sveglio." (Your son is awake.)

A sleepy Caesar muttered, "Prima dell'alba, lui è tuo figlio da affrontare." (Before sunrise, he's your son to deal with.)

"Dad!" Erik still said out loud. "Avanti!" He tried tugging on his father's arm but he fell back a little. He nudged him in the arm. "Hai promesso!" (You promised!)

He gave a little pleading look to his father before he said, "Ok Erik. Ci soto. Ci soto." (I'm up, I'm up.)

Erik gave a little cheer of victory before swimming out of the cave with his parents following out of him, clothed in their royal garments. Caesar's royal garment was similar to his father's but instead of a gem there was a large C surrounded by sea waves. The Consorzio Family seal. His armor was a bit thicker too and on his head was a gold circlet that a diamond shape in the center on the forehead with
the Consorizio seal. Persephone had the Queen's style. She wore a strapless bikini top with a large sapphire on her chest. The rest was decorated in a lot of little sparkling sapphires. She wore arm bracelets that were smaller and had a lot of sapphires. There was an arm bracer just a few inches below her left shoulder that had sapphires in it. She had a small gold circlet that was more feminine looking and had a small sapphire in the center.

Erik swam to his mother who gave him a light pat on his back before nudging him to go to his father. The two mermen left a smiling Persephone who then swam to check on her baby son, Raiden.

And just on cue, the sun rose when the merman king and his son were just a few inches from the main entrance of the caves.

"Guarda Erik." (Look Eri.k) Caesar said to his firstborn son. "Tutto i tocchi di mare, siamo connessi." (Everything the sea touches, we are connected to.)

"Whoa." Erik breathed. All of the world's two thirds, he could understand.

"Il viaggio di un tritone sorge e tramonta come la marea." (A merman's journey rises and sets like the tide.) Caesar explained to his son. "Un giorno Erik, la mia marea set e la tua salirà come il nuovo re." (One day Erik, my own tide will set and yours will rise as the new king.)

"E tutto questo sarà il mio?" (And this will all be mine?) Erik asked in wonder.

"Ogni Cosa." (Everything)

"Tutto quello che il mare tocca posso sentire." (Everything the sea touches I can feel.) Erik muttered in amazement. "Che dire del continente?" (What about the mainland?)

"Questo è al di là dei nostri confini di sicurezza." (That's beyond our safety borders.) The king said to his son. "Siete non andarci." (You are never to go there.)

Erik looked confused. "Ma ho pensato che un re potesse fare quello che vuole." (But I thought a king could do whatever he wants.)

"Oh c'è di più ad essere re che avere il potere sulla tua gente." (Oh there's more to being king than having the power over your people.)

"C'è più?" (There's more?) Erik asked.

Caesar laughed at his son's antics as he led him across the Mediterranean showing him the different homes for the rest of the clan.

"Tutto ciò che vedete in qualsiasi parte del mare esiste in un equilibrio delicato. Come re e un tritone, è necessario capire che l'equilibrio e rispetto tutte le persone, non solo in clan, ma altre persone che si possono incontrare." (Everything you see in any part of the ocean exists in a delicate balance. As king and a merman, you need to understand that balance and respect all the people not only in the clan but some other people who you may meet.)

Erik still was confused. He had never swam out of the European waters he had called home. "Dad, non escludiamo la gente qui?" (Dad, don't we rule the people here?)

Erik's father only laughed. Only a child could ask that question. "Erik, leader non impone la sua volontà, ma aiuta i suoi seguaci fiorire. E così siamo collegati in questo cerchio della vita." (Erik, a leader doesn't impose his own will but helps his followers flourish. And so we are connected in this circle of life.)
Suddenly a Croatian mermaid arrived. "Vaše veličanstvo! Krivoloveci, u blizini klana grebena!" (Your Majesty! Poachers, near the clan reefs!)

"Uzmite mog sina kući." (Take my son home.) Caesar said to the messenger.

"Tata, ne mogu doći?" (Dad, can't I come?)

"Ne sine." (No son). And the king took off, to sort the problem, leaving his son to go to Zannone Island.

"Ja nikada ne ide nigdje i ništa ovdje." (I never get to go anywhere or do anything around here.) Erik silently complained.

The Croatian messenger laughed, as she swam with him back to Zannone. "O Erik jednog dana ćete biti kralj. Tada možete potjerati one balav prljav glupe krivolovaca od zore do sumraka." (Oh Erik one day you'll be king. Then you can chase those slobbery mangy stupid poachers from dawn until dusk.)

As soon as he arrived home, he heard some arguing nearby. Curious, he swam to the place where some guards were arguing about a sailor's graveyard that spiked up Erik's interest. He swam to tell his best friend about this. He found her at the waterfall. Ondina Durant-Marino was a fairly skinny kid with freckles dotting every line of her skin.

"Hey Dinie." He greeted.

"Hi Erik." Ondina said.

"Avanit." (Come on.) He whispered to her. "Ho appena sentito parlare di questo posto fantastico." (I just heard about this great place.)

Ondina looked annoyed. "Erik, nel caso in cui non avete notato che sono un po ' nel mezzo di una doccia." (Erik, in case you haven't noticed I'm kind of in the middle of a shower.)

"Ed è il momento per il vostro." (And it's time for yours.) Persephone said from behind Erik. She scooped him up and got to work on cleansing Erik who was struggling to get out.

"Mom!" He pleaded. "Mom, stai rovinare la mia barba!" (Mom, you're messing up my beard!)

Erik's mother could only laugh. "Che barba?" (What beard?)

Erik finally got out of his mother's arms. "Ok, ok. Io sono pulito. Possiamo andare adesso?" (I'm clean. Can we go now?)

"Allora, dove stiamo andando?" (So where are we going?) Ondina asked, combing her hair. "E' meglio non essere ovunque stupido." (It better not be anyplace stupid.)

"No." Erik said to the blond mermaid. "E'davvero cool." (It's really cool.)

"Allora dov'è questo posto davvero cool?" (So where is this really cool place?) Queen Persephone asked in a motherly tone.

Erik fumbled for an answer. "Uh, vicino alla riva." (Near the shore.)

"La costa?" (The shore?) Ondina asked. "Cosa c'è di così grande circa la riva?" (What's so great about the shore?)
"Ti faccio vedere quando ci arriveremo." (I'll show you when we get there.) Erik said through gritted teeth.

"Mãe, posso ir com Erik?" (Mom, can I go with Erik?) Ondina asked her mother in Portuguese.

"Hmm." Esmeralda mused. "Cosa ne penso, Persephone?" (What do you think Persephone?)

"Well…" Persephone said.

"Please?" The two mer kids asked in unison, both of them putting on their best cute faces.

"E' bene con me." (It's alright with me.) She said.

"YEAH!" The two kids tried to swim off but were stopped by Persephone.

"Fino a quando un paio di guardie con te." (As long as a couple of guards go with you.)

Erik looked to his mother in horror. "No Mom! Non è una babysitter!" (Not a babysitter!)

Instead of guards, one of the king's advisors, Aristotle, went with them.

On the way, Ondina asked mentally, Allora, dove stiamo davvero andando?" (So where are we really going?)

Erik said back mentally, Il cimitero di un marinaio. (A sailor's graveyard.)

Whoa! Ondina exclaimed mentally.

Shh. Erik swam towards to her to put his hand over her mouth.

Destra. Ondina said. Così come faremo fosso lo stalker? (So how are gonna ditch the stalker?)

As the two merchildren conversed Aristotle swam up and interrupted them. They swim to the surface. "O aplá koitáxte eseís oi dúo." (Oh just look at you two.) He said in Greek. "Mikrí margarítária tou romantismoú pou anaptýssontai stin ýfalo. Oi goneís sou tha enthousiastoún. Me to na einai mistí sou kai óla." (Little pearls of romance growing in the reef. Your parents will be thrilled. With your being betrothed and all.)

Erik and Ondina looked confused. "Na ti?" (Be what?)


Again the two children looked utterly baffled. They had no idea what he was talking about.

"Simasia?" (Meaning?) Ondina asked.

"Mia méra eseís oi dúo prókeitai na pantrefteî." (One day you two are going to be married.) Aristotle said.

The two kids of course grimaced in disgust. "Den boró na tin pantrefteî." (I can't marry her.) Erik said. "Eínai filos mou." (She's my friend.)

"Yeah." Ondina agreed. "Tha ítan polý paráxeno." (It would be so weird.)

"Sygnómi gia na skásei foúska sas." (Sorry to burst your bubble.) Aristotle said. "Allá eseís oi dúo merlings den échoun álλi epilogí. Eínai mia parádosi pou anágetai
geniés. Énas pou Aftoú Megaleiótitas tou épapse me ti Chári tis." (But you two merlings have no choice. It's a tradition going back generations. One that His Majesty broke with Her Grace.) As Aristotle made his lecture, Ondina made a "blah blah blah" face.

"Loipón, ótan émai vasilías, ypárchoun kai álla prágmata pou prókeitai na páei." (Well when I'm king, there are other things that are going to go.) Érik said with pride.

"Óchi tóso óso émai edó." (Not so long as I'm around.) Aristotle said also with pride.

"Se aftí tin períiptosi apolýesai." (In that case you're fired.) Erik said.

"Kali prospatheia" (Nice Try.) Aristotle smiled. "Móno o vasilías boreí na to kánei aftó." (Only the king can do that.)

"Kalá techniká émai o diádochos tou thrónou tou thránous tis ólis aftís tis fylís." (Well technically I'm the crown prince of this whole clan.) Érik said. "Étsi, apó technikí aftí mou o mellontikós vasilías kánei. Étsi tha prépeí na kánoume ó, ti sou léo." (So technically this makes me the future king. So you gotta do what I tell you.)

Erik pushed back Aristotle a bit. "Den échei akómi den to pistévo." (Not yet I don't.) He said. "Kai me mia stási ópos aftó, fovámai óti eíste diamórfosí epáno se mia axiolýpiti vasilías prágmati." (And with an attitude like that, I'm afraid you're shaping up into a pathetic king indeed.)

Erik scoffed. "Den émai o trópos pou to vlépo egó." (Not the way I see it.)

Without further warning, the two merkids dived down and swam in many places with Aristotle chasing after them. They led him to a dock where the kids left him. They were far separated. Aristotle cursed himself for being on the King's court but not being able to watch a couple of children.

Outside of the Mediterranean Sea, about 30 miles away from Portugal, Ondina and Prince Erik were laughing hysterically.

"Funcionou." (It worked.) Érik said in Portuguese.

"Perdemo-lo." (We lost him.) Ondina said.

"Eu sou um gênio." (I am a genius.) Érik said with arrogance.

"Hey, gênio, era a minha idéia." (Hey genius, it was my idea.) Ondina sassed back.

"Sim, mas eu o retirei." (Yeah, but I pulled it off.) Érik said proudly.

"Avec moi." Ondina challenged.

"Oh oui?" In a flash, Érik tackled Ondina, only to be defeated by the blond mermaid.

"Pinado ya." (Pinned ya.) Ondina said in victory.

"Hey, deixe-me up." (Hey, let me up.) Érik said, pushing her tail off of his own and then tackling her, the two hatchlings diving down to the depths.

Pinned ya again. Ondina said through the mental link. Just then, an underwater geyser erupted, startling the children. Looking up, they saw a massive submarine. It looked dead, haunting, and otherworldly. Èrik, with his ever curiosity, swam towards it.
Questo è. (This is it.) Erik said in Italian. "L'abbiamo fatta." (We made it.)

The two children swam to the side of a large broken piece of the submarine and looked over it to see a massive zone of sunken ships. A sailor's graveyard.

Questo è davvero raccapricciante. (This is really creepy.) Ondina said.

Yeah. Erik replied. Non è fantastico? (Isn't it great?)

Potremmo entrare abbastanza grossi guai. (We could get in pretty big trouble.) Ondina said sarcastically and smiling.

Lo so, si? (I know right?) Erik asked.

Mi chiedo se il cervello marciscono in là. (I wonder if brains are rotting in there.) Ondina said in puzzlement.

C'è solo un modo per saperlo." (There's only one way to know.) Erik said smugly. Avanti, andiamo a controllare. (Come on, let's go check it out.)

But suddenly, Aristotle swam in front of the kids.

Sbagliato! (Wrong!) He said. L'unico check-out si sta andando a fare è quello di essere il check- fuori di qui. (The only checking out you're going to be doing is to be checking out of here.)

Erik groaned and rolled his eyes in annoyance. Avanti Aristotle, seriamente , mi stai uccidendo. (Come on Aristotle, you're killing me.)

Mi scusi. (Excuse me.) Aristotle said. Siamo ben oltre i nostri confini. (We're way beyond our boundaries.)

Ondina snorted. Cosa sai? Pesce Fraidy è spaventato. (What do you know? Fraidy fish is scared.)

Aristotle looked mortified. Quello è il signor Fraidy pesce a voi squamosa. (That's Mr. Fraidy Fish to you missy.) He said. E dovremo essere , perché in questo momento siamo tutti in pericolo molto reale." (And I should be because right now we are all in very real danger.)

Erik scoffed. Pericolo? (Danger?) He snorted. Per favore, nuoto sul lato selvaggio. Rido di fronte al pericolo. (Please, I swim in the wild side. I laugh in the face of danger.) Erik mock laughed only to get echoing creepy laughter from inside the submarine. He swam back and hugged Ondina and she hugged him.

Emerging from the submarine, were two mermen and a mermaid. Their tails were a sickly green and brown. They had seaweed in their hair and their teeth were shark teeth. They were cannibals. They looked like living corpses.

Well well well. The mermaid said. Banzai what have we got here?

Hmm. Banzai mused. "I don't know Shenzi. What do you think Ed?" Ed behind him laughed like a hyena. Just what I was thinking. A trio of trespassers!

And quite by accident let me assure you! Aristotle said. A simple navigational error.

When Aristotle was about to leave, Shenzie grabbed him by the fin. Wait a minute. I know you. You're that Italian mook's stooge.
I am one of His Majesty's advisors. Aristotle said.

And that makes you pretty boy in gold? Shenzi asked Erik who had put on a brave face.

The future king! Erik proclaimed proudly.

Do you know what we do to kings who swim out of their little kingdom? Shenzi asked, licking her lips.

You can't do anything to me. Erik said.

Aristotle nervously chuckled. Uh technically they can. We are in their territory.

But Aristotle, you told me they're nothing but slobbery mangy stupid poachers. Erik said.

Ixnay on the upid-stay. Aristotle muttered.

"Who are you calling upid-stay? Banzai asked in their face.

Well, look at the sun! Aristotle said trying to swim away with the kids. It's time to go.

Shenzi got in the way. What's the hurry? We'd love for you to stick around."

Yeah. Banzai agreed. We can have whatever's...on the catch! (A.N I know, booo)

The three cannibals laughed hysterically. Wait I got one. Shenzi spoke up. Make mine a fish fillet. The three laughed hysterically until Ed started pointing north of the submarine. What Ed? What is it?

Banzai took notice and asked, Hey, did we order this dinner to go by chance?

No. Shenzi replied. Why?

cause there it goes! Banzai was pointing the Clan trio swimming off. Aristotle tried to swim off but he was pulled back by the cannibals. Meanwhile the two children surfaced to take a breath.

"Abbiamo lo perdiamo?" (Did we lose him?) Ondina asked in Italian, terrified.

"Credo di si." (I think so.) Erik replied also terrified. He looked around and saw that their friend wasn't with them. "Dove si trova Aristotle?" (Where's Aristotle?)

Meanwhile, the cannibals were having a little fun.

And the little merman hippty hopped all the way to the fishy flier. Shenzi cackled maliciously as she forced the poor merman in a small volcano.

Not the fishy flier! Aristotle muttered as he was blasted across the sea. The cannibals were laughing hard until Ondina spoke up.

Hey! Why don't you pick on someone your own size for a change?

Like, say, you? Shenzi asked.

Oops.

The cannibals advanced on them but they swam all around the graveyard looking for a way out. Erik had gotten to an abandoned ship when he heard Ondina cry his name. He turned around to see her being pulled away by the cannibals. Furious, he swam to the monstrous mermaid and punched her in
the nose, breaking it. The two kids swam inside but got trapped by one of the cages. They looked up in fear to see the cannibals advancing towards them like panthers stalking their prey.

Here fishy.

Erik tried to take a stance. Don't come any closer, or… I'll use a little bit of this!

The cannibals laughed. That was it? Do it again come on.

Erik was about to speak when they all heard a strong masculine voice scream, "HEY!" Before they could register it, two mermen attacked them, beating the life out of them. It was Erik's dad and Ondina's father. Phoebus had been at work, he was the Royal Chief Architect. Most of the caves around the clan had ancient Roman architecture in them. They still used it to this day. He also built most of the caves and moon pools. When he had heard about his daughter, his wife stayed behind to watch the little children and Persephone had taken her Queenly duties.

The cannibals were at the mercy of the King and a very angry Phoebus Marino.

Ok! Ok! Banzai said.

SILENCE! Caesar shouted.

We're gonna shut up now. Banzai said.

We're really sorry. Shenzi said.

If you ever come near our children again…Phoebus almost growled.

Oh these, these are your kids? Did you know that Shenzi asked.

No of course not no! Banzai said. Ed?

Said merman nodded stupidly. The cannibals then swam off. Aristotle who had arrived with the two fathers, swam up to King Caesar and gave him thumbs up only to get a glare in return.

Erik, who had gotten out of the cage, swam up to his father. Dad, I…

Deliberatamente mi disobbedito. (You deliberatly disobeyed me.) Caesar said to his son.

Erik looked for an answer. Papà, mi dispiace. (Dad, I'm sorry.)

Andiamo a casa. (Let's go home.)

Phoebus took one look at the king's son and said, Tu non sei nei guai. Sei morto causa si respira. (You're not in trouble. You're dead cause you breathe.)

The European quartet swam back to the clan waters, the kids feeling absolute shame. They surfaced to talk.

"Phoebus." Caesar said.

"Si Sua Maestà?" (Yes your majesty?) He replied.

"Prendete la vostra casa figlia." (Take your daughter home.) Caesar said. "Devo insegnare a mio figlio una lezione." (I have to teach my child a lesson.)
Erik, hearing his father's words, lowered his head in the water.

Phoebus swam to his daughter. "Venire Ondina." (Come Ondina.) He turned to face the heir of the throne. "La prossima volta che si fa qualcosa di simile, potrebbe non essere così fortunato hai 7 anni. Se tu non fossi il figlio del re, questa sarebbe una storia diversa." (Next time you do something like this, you might not be so lucky you're 7 years old. If you weren't the king's son, this would be a different story.) Taking one last glance at her best friend, Ondina ducked under the surface of the sea and swam with her father back to the main island.

"Erik Alexander!" Caesar said loudly for the young merboy to flinch a little. Erik took a big breath and swam to his father. "Erik sono molto delusi in voi" (Erik, I'm very disappointed in you.)

"Lo so. Hai il diritto di essere." (I know. You have a right to be.) It was all Erik could say in formality to his father. Caesar Consorzio may have been his father but he was also his king.

"Erik, si potrebbe essere stato ucciso. Si, appositamente Mi disobbedito. E quel che è peggio, si mette Ondina in pericolo!" (Erik, you could have been killed. You purposely disobeyed me. And what's worse, you put Ondina in danger!)

"Stavo solo cercando di essere coraggioso come te." (I was just trying to be brave like you are.) Erik said.

"Ho solo coraggioso quando devo essere." (I'm only brave when I have to be.) Caesar said. "Erik, essere coraggiosi, non significa che effettivamente andare in cerca di guai." (Erik, being brave, doesn't mean you actually go looking for trouble.)

"Ma tu non hai paura di nulla." (But you're not scared of anything.) Erik said to his father.

Caesar looked at his firstborn son in contempt and said, "Sono stato oggi." (I was today.)

"Tu eri?" (You were?) Erik asked in surprise.

"Si." Caesar said, cupping his son's cheek. "Ho pensato di perderti." (I thought I would lose you.)

"Credo che anche i re si spaventano." (I guess even kings get scared.) Erik said with his father nodding. "Sai cosa? Scommetto che quei cannibali erano ancora più paura." (You know what? I bet those cannibals were even more scared.)

Caesar laughed. "Ecco perché nessuno pasticci con tuo padre. Vieni qui!" (That's cause nobody messes with your dad. Come here you!) He pulled Erik in a hug and gave him a humongous noogie. Erik got himself free and play wrestled his father.

"Dad?" Erik asked. "Siamo amici giusto?" (We're pals right?)

"Desta." (Right.)

"E saremo sempre insieme giusto?" (And we'll always be together right?)

"Erik." Caesar said. "Lasciate che vi dica una cosa che mio padre mi ha detto." (Let me tell you something that my father told me.) He and Erik looked to the night sky. "Guarda le stelle. I grandi re e leader del passato guardare dall'alto in basso su di noi da quelle stelle." (Look at the stars. The great kings and leaders of the past look down on us from those stars.)

"Davvero?" (Really?) Erik asked.
"Sì. Così ogni volta che ti senti solo, bisogna ricordare che quei re saranno sempre lì per guidarti. E così sarà I." (Yes. So whenever you feel alone, just remember that those kings will always be there to guide you. And so will I.)

Erik yawned, signaling Caesar's fatherly instincts that it was time for his firstborn son to get some shut eye. The Consorzio Elder carried the sleeping boy to the children's cave after he was stripped of his royal garment. He swam to another cave where his wife and queen was waiting for him.

"What is this I hear about Erik going to a sailor's graveyard?" She asked with her arms crossed.

"Persephone," Caesar said. "I never intended for Erik to find out about that place. I never even mentioned the name of that place."

The Queen swam up to him and stroke her hand on his cheek. "Is this blood?"

Caesar chuckled nervously. "It was just a little souvenir of someone trying to mess with our son."

"You know how I feel about you losing your cool when something like that happens!" Persephone exclaimed. "Damn you Caesar, we can't have our enemies know our location!"

"Ondina was in danger as well." Caesar said instantly regretting it.

"What?!" Persephone exclaimed. "You brought Ondina with you?!"

"She actually went with Erik!" Caesar said. "I'm trying to be a good leader for this kingdom and you act like this is a bad thing!"

"That incident was a bad thing Caesar!" Persephone exclaimed. "Taking our kids to one clue that teaches them about our years in the Order when they are mere children is a very bad thing!"

"Remembering those days is better than acting like they didn't happen!" Caesar shouted. 

"Yes!" Persephone said. "They happened! But this is what's happening now!"

"I didn't know how they found out about it but I know that they are not ready to know about the Order." Caesar said.

"This isn't about you Caesar." Persephone said. "This is about our kids."

Caesar scoffed. "You wanna do something for our kids? Then let Raiden out of Zannone! Let him go to Alma Mater with the other kids his age!"

"I will not be made the enemy here of my people!" Persephone yelled. "You know why we can't do that!"

"Because he'd feel like a free merman instead of a prisoner!" Caesar yelled.

"This is not about you!" Persephone yelled. Behind them, the smell of ozone contaminated the air for a minute.

"So che lei è giovane. Uscire." (I know that's you young man. Come out.) Persephone said. The air shimmered with electricity as Raiden turned from being invisible. What it looked like was the air shimmering and turning into electricity which morphed into Prince Raiden. His garment was very similar to his brother's but it was smaller to fit his body. It was the same some sort of torso armor. But it wasn't too much. There were similar straps of tight well bound brown seaweed with some gold plating on the strapping. In the middle was a charoite in gold plating. On his arms were gold
gauntlets with small charoite gems on the arms in an X motion. He was quite skinny for his age. In fact, he looked like he weighed 60 pounds in human weight. His hair was pretty short and gold streaks were starting to form in it. His big bright violet eyes were wide with worry.

"Mom? Dad?" The four year old merman asked in Italian. "Qualcosa non va? Ho fatto qualcosa?" (Is something wrong?)

"No Raiden." Caesar said to his baby son. "E' solo che io e tua madre stiamo avendo qualche disaccordo, ma abbiamo ancora amarsi." (It's just that your mother and I are having some disagreements but we still love each other.)

"Raiden andiamo." (Raiden let's go.) Persephone led her son to the children's cave where she placed her son next to the sleeping Erik. She stripped Raiden of his royal garment and laid him down on the floor of the Roman temple that was infused with the cave.

"Mommy?" Raiden asked. "Hai tenermi lontano dagli altri bambini, perché io sono un mostro?" (Do you keep me from the other kids, because I'm a freak?)

Queen Persephone looked at her son in shock. She certainly hadn't been expecting that. "Chi vi ha detto che?" (Where did you hear that?)

Raiden paused. "Alcuni bambini... mi dicono che io non sono degno di essere in linea." (Some kids...they tell me that I am not fit to be in line.) Raiden's mother gave him a big hug. "Forse hanno ragione." (Maybe they're right.)

Persephone cupped Raiden's cheeks. "Raiden, non mai dire che." (Raiden, don't ever say that.) She looked at her son with absolute love. Sapphire eyes meeting violet lightning ones. "Quel bambini che voi vittime di bullismo, non avevano diritto. Non a causa del vostro stato reale, ma a causa della bella tritone sei e diventerai." (Those children who bullied you, they had no right. Not because of your royal status, but because of the beautiful merman you are and will become.)

"Ma ciò che di Erik?" (But what of Erik?) Raiden asked.

"Erik è la tua grande fratello sì." (Erik is your big brother yes.) Persephone said. "Si, egli è l'erede alla corona. Ma questo non significa che non si ha la possibilità di fare grandi cose. Sei quattro anni e già vedo grandi cose in anticipo per voi Raiden." (Yes, he is the heir to the crown. But that doesn't mean you don't have the capability to do great things. You're four years old and already I see big things ahead for you Raiden.) Persephone then hugged him one more time before kissing him on his temple. "Sogni d'oro piccola scintilla." (Sweet dreams, little spark.) Watching her baby son close his eyes, Persephone left the cave to go to her husband.

"Caesar." She said to her king. "I'm...I'm sorry."

"You don't..." Caesar said.

"No you don't understand." Persephone said. "For the past 8 years, I have done the best I could to be a decent Queen/wife/mother. Have I been perfect? No. Do I know anything about children? No! Should I have read a book on parenting? Probably! Where was I going with this? I had a point."

"Well you're decent enough for me Seph," Caesar said. "I love you."

"Well I love you too!" Persephone said, grabbing an oyster and slurping it in a frenzy. "See this? Stress eating!" She continued eating until her husband grabbed her arms and kissed her. She broke from the kiss, feeling happy. "Thanks. I needed that."
"Persephone, you're a great mother, wife and queen." Caesar said. "But you can be a bit tad overprotective."

"Well I can't help it." She said. "It's just that it's been 4 years since the fire and…"

"I know." Caesar said.

"Raiden is the only Omega in the entire clan." Persephone said. "That's why he must be protected. Unless you have a better way."

"I do." Caesar said. "Put him with the rest of the kids in Alma Mater."

"Caesar, I'm serious." She said.

"So am I." He said.

"Those jealous kids would brutally kill him," Seph said. "He's only 4 years old."

"And already he's developed his powers, starting from age 2." He said.

"That's beside the point." She said. "You know how much of a show off Raiden can be. He obviously doesn't know his own strength. He could end up hurting himself or someone else."

"You can't stop him from growing up." Caesar said to his wife. "You can only prepare him. I know it seems hopeless, but the truth is, you won't always be around to protect him. Like with me and our friends. He's going to get out there again, he's probably thinking of going out now."

Persephone looked down, deep in thought. Caesar saw the doubt grow in his wife's eyes, swam to her and they embraced in a passionate kiss.

If only she could have known, that in just one year, she would lose him forever…

One year later…

Prince Erik was just simply swimming around in the reef near Portugal. He wasn't supposed to be out late at night but he went anyway because he couldn't sleep. Hearing a war cry break the silence, he looked around to see a flood of soldiers. Erik had never been more terrified. Without a second thought, he raced back to Zannone to look for his family.

In said island, there was a lot of noise that woke everybody up including Prince Raiden. He looked around for his parents.

Caesar had ordered the women and the children to leave, but some of the women volunteered to stay behind and help defend. He had just beaten an Ares Tribe soldier when his wife who had just defeated a soldier came up to him and asked, "Where are the kids?"

Meanwhile Raiden was all over the Mediterranean Sea looking for his parents and brother. He swam past and ducked soldiers. He was close to getting snatched but then a bunch of rocks fell on him. A merman raced past him and stopped.

"Aristotélis, voíthisé me!" (Aristotle, help me!) Raiden cried in Greek.

"O patéras sou eínai sto drómō." (Your father is on the way.) He replied. "Perímene."(Hold on.)

"Grígora!" (Hurry!)
Just then Raiden heard his father yell out telling him to hold on. They didn't know it, but as Aristotle moved to help his king he was taken away, and killed. Caesar moved his way in front of the soldiers and moved the rocks with his powerful strength and tail. He carried his 5 year old son but lost him for a second as they were separated for a minute before Caesar found him and placed him on the side of the battle.

"Andare." (Go.) He said in Italian. "Trova la tua madre e tuo fratello." (Find your mother and your brother.) The King saw tears welling up in his eyes. "Figlio, non preoccuparti per me. Tu e tuo fratello sono più importante della mia vita." (Son, don't worry about me. You and your brother are more important than my life.)

Raiden hugged his father for what would be the last time. Caesar of course, returned it. "Io ti amo." (I love you.) Taking one last look at his father, Raiden swam off to find his mother. He swam and swam until he found himself cornered by a mermaid.

"Quindi questo è il più giovane marmocchio di Cesare?" (So this is Caesar's youngest brat?) The Italian mermaid said with her native Slovenian accent. "Sto metà impressionato sei un Omega." (I'm half impressed you're an Omega.) Raiden tried to swim away but Cordellia grabbed his arm and move to strike him hard when Persephone pushed her away.

"Get away from my son!" The Queen yelled.

Cordellia laughed. "Persephone. Good to see you again, after you and your snot nosed husband stole my crown!"

"You were never meant to rule you traitor!" Persephone exclaimed.

"We'll see about that." The Slovenian mermaid said, taking a dagger out and charging at the queen.

"Raiden!" The queen cried. "Get out of here!"

"I'm not leaving you!" The 5 year old shouted.

"Raiden, get your brother and go!" Persephone shouted, taking a strike at Cordellia, knocking her out. Persephone swam to her son and hugged him tight. "I love you my boy. Go. Please." Turning around as Raiden treaded away, she continued defending herself. She took one last look at her son, the right distraction for Cordellia to swipe her dagger on her left eye. She quickly covered her wound, that was pouring out blood like a faucet. Raiden was still there, frozen in fear, witnessing the whole thing. He tried to swim to help her but Persephone pushed him back with a wave of force that sent him flying back a few feet. He then swam to find his brother, carrying the guilt and shame that would follow him for the rest of his life.

But Erik would suffer a more emotional trauma than his little brother. He swam to a cave to find his father to hear voices grunting in battle.

"Why do you persist in this insanity Slade?" He heard his father ask.

"You took Persephone from me!" A merman covered in armor and scars shouted.

"She was never yours!" Caesar shouted charging at him. The two mermen fought against each other for what seemed like forever. Erik was frozen in fear, unsure of what to do. He grabbed a dagger, his arms shaking with fear. When his father was knocked back several feet, he charged at Slade, making a slash, but Slade blocked it and punched the 8 year old merboy back hard. He moved to make the final blow on the child.
"NOT MY SON!" The sound of flesh being torn was heard throughout the cave as the last King of the last clan was mortally wounded. Too great for the water to heal him in time or a moon ring as well.

And Erik witnessed the entire thing.

His breathing became ragged as he raced to save his father. He didn't notice Slade chuckling evilly as he swam off.

"Dad!" Erik cried shaking his father. "Don't leave me! Please don't leave me!"

"Erik." Caesar said raspy, taking his final words in his native tongue. "Promettimelo. Prenditi cura del tuo famiglia." (Promise me. Look after your family.)

"I." Erik said, crying his heart out. "Io prometto."

"Ti amo figlio." (I love you son.) Caesar said. "Arrivederci." The King's eyes rolled at the back of his head as his final breath was took. Caesar Consorzio was dead. Erik was shaking, crying every ounce of tears he could muster. Erik was forever traumatized. The raid continued for hours and then in deathly silence, it stopped.

"Dad! Erik!" A 5 year old's voice sounded though the cave. "Dad?" Raiden had surfaced the cave to see his big brother crouching over a bleeding corpse. He swam a little closer to see that it was his recently dead father. But he wouldn't believe it. "Dad? Avanti, che devi altzarti." (Come on, you gotta get up.) He tried shaking his father only to have him turn over and his body showed the fatal wound in the heart. Raiden looked around. "HELP! He cried. "Somebody! Anybody! Help."

"Don't you see?" Erik asked in absolute grief. "He's dead. He's not waking up."

"Erik…" Raiden was on top of his dead father, bursting in tears. Erik, feeling shame for what he said to his baby brother, wrapped his arms around Raiden and comforted him in a hug. Raiden of course, returned it in good heart.

An hour later, an amateur funeral was held. The two princes placed their father's body on the ocean. This was how merpeople rituals worked even back in the time before the war. They placed a shroud of their father's favorite color, gold. It told some tales of their father. Taking one last look at their father, they placed the shroud over his head and set him adrift on a piece of ice.

"Dii bene iudicare." (May the gods judge you well.) Erik said in Latin. "Et cum duxerint vos portas infer". (And lead you though the gates of the Underworld.)

Raiden took a breath and said the rest of the euology in sync with Erik. "Et cantent in amore tuo fortitudo ut possimus audire Elysium ab imo surgere. Scientes accipiat locum in insula beata . Nam maximus cecidit. Bellato . Rex. Pater. Amicus." (May they sing your name in love and might so that we might hear it rise from the depths of Elysium. And know you may take your place, in the Isle of the Blessed. For a great man has fallen. Warrior. King. Father. Friend.)

The two brothers ignited the Greek fire, a green flame that burned even water, on their arrows that were drenched in a funeral potion.

"Insieme?" (Together?) Erik asked his younger brother.

Raiden put on a sad smile and said. "Insieme."

They grasped their bows and shot 4 arrows each to their father's body, burning him and turning him
and the shroud into seafoam in a blinding blue glow.

Without warning, Raiden gave his brother a huge hug. "Sembravi avevi bisogno uno." (You look like you needed one.)

Erik hugged his brother tighter. "Grazi."

Raiden looked up and met Erik's tear stained blue green eyes. "Cosa faremo?" (What are we gonna do?)

Erik looked at his disintegrating father and understood that some growing up was needed at the moment. "Dobbiamo spostare Raiden." (We gotta move Raiden.) He said. "Raccogliamo una cosa significativa che vogliamo prendere. In primo luogo cerchiamo sopravvissuti. E poi usciamo di qui." (Let's gather one meaningful thing we wanna take. First we look for survivors. And then we get out of here.)

Raiden and Erik swam all over the ruins Zannone. The only things they took with them were the halves of the locket they shared, some rings, and some jewelry of the Royal Family. Raiden stopped, thinking about his mother, and he burst crying, his heart feeling like it was being torn to pieces.

"Raiden." Erik said, surfacing in the cave. "Andiamo."

The Lightning Omega looked up and shook his head violently.

"Raiden, andiamo." Erik said.

"Erik no!" Raiden cried. "I don't wanna!"

"Raiden please." Erik said, cupping his brother's cheeks. "I know this is our home. I know this where our forefathers were born. But we have to leave it's not safe."

Raiden backed away from him, clinging on a rock. "No."

Erik looked at him with concern. "Brother, forgive me." In a flash, Erik grabbed his brother's wrists and dragged him out of the cave. Raiden was flipping his tail and screaming not to go away and to let him go.

"JESUS CHRIST YOU SUCK!" Raiden yelled. SLAP! Erik eyes widened as he realized what he had done. He hugged his baby brother tightly as Raiden continued crying.

"Erik I'm sorry." Raiden said. "I'm a bad brother."

"No." Erik said looking into Raiden's tear stained eyes. "Don't ever say that. Let's go."

Erik took one last look as his brother ducted down to swim and said to his old home, "Arrivederci." Erik ducted down as well and the two brothers swam to a spot in the sea, about 20 feet away from the coast of Iraq. The Consorzio brothers then laid down on a bed of kelp, Erik wrapping his hand around his sleeping brother's torso. Erik silently cried himself to sleep, and yet at the same time, he made a silent promise to his father that he would be strong for his 5 baby brother.

16 months later…

A 6 year old Raiden woke up in the ratty stone attic they called a makeshift home. Looking down, he saw Erik drying up his tail.

"Che è successo?" (What happened?) Raiden asked sheepishly.
Erik chuckled finishing up the drying process. "È sorta di butti su un bicchiere di acqua." (You kind of knocked over your glass of water.)

"Gee che spiega la mia goffaggine sonno." (Gee that explains my sleepy clumsiness.) Raiden said sarcastically. Erik only laughed, helping him.

"Mattina." (Morning) Erik opened the curtain to reveal the port city of Jizan of Saudi Arabia.

Erik and Raiden had gone from being royalty in the sea to street rats on land. It was because of this that they almost wore the same clothes. Erik wore a lose tan sleeveless t shirt with a v line in it, loose tan pants, and a dark yellow sash belt. Raiden wore a violet vest, a violet sash belt, loose white shorts that reached his knees, and a violet turban. They each wore their royal rings and locket halves. Erik had his in gold metal and a turquoise stone in it. Raiden had his in gold and amethyst stone. They each wore one shoe. Erik wore his on his left foot, while Raiden wore his on the right. They had gotten a lot more tanner from being in the Arabian heat for so long.

"Let's get some breakfast." Raiden said, patting his ever hungry stomach.

Over the time, they lived on the streets, the Consorzio brothers became thieves. For Raiden, stealing was the equivalent of smoking. Once he started, he couldn't stop. That was the reason he kept stealing into today. It was an addiction he couldn't satisfy.

"STOP THEIF!" Erik heard a police cop yell behind him as he held his target close. He had just stolen bread when the person with the salescart wasn't looking but now the police found him. "I'll have you in now street rat!" The Arabian cop said, lurking towards him.

Erik looked confused. "All of this for a loaf of bread?" He asked diving down and climbing down the clothes lines. He landed in a pile of robes.

"There he is!" A cop yelled from the roof. The 9 year old merboy looked up. "You won't get away so easy!"

Erik scoffed. "Do you think that was easy?" He asked quietly. Near him, a bunch of girls were giggling. He blushed as we realized he was wearing a girl's bathrobe. Thinking quick, he put it on disguising himself from the cops. "Morning ladies." He greeted the Arabian females.

"Getting into trouble a little early today, aren't we Romeo?" An Arabian girl asked flirtingly.

"Trouble?" Erik asked keeping his cool. "No way. You're only in trouble if you're caught."

"Gotcha!" He was grabbed in the shirt by a cop.

"I'm in trouble."

"And this time…" The cop didn't finish because he started standing stiff as electricity surged through him, knocking him down. Standing, holding his finger like a trophy, was Raiden.

"Perfect timing Raiden." Erik greeted. "As usual."

"The same can be said for you." Raiden said sarcastically.

"Come on." Erik led Raiden but was blocked by a cop.

(Gotta keep one jump ahead of the breadline. One swing ahead of the sword. We steal only what we can't afford. And that's everything!)
Erik and Raiden dodged the cop like pros, having done this before. Raiden performed a backflip and pulled the belt of the pants of the cop's pants.

(One jump ahead of the lawmen. That's all and that's no joke. These guys don't appreciate we're broke!)

Erik missed being shot and ran up a bunch of barrels and knocked them down.

(Riff raff! Street rats! Scoundrels! Take that!)

Raiden helped his brother get up on a wooden tower.

(Just a little snack guys! Rip them open take it back guys! I can take a hint, gotta face the facts. You're my only friend Raiden.)

Raiden jumped off, landing on a flagpole of a building. Erik dramatically fell and the two brothers performed a leap off the flagpole and they both flipped in a house. But it wasn't just a house. It was a harem.

(Who's them? Oh it's those two brothers hit the bottom! They've become a two man rise in crime!)

The prostitutes danced around them seductively. The harem girls were about 10 years old. They wrapped them in silk and pushed them in front of their mistress.

(I'd blame parents...oh wait that's right, they haven't got them!)

The harem mistress swung her broom at the boys shooing them away.

(Gotta eat to live, got to steal to eat, tell you all about it when I got the time!)

One of the girls pushed them out of the window but they landed safely and resumed their running.

(One jump ahead of the slow pokes. One skip ahead of my doom.)

Erik whispered to his brother as they were running from the cops, "Next time we need to use a nom de plume."

"There they are!" A cop shouted.

(One jump ahead of the hitmen, one hit ahead of the flock. I think we'll take a stroll around the block.)

They crawled in a heard of sheep and jumped over a guy sleeping on a bed of nails.

(Stop thief! Vandal! Erik! Scandal!)

Raiden had to pull his brother away from a cart of jewelry.

(Let's not be too hasty!)

The two brothers were then cornered into a closed door. But opened to reveal a large ugly woman who eyed them with lust.

(Still I think they're rather tastey!)

In disgust, Raiden grabbed his brother and they stepped to the middle and ran away.
The cops fought each other, not noticing two vases moving. Once they were found, they kicked them in the soft spot. They leaped and used a man walking on hot coal as a springboard. The cops? They were gonna need major massages. Erik found a sword swallower and grabbed the sword out of the man's hand and swung it threateningly at the cops.

"He's got a sword!" One the cops exclaimed. "You idiots! We've all got guns!"

"I'm gonna go now." Erik said, scared, placing the sword on the ground and running to Raiden. They were cornered by the cops until they found a rope going up.

(One jump ahead of the hoofbeats. One hop ahead of the losers. One trick ahead of disaster. They're quick but we're much faster. Here goes. Better throw my handing, wish me happy landing. All we gotta do is jump!)

The brothers ran, evading the cops until they found a tower and jumped out of the window on a carpet. The cops jumped too, but landed in fertilizer.

The brothers landed safely, using the carpet as a parachute, before letting it fly away.

"And now my brother." Erik said, taking apart the bread in half. "We feast."Raiden was about to take a bite when he saw two children looking in the garbage for food. Erik without a second thought, took a big bite of his bread. Raiden got up and handed the bread to the homeless children. Erik, feeling envy for his brother, handed his bread to the children.

At the end of the day, the brothers bid each other goodnight before the 6 year old boy said to him, "Erik , per favore non andare via." (Erik, please don't go away.)

He looked at Raiden in the eye and said, "Non si preoccupi."(Don't worry.) He placed sheets on his brother. "Ti prometto, non sto andando da nessuna parte." (I promise you, I'm not going anywhere.)

When Erik went to sleep, Raiden got up and looked at the sea view. "Someday Erik." Raiden said in an optimistic voice. "Things are gonna change. We'll be rich, live in a palace, have our family, and never have any problems whatsoever."

End of flashback…

It would only be another 3 months of living on the streets before the Ares Tribe forced them to join their forces. Over those long brutal years, the boys had been trained well, but they lost hope that they would have a happy life. They had gotten stronger, more agile, faster and more powerful. But they had grown cold in their hearts. They didn't see each other for about 6 years until they were allowed to live with each other. They endured years of abuse and punishments. Slade never approved of them, no matter what. He had been looking for the clan to exact his revenge and a former advisor tipped him off. When Erik killed his first mermaid, he never forgave himself. It was right to the tribe but for 10 long years, the brothers didn't understand morality anymore. The only love they got was each other. Until Raiden found his posse, the Blade Boys in the tribe. Raiden had grown distant of his brother as Erik started to grow distant as he seemed to want power. The Blade Boys were the most formidable team in the entire tribe. No one ever stood a chance against them. It was not until they were assigned the Mako mission that their lives would take a better path.


(The tale of Caesar Consorzio)
In the vast Canadian sea, swam a mermaid carrying knapsacks of tradable items. She was due to arrive at the Erudit Pod in Canada, where she would give a lesson to the mermaids in their mermaid school. Her name was Nixie.

(Where they banish you out if they don't like your brain. It's strict coding, but hey, it's home.)

The raven haired mermaid surfaced, eyeing the Hudson Bay where the pod was.

(Where the winds from the east, and the suns from the west, and the sand in the glass is right. Come on down stop on by, take it from I, enjoy a Canadian night!)

She swam past Canadian mermaids who greeted her warmly and led her to the mermaid school.

(Canadian nights! Like Canadian days! More often than not! Are colder than hot. In a lot of good ways! Canadian nights! In Canadian moons! A fool off his guard, could fall and fall hard, out there in his dooms!)

Nixie surfaced to meet a group of Northern hatchlings. "Ah, good evening. Please come closer."

Some mermaids swam and hung on Nixie's arm. "Too close. A little too close." She got free of the little children. "I am Nixie. A mermaid of mystery, of enchantment, and the finest merchandise this side of the Pacific today! Come on down!" She reached in her bag and pulled out a shell. "Combination of caller and also helps you find your way! It will not break." She noticed a crack. "It broke." She threw the shell away.

"Nixie." A hatchling said. "Can you tell me what this is?" She handed her a ceramic box that had intricate designs on it.

"Oh look at this." Nixie said. "I have never seen one of these intact before. This is the famous Red Sea Tupperware. Listen." She opened the box and blew a raspberry. "Ah still good." Some hatchlings then tried to leave but Nixie stopped them. "Don't go! I can see that your girls are only interested in the exceptionally rare. I think then you would be most rewarded to consider this." She pulled out of her bag, a golden lamp.

"It's just a lamp." A mermaid said unconvinced.

"Do not be fooled it's commonplace appearance." Nixie said smiling a snarky grin. "Like so many things it is not what is outside, but what is inside that counts. This is no ordinary lamp! It once changed the course of the lives of a young merman and mermaid. A merman who like this lamp was more than what he seemed, A Diamond in the Rough. Perhaps you would like to hear the tale?"

"YES!" The hatchlings said with absolute enthusiasm.

"Well then." Nixie said. "It begins on a simple afternoon in the Mediterranean sea. Where a young prince is forced to follow ancient tradition."

Flashback

24 years ago

Zannone Island, Italy…

A French mermaid surfaced out of the moon pool screaming, "Je ne l'ai jamais été aussi insulté!" (I have never been so insulted!)
"Antionette." King Nero said in worry. "Vous ne partez pas si vite êtes-vous?" (You're not leaving so soon are you?)

Antoinette turned around and said with absolute spite, pointing to her hair that was chopped short, "Bonne chance LUI marier!" (God luck marrying HIM off!)

After Antoinette swam back to the northern part of the clan, Nero said under his breath, "Caesar."

A young prince, just in his early teens, sat on the ledge of the moon pool, looking in the sky.

"Caesar?" His father said surfacing. "Io…” He was stopped by Caesar's pet shark. "Abbastanza!" (Enough!) The shark spat out some of Antoinette's blond hair. "Quindi, questo è il motivo per cui Antonietta furia!" (So, THIS is why Antoinette stormed off!)

"Oh Father." Prince Caesar said stroking his pet shark. "Nettuno è stato solo giocando con lei. Non stavi Nettuno? Stavi solo giocando con quella sopra gioiello, auto assorbito Antonietta Achmed non fosse vero?" (Nettuno was just playing with her. Weren't you Nettuno? You were just playing with that over jeweled, self absorbed Antoinette Achmed weren't you?)

King Nero gave his own son a mad glare. "Figlio, devi smettere di respingere ogni corteggiatore che vieni da chiamare. La legge dice..." (Son, you've got to stop rejecting every suitor that comes to call. The law says...)

"Devi essere sposata con un consorte dal clan." (You must be married to a consort.) Caesar finished the usual speech.

"Con la vostra quattordicesimo compleanno." (By your 14th birthday.) Nero said.

Caesar rolled his eyes. "La legge è sbagliata." (The law is wrong.)

"Tu hai solo più 3 lune piene." (You've only got 3 more full moons.)

"Father." Caesar said, levitating a ball of water and molding it into shapes. "Odio essere costretto in questo. Se io sposo, io voglio che sia sulla mia scelta." (I hate being forced into this. If I do marry, I want it to be on my own choice.)

"Caesar." Nero said. "Hai capito il compito per il quale la vostra nascita vi ha destinato? Le antiche tradizioni. Quando passo negli Inferi allora sarete al mattino e alla sera stella del Mediterraneo." (Do you understand the task for which your birth has destined you? The ancient traditions. When I pass into the Underworld then you will be the morning and evening star of the Mediterranean.)

"Per favore Father." Caesar said, moving the levitating water around. "Non ho mai fatto una cosa sul mio cuore. Non ho mai avuto degli amici veri."(I've never done a thing on my own heart. I've never had any real friends.) Nettuno looked at him. "Tranne te, Nettuno." (Except you Neptune.) Said shark flashed a toothy grin. "Io sono mai stato al di fuori delle mura del palazzo della grotta." (I've never even been outside of the palace cave walls.)

"Ma Caesar, tu sei regalità." (But Caesar, you're royalty.) Nero said.

"Allora forse io non voglio essere più reale!" (Then maybe I don't wanna be royal anymore!) Caesar exclaimed, slapping the water with his free hand.

Nero then swam out of the moon pool, fuming in anger. Caesar yelled in frustration, throwing the ball of floating water at the wall. Caesar was wearing his royal princely armor with a tanzanite gem in its place. He wore his royal ring with a tanzanite gem in it. He had no siblings. And the only
reason people became his friend, was because of his royal status. He was all alone. And now he was forced to be married when he just became a teenager. He ducked and swam, his tail flapping in the water as he surfaced in the main chamber of Zannone. He saw 3 people talking. His mother, Queen Leah, his father, and a black mermaid. She had a Bosnian accent.

"Vaša Visočanstva." (Your highnesses.) The mermaid bowed. "Došao sam iz istočnog dijela klana da traži ruku svog sina." (I have come from the eastern part of the clan to seek your son's hand.)

"Alia." Nero said. "Čuo sam vaše želje sudu mog sina." (I have heard of your desire to court my son.)

Queen Leah chuckled. "Jesi li siguran u ovo ? Moj sin može biti prilično izbirljivi." (Are you sure about this? My son can be quite picky.)

Alia chuckled. "Vjeruj mi. Ja ću osvojiti tvoj sin." (Trust me, I will win your son.)

Prince Caesar couldn't take it anymore. "How dare you! All of you! Treading water and deciding my future like I'm sort of debate! I am the one breathing in this body!" The prince swam back to the Royal chamber. He looked at his reflection in the water and said, "That's it!" So he waited until his parents went to sleep, he grabbed his mother's moon ring and made a little spell to record himself.

"Mother, Father." He said in the "video." "Se si sta guardando questo , sto già andato . Non si preoccupi. Sarò bene. Io non vengo di nuovo per altri 5 anni . State tranquilli , io non so chi mi incontrerò o quali nemici attirerò ma voglio sapere chi sono. Al fine di escludere questo regno , devo scoprire chi sono e dove il mio cuore si trova . Non posso farlo ed essere in un'unione organizzata allo stesso tempo. Mi dispiace. Un re deve essere sicuro di se stesso prima di poter governare. Non puoi fermare. Amo voi due. Tornerò quando sarò pronto in 5 anni." (If you are watching this, I am already gone. Don't worry. I will be fine. I am not coming back for another 5 years. Rest assured, I don't know who I will meet or what enemies I will attract but I will find out who I am. In order to rule this kingdom, I must find out who I am and where my heart lies. I cannot do that and be in an arranged marriage at the same time. I'm sorry. A king must be sure of himself before he can rule. You can't stop me. I love you two. I will be back when I'm ready in 5 years.)

He finished the spell with a few tears leaking out. He went to his sleeping parents and kissed them on the head. Before he could leave the island, something brushed against his blue tail. Looking down, he saw that it was Nettuno.

"Mi dispiace Nettuno." (I'm sorry Nettuno.) Caesar said. "Ma non posso stare qui e avere la mia vita vissuta per me. Mi mancherai." (But I can't stay here and have my life lived for me. I'll miss you.) He gave his pet shark a big hug before saying his final goodbye and leaving the Mediterranean Sea.

He was soon confronted by Rafiki, who was known throughout even the clan. (A.N for those of you who don't remember him, consult Birthmark, chapter 16.) Rafiki promised he would take him to someplace where he could start over.

"Is this a good idea?" Caesar asked, once they stopped. "Because it's not feeling like I thought it would."

"It's what you wanted Caesar," Rafiki said. "This will be the hardest part. Tomorrow, you will be out there, starting a new journey. Put this on." The African merman handed the Italian merman a brown leather armor that covered up his royal garb.

"How did you know I wanted this?" Caesar asked.
Rafiki laughed. "As I say before, follow Rafiki, he knows the way!" He ducked with the 13 year old merman following him.

They had arrived at…

"Canada?" Caesar asked, reaching the border. "Why here of all places."

Rafiki laughed loudly. "This is where your journey begins. Good luck." Rafiki disappeared under the water.

"Wait!" Caesar said. "Start here?" He looked at the bay. "Alright. The next phase of my life, begins!"

He swam to the far edge of the Canadian reef and found a bed of kelp to sleep on. Rafiki was right. Tomorrow, he would find a friend that would change his life.

The next morning, he got himself about 7 oysters. Breakfast was served. He heard dolphin clicking nearby and he swam towards it after he finished eating his breakfast. He crept behind a large rock to see a mermaid about his age, talking with a dolphin. She had chestnut brown hair and sparkling sapphire eyes. The only thing Caesar could say was, "Wow." She was pretty and kind. A rare combination he saw in a mermaid. He tried to get closer to this mermaid only to slip from the rocks. His blue green eyes met sapphire ones.

"I'm sorry." Caesar said. He waited for the mermaid to be scared of him. But she didn't budge.

"Are you alright?" She asked.

Caesar raised an eyebrow. "You're not scared of me?"

She chuckled. "I guess you don't meet many pod mermaids who believe that there can be peace. Of course, it's a very unpopular opinion. My sister is having a hard time believing it."

"Persephone!" A female Canadian voice sounded. "What could possibly be taking you so long? Don't keep us waiting!"

"Or what?!" Persephone shouted. "What can you do? I'm following every single freaking rule."

"What are you doing with this merman?" A Canadian mermaid asked, surfacing next to her.

"Ah you see, this is all very simple." Persephone said. "Play along." She whispered to Caesar. "I was just giving this new slave a new order to test him. I had just gotten him off the latest trade."

"I live to serve mermaids." Caesar said with a perfect lying voice.

"Don't stay here long." The Canadian mermaid said, swimming back to the pod. Meanwhile, Persephone led Caesar to a special place of her own. A small cave located outside of the Hudson bay.

While that was happening, dark forces were at work. A mermaid named Mirage had been looking for a precious lamp in the mystical Cave of Wonders. And the only way one could get in is if that one was the Diamond in the Rough. She ordered her slave, Iago, to power up the gem while she whispered, "Seek out my Diamond in the Rough." In the gem, a merboy with brown leather appeared. "It's Caesar! Nero's son!"

"That's him?" Iago asked. "That's who we've been looking for?"
"I think it's time I extend an invitation outside of his borders." Mirage said cruelly.

Persephone helped Caesar in the cave. "This is your place right?" He asked.

"Yes." Persephone said. "This is where I go to get away from my troubles. And that's not the only surprise in here." She pulled herself out of the cave and she started drying her tail Caesar could only stare at her in confusion. Persephone became water and then she started standing. On two legs. She wore shorts and a white tank top. Caesar's mouth dropped in shock. Even in the clan, they were forbidden to go to land.

"Legs?" He asked. "How did you?"

"I borrowed a moon ring." Persephone said. "Believe me, walking wasn't easy to learn. Would you like some?"

"No I'm good thanks." Caesar said. "How does it feel? Does it hurt?"

"No." She said. "It feels weird at first, but you get used to it. Although life in that Consorzio Clan must seem nice." Persephone said.

Caesar looked down as he was reminded of his old home. "Oh yeah. Sure."

"I've always wondered what it would be like to live in a clan." Persephone said in wonder. "And live with the united merpeople and live in peace."

"Oh sure." Caesar said with sarcasm. "People who tell you where to go and how to dress?"

Persephone scoffed. "Better than here. You're always living in conformity."

"You're not free to make your own choices." Caesar said.

"Sometimes you just feel…" Persephone said.

"You're just…" Caesar said.

"Trapped!" They said in unison before chuckling.

"So where are you from?" Persephone asked.

"Does it matter?" Caesar asked. "I ran away and I'm not going back for a long time."

"Why not?" Persephone asked, leaning down.

Caesar sighed. "My father is forcing me to get married."

"That's awful." Persephone said. "I wish I could help."

"I ran away because I wanted to start a new life." Caesar admitted.

"That's very wise of you." Persephone said. "Sometimes you have to give up what you have in order to find what's in your heart."

"Wow." Caesar said. "That's deep."

"I think they're in here!" Female voices sounded.

"They're after me!" They said in unison. "They're after you?"
"Persephone." Caesar said. "Do you trust me?"

"Yes." She said.

"Make yourself invisible." He said. "Then swim out of here."

Mermaids came in and he turned himself in and was sent to a nearby prison. After the mermaids left, Persephone sat in absolute guilt. "I didn't even know his name."

Meanwhile, Caesar lay in his prison cell. It was illegal in the sea that any member of any royal family was harmed even for pod mermaids. That was one of the reasons the Consorzio Clan remained isolated from the rest of the world.

"Uomo." (Man.) He said in his native tongue. "Avrei dovuto dire che ero il principe." (I should have said I was the prince.) He flapped his tail in frustration about 6 times against the stone floor. He knew he couldn't get out of the chains holding him. "Non ha importanza. Sono un principe tritone e lei è una sirena pod. In nessun modo si può essere amici e lei può aiutarmi a ricominciare. Io sono un pazzo." (It doesn't matter. I'm a merman prince and she's a pod mermaid. No way we can be friends and she can help me start over. I'm a fool.)

"You're only a fool if you give up, boy." An elderly voice sounded in the cave.

"Who are you?" Caesar demanded.

"A lowly prisoner like yourself." The voice said. "But you can be something more. You can have your freedom, if you do me one small favor."

"What can I do?" Caesar asked.

"There is a cave." The voice said. "A cave of wonders. It exists alright. All it takes is for a strong young tail and arms to carry out the treasure and then you will have the rest of it and your freedom. You can start over and this treasure can help you. So, do we have a deal?"

Caesar thought for a minute before saying "Deal." The chains melted off of him and he swam following the elderly mermaid who spoke before.

They arrived at a cave that looked like a tiger's head. As Caesar swam forward the cave actually spoke.

"WHO DISTURBS MY SLUMBER?"

"It is I." The young merman said. "Caesar."

The cave seemed to study him before saying, "PROCEED. TOUCH NOTHING BUT THE LAMP."

"Remember boy!" The mermaid yelled. "Bring me the lamp! The rest of the treasure is your but the lamp is mine!"

Taking a deep breath, Caesar ventured into the Cave of Wonders. He swam from tunnel to tunnel until he surfaced and saw before him, a swamp of gold and treasures.

"Wow!" He breathed. "Solo una manciata di questa roba mi farà più ricchi di mio padre." (Just a handful of this stuff will make me richer than my dad.) He looked around for a lamp but he didn't see a thing. "Tutto apposto. Basta avere in , trovare la lampada stupido e uscire . Facile come una
"passeggiata." (Alright. Just get in, find the stupid lamp and get out. Easy peasy) Caesar looked and
looked until he found a lonely cave with a light shining in it. He swam to the light and found a gold,
rusted lamp. Shurgging it off, he seam back until he found a roting octopus and screamed. But he
made the mistake of tumbling back and accidentally touching a ruby on a gold statue.

"INFIDEL!" The caves began to shake. "YOU HAVE TOUCHED THE FORBIDDEN
TREASURE! NOW YOU SHALL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AGAIN!" Panicking,
Caesar swam in every escape he could find. Luckily he found the main entrance where the mermaid
was waiting for him. But the water began pulling him in and he found a rock to hold onto

"The lamp!" She shouted. "Do you have it?"

"Yes." Caesar said. "Help me!"

"First give me the lamp!" Caesar hurriedly gave the old mermaid the lamp and she cackled in glee.
Then she started pushing him down.

"What are you doing?" The merman asked.

"Giving you your reward!" The mermaid said. "Your eternal reward."

Caesar then in anger, whipped water at the woman and she pushed him down, the cave swallowing
him.

Outside, Mirage who had reversed the aging potion, turning herself back into a younger her, laughed
in glee. "At last! I have it! I…" She looked around and she saw that she didn't have the lamp. "No.
NOOOOoOO!"

Inside the cave, the young Italian prince woke up, his head throbbing. Looking up he saw there was
a surface to the water he was in. He swam up and saw that the underwater cave was completely
sealed off. "That two faced daughter of a pig!" He cursed. "Too bad she never got this." He held up
the busted up lamp. "Sembra un inutile pezzo di spazzatura. C'è qualcosa di scritto qui, ma è difficile
da capire." (Looks like a worthless piece of junk. There's something written here, but it's hard to
make out.) Caesar rubbed the lamp only for it to glow in bright colors and shoot out fireworks.

A mist emerged from the lamp taking the form of a giant blue man screaming. "Oh! 10,000 years will
give you such a crick in the neck! Hold on a second." The blue man spun his head 306 degrees
while hollering. "Does it feel good to be out of there!" His wispy tail morphed into a microphone.
"I'm telling you, it's nice to be back ladies and gentlemen. Hi where are you from? What's your
name?"

The blue man out the microphone to Caesar's mouth. "My name is Caesar."

"Caesar?" The blue man asked. "As in Caesar salad?" He morphed into said salad and then into a
Roman man. "Et tu brutet?"

"I must have hit my head harder than I thought." Caesar said, holding his temple.

"Do you smoke?" The blue man asked. "Mind if I do?" He poofed into smoke while laughing and
took a look at Caesar. "Say, you're a lot smaller than my last master. Either that or I'm getting
bigger." He took a pose that showed his body fat. "Look at me from this side do I look different to
you?"

"Wait a minute." Caesar said. "I'm…your master?"
"That's right!" The blue man slapped on him a diploma and an academic cap. "He can be taught! What would you wish of me?" He morphed into a buff version of himself. "The ever imrepssive." He put himself in a box. "The loooong, contaiiiiiiiinnnnnned." He sat out of the box with a puppet. "The often imitated." He flew around creating copies of himself, "But never, duplicated, duplicated, duplicated! Geeeninnnie oooof the LAMP!" He morphed into Ed Sullivan. "Right here, direct from the lamp! Right here for your very own wish fulfillment! Thank you!"

Caesar cleared his throat with the graduation stuff gone. "Wish fulfillment?"

"3 wishes to be exact," Genie said with the clones disappearing. "And Ix-nay on the wishing for more wishes." He turned into a slot machine with 3 genies on the screen. "3." 3 genies came out of the machine wearing sombreros. "Uno does tres." He changed into a grey Groucho Marx. "No substitutions exchanges or refunds."

Ceaser laughed. "Now I'm definently dreaming."

"Master!" Genie yelled excited. "I don't think you realize what you got here. Why don't you just ruminante, whilst I illuminate the possibilities?" He waved his hand a screen appeared out of nowhere with a video playing on it. (A.N, the video is the scene, Friend Like Me from the movie Aladdin and I'm going to throw in the lyrics in honor of Robin Williams.)

Well, Ali Baba had them forty thieves,

Scheherazade had a thousand tales.

But master you're in luck, 'cause up your sleeves

You've got a brand of magic never fails

You've got some power in your corner now!

Some heavy ammunition in your camp!

You got some punch, pizzaz, yahoo and how.

See, all you gotta do is rub that lamp, and I'll say:

Chorus:

"Mr. Aladdin, sir, what will your pleasure be?

Let me take your order, jot it down?"

You ain't never had friend like me

Life is your restaurant and I'm your maitre'd

Come on whisper what it is you want;

You ain't never had friend like me!

Yes sir, we pride ourselves on service.

You're the boss, the king, the shah.

Say what you wish; it's yours, true dish.
How 'bout a little more baklava?

Have some of column A try All of column B,

I'm in the mood to help you, dude.

You ain't never had friend like me

Oh my. No no. My my my.

Can your friends do this?

Can your friends do that?

Can your friends pull this

Out their little hat?

Can your friends go poof?

Well looky here.

Can your friends go abracadabra, let her rip,

And then make the sucker disappear?

So don't just sit there slack-jawed, buggy-eyed,

I'm here to answer all your mid-day prayers,

You've got me bona fide certified;

You've got a genie for charge d'affaires.

I've got a powerful urge to help you out,

So what you wish, I really wanna know?

You've got a list that's three miles long, no doubt,

Well all you've gotta do is rub like so, and oh -

Mr. Aladdin, sir, have a wish or two or three.

I'm on the job you big nabob!

You ain't never had a friend, never had a friend,

You ain't never had a friend, never had a friend,

You ain't never had a friend like me.

You ain't never had a friend like me

The video ended with a giant "applause" on flashing on the screen.

"So what'll it be Master?" Genie asked.
"Let me get this straight," Caesar said. "You're gonna grant me any three wishes I want?"

Genie turned into William F. Buckley. "Almost. There are a few provisos, a couple of quid pro quos."

"Like" Caesar asked.

"Rule number one," Genie said. "I can't kill anybody." He chopped off his head. Caesar held his neck in reflex. "So don't ask. Rule number 2, I can't make anybody fall in love with anybody else." He put his head back on and his face turned into a giant pair of lips and kissed Caesar. "You little punim there. RULE NUMBER 3!" He fell back and slowly rose, turning into a rotting corpse. Caesar was pretty sure he was gonna be sick from the smell. "I can't bring people back from the dead. It's really not a pretty picture. I don't like doing it!" Genie morphed back into himself. "Other than that, you got it."

Unfortunately, Caesar had a plan in his mind. "Provisos? You mean limitations? On wishes? Some all powerful genie you are. You can't even bring back people from the dead! I don't know, you probably can't even get me out of this cave. Looks like I'm gonna have to leave you and find another way out."

A giant foot stepped on the water in front of Caesar. "Excuse me? Are you looking at me? Did you rub my lamp? Did you wake me up? Did you bring me here? And all of a sudden you're walking out on me? I don't think so! Not right now! You're getting your wishes so SIT DOWN!"

Genie conjured up a magic carpet on which Caesar and Genie got on. "In case of emergency, the exits are here, here, here, here, here, anywhere! Keep your hands and tail inside the carpet. We're OUTTA HERE!" They blasted out of the cave on their way to the northern Canadian sea.

Genie led the carpet to an isolate destination where it was freezing cold. Luckily, Italy was a Northern country so it was prone to very cold winters. But Northern merpeople are immune to cold weather.

"Thank you for choosing Magic Carpet for all your travel needs." Genie said, dressed as a flight attendant. "Don't slide off until the rug has come to a complete stop. Goodbye now, thank you, thank you, goodbye." Genie turned back into himself. "Well, how about that Mr. Doubting Mufasa?"

"Oh you sure showed me." Caesar said, crossing his arms. "Now about my three wishes."

Genie put his hand dramatically at his ear. "Dost my ears deceive me? Three? You are down by ONE boy!"

"Um technically I never actually wished to get out of the cave. You did that on your own." Caesar explained.

Genie opened his mouth to say something but his jaw dropped when he realized that he had been tricked. He had been tricked by a 13 year old merman. "Boy I feel sheepish." He transformed into a sheep. "Alright you baaaaadd boy. But no more freebies."

Caesar shrugged. "Fair deal. So now 3 wishes. I wanna make em count. What would you wish for Genie?"

Genie stumbled back in surprise. "Me? No one's ever asked me that before. Well in my case…no forget it."

"What?" asked Caesar. "Come one tell me, tell me."
Genie looked sad before saying and gesturing to his gold cuffs, "Freedom."

Caesar looked at the lamp and back at him. "You're a prisoner?"

"It's all part and parcel of the whole genie gig." Genie said before talking in a booming voice. "PHENOMINAL COSMIC POWERS!" He shrunk back into the lamp. "Itty bitty living space."

"Oh Genie." Caesar said, feeling sympathy for him. "That's terrible."

"But oh." Genie said, coming out of the lamp. "To be free. Not to have to go." POOF. "What do you need?" POOF? "What do you need?" POOF. "What do you need? To be my own master. Such a thing would be greater than all the magic and all the treasures in all the world! But what am I talking about? It's not gonna happen. Genie, wake up and smell the hummus."

"Why?" Caesar asked. "Can't you wish your way out?"

"It's not that simple Princy boy." Genie said. "The only and one way I get out of this is my master wishes me out. So you can guess how often that's happened."

"I'll do it." Caesar said eagerly. "I'll set you free."

"Uh huh." Genie said. "Yeah right." His head morphed into Pinocchio. Caesar pushed the long nose back.

"Genie I promise." Caesar said. "After I make my first two wishes, I'll use my third wish to set you free." He extended his hand and Genie shook it.

"Alright." Genie said, smiling big and wide. "Let's make some magic! How about it? What is it you want most?"

"Well..." Caesar thought about this before speaking again. "There's this girl."

There was a buzzing sound and a no heart sign was flashing on the Genies chest. "Wrong! I can't make anyone fall in love remember?"

"No Genie." Caesar said. "I'm not ready for that yet. I mean sure she's smart and fun and pretty. She's got this wisdom in her and I believe that she's the key to helping me start over and help me figure out who I am."

"Ah." Genie said understanding. "A friend who can help you as you can help her."

"But she's a pod mermaid and I'm a merman, regardless of my royal status." Caesar said. "And she visits land. To even have a chance I'd have to... wait. Can you give me legs?"


Caesar took a big breath and said with absolute bravado, "Genie, I wish for you to grant me legs!"

"Alright!" Genie yelled. He then changed into a doctor. "Now son." He said in a Southern accent. "This will feel very weird. Are you sure about this, you tyke?"

"I can take it." Caesar said.

"Once you step in the circle." Genie said impersonating Nicholas Cage. "There is no going back."
Caesar thought about this. If he did this, it would mean going against ancient tradition. But he didn't care. He was pretty sure royalty running away was breaking tradition.

"Let's do this." Caesar said.

"Alright merman." Genie said transforming into Ursala. "Don't worry, I won't ask for your voice. YET!" Genie looked at him pale as a sheet. "I'm just kidding!" Genie had morphed into his doctor mode. He conjured up a glowing zipper on his tail. He pulled it down in lightning speed and as he did, his tail split apart, scales became human flesh, fins shrunk into feet and he grew extra parts. Yeah, those parts. To Caesar, it felt like his tail was going numb and then split in two tails. Once that process was complete, he looked down on himself. Instead of his blue tail that he was born with, he saw two legs that matched his creamy skin. They had some muscle growing on them and there was some hair growing on them. To be sure, he ran his hand on his legs and felt not scales, but smooth human flesh. On his midsection were white boxers.

"I have legs." Caesar said in amazement. "I have legs!"

"Alright C." Genie said. "Let me help you up." He took his hand and Caesar almost fell down instantly. Genie then taught him how to walk and run. It was tiring and his legs were sore, but it was worth it. Genie morphed into a woman with an apron and cried with a handkerchief. "My baby boy! Taking his first steps! He's walking! Where did the time go?"

Caesar put on a sad smile, remembering of how his mother was so proud of him that he did his first display of abilities.

"But now." Genie had morphed into a tailor. "First those white boxers, much too Mowgli here, and what are we trying to say? Just got legs? Let's work with me here." With a snap of his fingers, a flash blinded Caesar for a second and he looked down to see himself wearing jeans, sneakers, and a white t shirt.

"I like it!" Caesar exclaimed. "Very royal."

"Now." Genie said still in tailor mode. "Still needs something. What does it say to me? It says…..mode of transportation! And what better way to make yourself your presentable debut in Ontario Canada than your very own Ferrari?" He snapped his fingers and an indigo Ferrari appeared.

"Uh Genie?" Caesar asked. "What is that?"

"That, kid, is a car." Genie impersonated Indiana Jones.

Caesar groaned. "I didn't think this through! Genie is it too soon to make my second wish?"

Genie put on a lab coat and a humongous calculator. "According to these calculations." He took an Einstein voice. "No."

"Genie." Caesar said. "I wish for you to grant me knowledge about land."

"I see." Genie said. "In order to get the girl, you gotta blend in. Smart kid." He put his finger to Caesar's head and zapped it with enough information of land to not make a scene. "He's got the legs, he's got the outfit, and he's got the brain! But we're not though yet! Hang on to your tail kiddo, we're gonna make you a star!"

Later, Genie disguised as a guardian drove Caesar to Ontario with sunglasses and all. Caesar had taken on a fake name, Charlie De Costa. He walked through town, taking in the sights, really looking like a 13 year old tourist. He saw all the attractions with Genie acting like his uncle. Caesar
never had an uncle or any relatives. It felt good that a person actually respected his opinion.

He was at a café, where he saw Persephone in a floral dress. "Hey." Caesar said to Persephone. "You look good with that dress."

"Um." She said. "Thanks?"

"I'm Charlie." He shook his hand but accidentally knocked over her drink. She looked at him outrage before running to the bathroom. Caesar slapped himself on the head.

"Hey kid." A man said from behind him. "You wanna have a second chance? See where she hangs out at night."

"Thanks man." Caesar said. "I needed that."

"Trust me kiddo. Girls at this age are just coming into their fruition. Better go get her before it's too late."

Later that night, Caesar paced in the cave while Genie was meditating.

"What am I gonna do?" He asked.

"Young Grasshopper." Genie impersonated a typical Chinese Sensei. "The most important goal of any land boy or merman when he talks to a blooming flower, is to come home in one piece."

"Genie!" Caesar exclaimed. "I need help!"

"Now little prince." Genie took the form of a dad with a tie and glasses. "If you want to be friends with a land girl, you gotta go for the heart."

"What?" Caesar asked confused.

"Tell her, the TRUUUUUUTH!" Genie said.

"No way!" Caesar exclaimed. "If Persephone found out I'm a merman prince who nearly got her splashed in public, she'd laugh at me."

A lightbulb appeared over Caesar's head with Genie's face on it"A woman appreciates a man who can make her laugh." Caesar growled as he used his powers to switch off the light. Genie morphed back into himself. "C, all joking aside, you really ought to be yourself."

"Hey that's the last thing I wanna be." Caesar said. "Ok I just gotta be smooth, cool, confident." He stood up tall and proud. "How do I look?"

Genie sighed sadly. "Like..Charlie." Caesar dived in the sea, his tail forming as he swam. Never had Caesar been so thankful to have his legs fusing back together. This was the real him but he had to get close to Persephone his way. Seeing her on a beach, he dried himself and walked over to her.

"What are you doing here?" She asked. Caesar gulped and sat down next to her.

"Well I just saw you sitting on this beach and I just thought I would take this opportunity to apologize for spilling that water on you." Caesar said.

"I…" Persephone said. "Well thank you for your apology."

"No problem." Caesar said.
"So what's your name?" She asked.

"Charlie." Caesar said quickly. He had to keep his identity a secret until he felt she was really trustworthy. "What's yours?"

"Persephone." She said. "But call me Seph." He stretched his arms, enough for Persephone to see him in the moonlight. "Wait. Do I know you?"

"No." Caesar said. "Why?"

"You remind me of someone I... met while diving." Seph said.

"Diving?" Caesar asked. "I don't dive. I don't even swim at all!"

"Oh." Seph said deflated. "You're not him then."

"It's ok Persephone." Caesar said. "People say I look like someone a lot."

"Oh really?" Seph asked.

"Yep." Caesar said. "Hey, I'm not doing anything tonight. You don't wanna go for a walk around town? You could show me the sights, we could have a blast."

"Is it safe at this time of night for a couple of 12/11 year old kids to be walking around Ontario at this time of night?"

"Sure, do you trust me?" Caesar got up and held out his hand.

Persephone's ears picked up on that sentence. It was the same sentence that the merman she met earlier used. "What?"

"Do you trust me?"

Persephone thought for a minute before taking his hand. "Yes."

The two mer kids walked around town. It was a sight to see and behold. Caesar had never been on land and he was blown away by the things they had to offer. Yes he knew about them, but to actually see them in person was a true marvel for the young merboy. They had laughs and times of joy as they got to know each other. Very very well. This friendship of theirs was progressing very well. But they only saw each other as good friends, For then. They found themselves sitting on the rocks near the shore.

"Beautiful night, isn't it?" Seph asked.

"Sure is." Caesar said in awe.

"Too bad some mermaids couldn't even see this from my pod." Seph said.

"Their loss." Caesar agreed before even realizing what he said. "I mean..." Before Caesar knew it, he was pushed in the water, his legs fusing together to form a long blue tail.

A head popped out, it was a little angry Persephone. As a mermaid. "I knew it! You are the merboy I met!"

"Seph I..."
"Did you think I was stupid?" Seph asked. "That I wouldn't find out?" She gave him her famous glare that clearly said, "go on."

"Uh..." Caesar said. "The thing is...I became a merman, a few years ago. I move around from place to place to avoid people finding me out. But I am from land."

"Sure." Persephone said a little unsure. The two mer children raced in the Canadian waters for a while before Persephone had to go back to her home with the pod.

Caesar swam back to his hideout and swam finally contempt that he had an actual friend who saw him as something than a title.

The next day, he woke up feeling like it was another day. Actually he felt like it was the day after a party.

"So C." Genie said. "You got the legs, you got the friend, now whatcha gonna do?" Caesar sat still thinking about that question. He hadn't thought that far. He couldn't break his promise but he also couldn't stop playing this card. "Pssst. Your line is I'm going to free the genie. Anytime now."

"Genie." Caesar said. "I can't."

"Sure you can!" Genie said, grabbing his face and making fishy noises. "Genie I wish you free."

"Stop it!" Caesar swiped his hands. "First off all, that is not how merpeople talk. And second, I can't because I can't do this without you Genie."

"But Caesar." Genie said. "You've got everything you've ever wanted."

"Look I'm sorry." Caesar said. "I really am. But Persephone seems better off knowing I'm just a human under a spell. Now she's even betraying her pod, just to see me. No, she's betraying her pod to see Charlie! Without you, I'm just Caesar, the runaway prince."

"C you won!" Genie said.

"Because of you!" Caesar shouted. "The only reason I can be someone else is because of you! What if they find out I'm not from here? What if Persephone were to find out? She would hate me. Genie, I can't keep this up on my own. I'm sorry but I can't wish your freedom."

"Fine I understand." Genie said seriously, shrinking back into his lamp. "After all you lied to everyone else. I was beginning to feel left out. Now if you'll excuse me, Master."

"Genie, I'm really sorry!" Caesar pleaded but was replied to by a raspberry. Caesar threw the lamp across the cave in frustration. "What am I doing? Genie's right. I gotta tell the truth." He swam out of the cave to meet the mermaid. Meanwhile, Iago had swum to the cave and snatched the lamp.

Mirage had finally gotten the lamp after Iago delivered it to her. She watched the two mer children walk around the park.

"Look at that royal brat." Iago sneered. "Chit chatting with that pipsqueak!"

"They won't be chatting for much longer." Mirage said, rubbing the lamp.

The Genie came out looking mad. "Look C, I'm not in the...you're not Caesar are you?"

"God forbid!" Mirage shouted. "I am your new master now!"
"That's what I was afraid of." Genie whispered.

"Genie, grant me my first wish." Mirage commanded. "I wish to rule on high as Pod Leader!"

As the children talked, the clouds grew dark and ominous. Persephone muttered, "Mirage."

"Who?" Caesar asked.

"One of the members of the pod." Seph explained. "She was always looking for power and to rule."

The children were suddenly transported to behind the pod, on rocks, where the pod was forced to submit to Mirage's will.

"Mirage you vile betrayer!" A Canadian mermaid shouted.

"That's Leader to you!" Iago shouted.

"Oh shut it merman!" A mermaid shouted. Mirage without a second thought, blasted her, turning her into a squid.

"Any more objections?" Mirage asked. "Now you will obey me!"

"We will never obey you!" Persephone shouted, joining them in the water.

"Why am I not surprised?" Iago yelled with sarcasm.

"Mirage!" Persephone yelled. "You don't have to do this!"

"Oh I don't?" She shrieked. "I spent 10 moons looking for this lamp! They said I was crazy! And now the treasure, is mine! If you won't bow before a Pod Leader, then you will cower before a sorceress! Genie, my second wish! I wish to be the most powerful sorceress in the world!"

"Genie stop!" Caesar ran to him, trying to stop his zapping finger, but no luck prevailed.

"Sorry kid." Caesar said sadly. "I've got a new master now."

"Ladies and Gentlemen." Iago clapped loudly. "A cold Canadian welcome, for sorceress Mirage!"

"Now where were we?" She asked. "Ah yes. Abject humiliation!" Using her moon ring, he forced all the mermaids to bow to her. She turned to Seph. "Oh Persephone! There's someone I'm dying to introduce you to!"

"Mirage!" Caesar shouted. "Step down!"

Mirage started breaking into song as she used her magic to pull them close together. "(It's Charlie. Yes, it is he but not as you know him. Read my lips and come to grips with reality. Yes meet a blast from your past, who's lies were too good to last! Say hello to your precious little Charlie!)" She then used her moon ring to change Caesar back into his merman form with his prince garbs on.

"Or should we say, Prince Caesar Consorzio?" Iago sneered.

Seph could only stare in shock. "Charlie?"

"Persephone." Caesar said. "I tried to tell you but…"

Mirage had pushed him away and used her dark magic to send him far away. ("So Charlie, turns out
to be merely a nasty. Just a con, need I go on? Take it from me. His personality flaws, give me adequate cause, to send him packing on a one-way trip so his prospects take a terminal dip. His assets are frozen, the venue's chosen is at the ends of the earth! So long! Ex Prince and Charlie!

Caesar had landed in the arctic, freezing like hell.

"Oh this is all my fault." He muttered. "I should have freed the Genie when I had the chance! I shouldn't have run away!" As if someone turned on a switch, his father's words rang in his head: Whenever you make a mistake or a mess, that's a sign of an opportunity to set a new course for the future.

Caesar knew what he had to do. "Somehow, I gotta go back and set things right." He dived back in and swam to the Hudson Bay.

Inside the pod territory, Mirage ruled with an iron fist. All her life, she wanted to rule and to be the best.

In one of the cave entrances, Caesar had sneaked and was close to grabbing the lamp when Mirage sensed him and moved to strike.

"HOW MANY TIMES MUST I KILL YOU BOY?!" She shouted.

"Seph, get the lamp!" Caesar shouted, wrestling Mirage.

Persephone moved to grab the lamp but was trapped by Mirage's magic.

"Persephone, your time is up!" Mirage shouted. Persephone was trapped in a giant hourglass and sand was pouring on her.

"Don't worry boy!" Mirage shouted. "I'm just getting warmed up!" She breathed fire and a circle of fire surrounded Caesar. "Get the point?" A bunch of swords fell around Caesar.

"Enough with the goddamn puns!" Caesar shouted. "Or are you afraid to fight me yourself your cowardly serpent!"

"A snake?" Mirage asked. "Perhaps then you would like to see how snakelike I can be!" Mirage had transformed into a giant sea serpent. Caesar had taken a sword and remembering his training, swung his sword like a professional. He had managed to stab her a couple of times.

"Rick 'em, rack 'em, rock 'em, rake! Stick that sword into that snake!" Genie had transformed into cheerleaders.

"Stay out of this!" Mirage shouted.

"Mirage, Mirage." Genie said half heartily. "She's our girl, if she can't do it, GREAT!"

Caesar continued the battle with Mirage until she wrapped him in his coils. "You fool! You thought you could defeat the most powerful being on Earth! Without the genie boy, you're nothing!"

"Genie?" Caesar asked. "Genie. The genie has more power than you'll ever have. He gave you your power! He can take it away! Face it Mirage, you're still just second best!"

"You're right." Mirage said. "His power does exceed my own. But not for long. Slave! I make my third wish. I wish to be, an all powerful genie!"

Genie sighed in sadness. "Alright, your wish is my command. Way to go C." Closing his eyes, he
zapped Mirage into a red genie.

"The power!" She screamed. "The absolute power!"

Persephone who had gotten out of the hourglass thanks to Caesar shouted, "What have you done?"

"Trust me!" Looking over, he saw a black lamp form.

"The universe is mine to command!" Mirage screamed while experimenting with her new found power. "To control!"

"Not so fast Mirage!" Caesar shouted. "Aren't you forgetting something?"

"Yeah." Seph shouted. "You wanted to be a genie? You got it!"

Gold cuffs appeared on Genie Mirage's wrists. "WHAT?!"

"And everything that goes with it!" Caesar shouted holding the black lamp. "Phenomenal cosmic powers…"

"NO!" Mirage shouted, dragging Iago with her into the lamp, never to come out.

"Itty bitty living space."

"Caesar, you little genius you!" Genie exclaimed.

Later, Persephone had to take Caesar outside of the Canadian border to avoid conflict. Mirage's lamp had been sent by Genie to the Cave of Wonders. Although some mermaids were starting to doubt what they had been taught about mermen.

"Caesar." Seph spoke. "I understand why you did what you did but I had a right to know who your were. What did you think I was gonna do? Turn you in? If you wanted to go low profile, so can I. It's like I was playing with fire and didn't even know it."

"Yeah." Caesar said. "I was a jerk for not telling you and for that I'm sorry."

"Caesar, you've shown me what it's like to have a life." Seph said. "For that I thank you."

"Well?" They heard Genie from behind. "Say the word, and you two will be on land again."

"But what about your freedom?" Caesar asked.

"It's only an eternity of servitude." Genie said. "Caesar, Persephone. You two have one life. Better spend it well."

"Guys." Caesar said. "I'm sorry, but if I'm gonna have the life I want, I can't deny who I am inside." Caesar raised the lamp high in the air. "Genie, I wish for your freedom!"

"One pair of wait what?" Genie was baffled.

"Genie." Seph said. "You're free." A bright light surrounded Genie and his gold cuffs were gone.

"I'm free." He said. "I'm free! Say something ridiculous! Wish for the Nile! Ah forget that! I'm free!"

While Genie was bouncing in excitement, Persephone and Caesar looked at each other.
"Persephone." Caesar said. "You've been my guiding light, but we need to understand who we are
before we can become real good friends."
"I understand." Persephone said. "So this is goodbye?"
"I guess." Caesar said. "Don't you have family to get back to?"
"My sister is on a studying trip and my mother is dead from Fire Fever, so no." Seph answered. "You actually inspired me to start thinking about my life."
"I'll see you again." Caesar said. "Someday." And he ducked under the surface. It wouldn't be for another 3 years until they met again.

As Caesar was swimming on the way, he was stopped by Genie who had morphed from being a shark.
"Genie?" He asked. "What are you doing?"
"Just came by to say goodbye and to wish you luck." He said. "And also to give you this." Indigo light surrounded Caesar as he was lifted from the water and he got dry, revealing his legs.
"I thought they were gone," Caesar said, still in mid air.
"Well kid." Genie said. "It looks like you're gonna need them."
"I'll miss you." Caesar said, hugging Genie tightly.
"I'm gonna miss you too," Genei said, returning the hug and setting Caesar back in the sea. "Now. Ciao! I'm history! I'm mythology! I don't care whatever. I'm free!"

Smiling, Caesar ducked under the waves and swam to Madagascar, where he would meet two other mermen his age who became more than best friends. They became brothers.

End of Flashback….

"And that my friends is the end of the tale." Nixie said.
"What happens next?" A hatchling asked.
"Well when they were 19/18, they got married and bore a son." Nixie finished.
"How do you know such tales?" A young mermaid asked.
"You'd be surprised what tales I hear of in my travels."

(The tale of Zoe Nightshade Khatha)

This tale of Mimmi/Zoe is not like any you have heard of. It is quite a tragic one. Are you prepared?

Flashback…

There was a time when Mimmi felt like she belonged. In the Erudit Pod in Canada. Where she had a place to call home. She had her best friend, Amaril were the closest pair anyone could think of. They did everything together. They shared equal smarts and were there for each other. It was Amaril who gave Mimmi happiness when she was abandoned by her mother. Never in her 10 years had Mimmi
felt so happy.

One day, all that changed.

When Mimmi was 10, she was practicing her magic, she felt her hands get roped.

"Mimmi you're under arrest." A councilwoman said to her.

"On what charge?" She asked.

"You'll find out in court." She said.

"Please!" Mimmi cried. "I never did anything wrong!"

In 2 days, the trial took place. The 10 year old mermaid was at the center, chained like an animal.

"Read the charges." Veridia demanded.

"Mimmi of the Erudit Pod." Another Councilwoman. "You stand here before this council accused of illegal black magic and attempting to assassinate the pod leader."

"But I never did it!" Mimmi pleaded.

"Silence!" Mimmi was trembling with fear. The trial continued for what seemed like hours. And the moment of truth came in.

"Amaril." Veridia said. "Come and testify." Mimmi looked at her best friend with tears in her eyes.

"Your Honor." She said. "I heard Mimmi talking to herself about overthrowing the court. She makes poisons by night! She wants absolute power! She caught me once, spying on her. I'll murder you she says, if you testify against me in court. But I am under your protection am I not? I say this girl is black magic!"

Mimmi could only stare in disbelief. Her best friend who she had cared for very deeply had testified against her when she needed her the most. The Court took a recess and the jury came back.

"Mimmi of the Erudit Pod, you are hereby in this court been found guilty!" Veridia shouted. "Your sentence is to be life in the Boiling Bay."

"Please!" Mimmi pleaded. "I didn't do anything! I swear!" As she screamed and shouted, water began churning, and objects began breaking.

"You see?" Amaril said. "She has dark magic in her!"

"PLEASE NO!" Mimmi shouted as she was thrown into her cell. The Boiling Bay was the most infamous prison in the entire ocean. It was inescapable.

"I don't want you to take this the wrong way." Amaril said in front of the bars. "But I hate you."

"Amaril." Mimmi said, swimming to the bar. "Help me get out. Help me wake up. This some sort of dream!"

Amaril chuckled. "Mimmi how can you graduate mermaid school at age 10 and still be so naive? You see it was I who used dark magic not to assassinate the pod leader but to make it look like it was going to happen."
"But why me?" Mimmi asked.

"You see, you were the best in the pod and I could not have that." Amaril explained. "I needed to siphon information from you and then when we were equal, I had to get you out of the way. And now, my plan has come to fruition. Hope to see you sometime again."

Mimmi couldn't believe her ears. Her heart felt shattered. "Mama where are you?"

"Your mother's dead and buried Zoe!" Amaril said. "Goodbye."

"Amaril please!" Mimmi cried only for her words to fall on deaf ears. "Amaril I swear! YOU WILL BURN IN HELL!" Mimmi swam back to her cell bed and cried herself to sleep.

A month later, Pod Leader Nerida visited the prison. She saw Mimmi with pity and offered a chance to repent for her sins.

One day, Veridia visited the prison and said to Mimmi. "I'm giving you a chance to be free. To go live with the Mako Pod. Do you take it?"

Mimmi looked up and said, "Anything to get out of this."

"But mark this." Veridia looked her in the eye. "If you ever come even near the edge of Canadian waters, I will come to you in the black of some terrible night with a pointy reckoning that will shudder you! And you know I can do it."

A week later, Mimmi was released and Esmeralda Marino took her under her custody where she met Ondina. But however, she became the target of bullying in the Mako Pod and Ondina defended her in every step of the way.

End of flashback…

Zac woke up, feeling scared. He had just witnessed the entire thing. He needed to talk to Mimmi. He went to the grotto where he found Ondina, Mimmi, Evie, Thalie, Phoebus, Rita and Esmeralda.

"Mimmi?" He asked. "Can I talk to you for a second?"

"If you've got something to say." Ondina said. "Say it here."

"Mimmi." Zac took a step closer to the Canadian girl. "I know about Amaril and what she did."

Mimmi stood still as a pole. She dropped the empty brass pot and didn't know it. "How? It doesn't matter. I should have done something! I should have realized she was just using me."

"Zoe." Zac said silencing her. "It wasn't your fault. She tricked you." Mimmi fell in Zac's arms as he gave her a hug. "You'd never poison anybody."

"Thank you Zac." Mimmi said smiling.

"What's going on?" Evie asked. "Who's Amaril?" Zac then explained what he had seen.

"So let me get this straight." Thalie said. "Your childhood nemesis put you behind bars because she was jealous of you? That is really messed up!"

"I had a childhood nemesis." Rita said. "Leona. She used to put sea slime in my hair."

"Jake Puckett." Phoebus said. "If I didn't do his homework, he'd give me a swirly."
"Mimmi I'm so sorry." Evie said.

"Me too." Thalie agreed.

"Thanks guys," Mimmi said.

"Mimmi."

"Is that why you detested Yukimi?"

"Yes." She said. "She reminds me of Amaril."

"How did you know about Mimmi's past?" Ondina asked.

"I had a vision." Zac answered.

"Like when you saw the merman chamber?" Rita asked.

"Not exactly.

"This time I was seeing through Mimmi's eyes. I saw what she was feeling. I could even feel your pain."

There was silence before Mimmi spoke. "I've had visions too. That's how I knew you were in the chamber last full moon. Yukimi said that we're connected in some way."

"I told you."

"I knew it." Esmeralda whispered to her husband. "I knew it."

"It is not new?"

"Why is this happening?"

"I wasn't sure until now." Rita said. "The night Evie, Rose, Kimi, and Helen got their powers, you two were affected as well."

"Mako must have given them more powers."

"More like reawakened their abilities." Phoebus whispered to his wife.

"That's gotta be it right?"

"We're telling them next full moon." Phoebus whispered to Esme.

Later that night, Evie and Thalie sat out on the docks.

"What are we gonna do?"

"Zac's powers are getting stronger and Mimmi is somehow dragged in all this. We have to find out why."

"I agree." Thalie said. "Before we do something we regret, let's seek advice from someone our age."

Evie and Thalie swam then to the Mako Pod where they would meet a merman expert. A mermaid who studied mermen.

"Thalie." Evie said. "What makes you think she'll be out here this late?"

"Because Evie." Thalie said. "She does midnight classes." They looked for the expert but couldn't find her.

"Not tonight she doesn't." Evie said. "Let's go."

"Hold on I know she's here." Thalie said. "Marissa? Marissa?"
"What do you want?" A voice asked from behind Thalie. It was a girl with light skin, cyan/teal eyes and brown hair. "You ok kid? I didn't mean to startle you, I was just underneath this rock looking for my comb."

"We need to see Marissa." Evie said. "It's an emergency!"

"Well you're lucky you caught me." Marissa said. "Normally I would have gone to sleep hours ago. What do you want?"

"It's about her boyfriend." Thalie pointed to Evie. "We need your advice."

"Well I already missed my aerobics class." Marissa said. "Be right back." She dove down and picked up a whole bag of squid. "What is this about?" We explained to her everything. "A land boy attracted to a merman being chamber is unusual but not unheard of. Of course it's a lot more complex than a natural merman being drawn. For one thing this Zac, is already closer to the more ancient side of Mako."

"So that's why he's drawn there almost every full moon." Evie said in realization.

"This is true." Marissa said. "Always when I miss a class I pig out instead."

"I thought he would be power hungry like when he got the trident." Thalie said. "But he's actually controlling it."

"Oh for now!" Marissa said. "But the feud is a terrible thing, and can overcome the sweetest of people! Turning them deadly!"

"That's actually why we came here." Evie said. "His powers are growing."

"Eh." Marissa said. "Doesn't surprise me."

"There's got to be a cure for being a merman right?" Thalie asked.

"Oh of course!" Marissa agreed. "For one thing, you can shoot him with a silver bullet!"

Evie and Thalie turned pale as a ghost. "Sho-shoot him?!"

"But then, wouldn't he be… you know?" Evie asked.

"Dead? Yes." Marissa said. "But he'll be cured!"

"Isn't there any other way?" Thalie asked.

"Well you could try that potion of 50 moons." Marissa said. "But you have to leave him in that glowing sphere."

"Told ya." Evie whispered to Thalie. "How long?"

"Long enough to…" Marissa made slicing noises.

"Ok." Thalie said. "But is there any cure that ends up with the merman, you know, ALIVE?!"

"Uh." Marissa said. "Most people don't want the merman alive."

"But this is my step brother!" Thalie exclaimed.
"I'm sorry." Marissa said. "I can't be of any help."

"Thank you." Evie and Thalie said. "Oh Evie. Zac is doomed."

"Come on girls!" Marissa said. "Don't look so down! I bet if you find out what it is in this chamber that's drawing him, things might work out after all. However you gotta do it before the next full moon."

Evie and Thalie looked at each other in worry. "The next full moon? Why?"

"After that, who knows what he'll be like? But I will tell you this: Everything you know about yourselves and the people around you is about to change forever."
A Night to Remember

You might wanna get a pillow for this.

Thalie's POV

We were in the moon pool discussing the matter of Zac and the merman chamber when Mimmi started zoning out.

"Mimmi!" Ondina snapped Mimmi out of her daze. "You even listening?"

"Sorry." The Canadian mermaid said.

"What do you think?" Ondina asked. "I say it's a dumb idea."

"I'm with Dinie." Helen agreed.

"It makes sense." Sirena said.

"We bring her to the moon pool and teach her to push through the moon spell." I said.

"Just like we learned when we were little." Mimmi agreed.

"Phoebus told me that you, Ondina used to hide under a clam." Rose teased Ondina.

"Who cares?" Ondina snapped. "We've got more bigger problems."

"Evie mastering the moon spell means one less problem we have to deal with." Kimi said.

"And in the meantime Zac will be drawn to that chamber like a fish on a line." Helen said. "We can't let that happen."


At the cafe

Raiden's POV

I sat at the Ocean Cafe, drinking my soda when I saw Thalie walk in. Thalie is one heck of a woman. She's smart, fun, brave, and beautiful. She's a natural leader with these amazing eyes. And that hair and her smile? She's amazing.

"What are you doing staring at her?" I heard Cam ask from behind me.

"Uh, I just happened to see her." I lied.

"Raiden it's fine." Cam said, sitting down. "I get it. You have a crush on her don't ya?"

"What?" I spluttered. "No!"

"Yes you do." Cam teased. "You wuv her."

I opened my mouth to say something but I closed it, realizing that he was right. "You know what? You're right. I actually do like her. A lot."
"So whatcha gonna do about it?" Cam asked.

"As of now, leave it to me." I said.

"Remember." Cam warned getting up. "That's the Principal's daughter and Zac's foster sister you like. So don't make her cry."

**Zac's POV**

After the mermaids talked with me and Evie about tonight, I went out to go to see Xandou aka Speed Demon.

"You saw something this morning didn't you?" Mimmi asked. "A vision. I saw it too. The connection's getting stronger."

Not willing to discuss it now I said, "It was just a dream." I walked to Xandou where he was eating a fish burger. He was wearing a black tanktop and jeans.

"Damn." The Chinese/Hindi boy said. "You look like cowshit. Did the monster under your bed wake you or something?"

I chuckled. "Something like it."

"Congratulations Australia." Xandou said. "You've ruined burgers. First the vegetarians and now you."

I couldn't hold in a grin. "Do you know anyone else besides twins who can get visions?"

"Nope." Xandou replied. "Just twinsies."

"Ok." I said. "Have you seen Erik, or your brother?"

Xandou paused before asking, "Why?"

I leaned in closer so no one would hear. "I had this intense dream last night. This white light, these symbols..."

"The ones from the merman chamber." Xandou cut me off. "Yeah save me the rest of the drama."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Erik took photos." He answered. "Last full moon."

"Do any of you know what they mean?" I asked.

"Me and my brother think they might be some sort of activation key for the chamber." Xandou said. "But Zac, maybe it's time you let the real professionals help you. Not those bitches."

Line break...

Me, Cam, Erik, the twins, and Diablo sat in my room garage looking at the photos Erik took.

"I didn't have much time." Erik said. "The tunnel entrance was about to close."

"I saw these in my dream last night." I said, looking at the symbols.

"What do you think they mean?" Diablo asked.
"I was hoping you or the smart as hell twins would have an answer." I said. "They do feel familiar. But it's like some kind of ancient language and I can't read it."

"Maybe it's not a language." Xandou said.

"I think it's a code." Xhiva said. "As I theorized in my initial thesis before, it's some kind of activation pattern."

"Like a PIN number?" Cam asked.

"I think that you're the only one who can unlock it." Erik said to me.

"I'll try but I'm gonna need your help to control the moon spell." I said.

"Like you need to ask." Erik said. "These other merboys are coming too."

"Good." I said. "Cause if I can stay in control then I might be able to unlock this thing."

"You're forgetting about the fish chicks." Cam reminded. "There's no way that they're gonna let this happen."

"They can't know." I said. "Especially The Marinors and Thalie."

"Or Raiden." Erik said.

"Why keep your little brother out of this?" Cam asked.

"Well this might get messy or just a waste of our time and I wouldn't want my brother there either way." Erik said. "And don't worry about those people you mentioned. They think I'm keeping you away from Mako."

"And you're cool with that and the risks?" I asked.

"This is more important."

I looked at the computer screen with anticipation. I wanted so badly to find out what those symbols mean. But if only I could have known that tonight, I would be tested on everything I ever knew about myself.


Phoebus' POV

I was sitting in my rental beach house in peace grading papers when I heard the doorbell ring. I got up to get it as I was the only one in the house. My wife was at work and my daughter was with her friends. I opened the door to see Zoe, my goddaughter.

"Uncle Phoebus?" She asked.

I chuckled. "Hello Zoe. Come in." She walked inside to the living room. "How are you? I hear you're helping Evie in controlling the moon spell, it's good of you."

Zoe smiled. "I was actually hoping I could talk to you about something."

"Of course Zoe." I said, gesturing to the couch which she sat in. "What's wrong?"
"These visions." She began. "That I have been sharing with Zac...I had another one this morning."

That got my attention. I knew those two were growing stronger the more they spent time around each other. "Go on."

"There was...this bright light." Zoe explained. "Symbols carved in stone. The ones from the merman chamber. I saw Zac, Erik, Xandou, and Raiden. They were in the light."

I froze. Zac's name I had expected, but Erik and Raiden? That must have been because they were mermen. "When exactly did these vision start?"

"The day I arrived." Zoe answered. "They've been getting stronger and whenever I'm around Zac, I feel my power increasing. Sometimes my eyes glow a royal blue whenever I'm angry. Zac's too. And sometimes, I can hear what Zac is thinking. Why is it me and Zac that have these visions? What's the connection?"

I knew it. Those kids were getting stronger by the hour. If only they knew what they were truly capable of. "I don't know." I lied.

"I was thinking though." Zoe said. "Perhaps it's not the island at all. Maybe it's a gift I inherited from my mother."

"I don't think so." I said. "Although Nerissa was an exceptional and powerful mermaid."

"You, Esme, and Rita talk with each other like you're old friends." Zoe said. "Does that mean you knew my mother?"

I scoffed. "Knew her? Of course I knew her! We were best friends since we were teenagers! Not only was she a singularly gifted mermaid, she was also a unique woman. We all were so close, we were like a family. Boy what adventures did we have. Stories told of your mother were legend. Every pod knew who she, Esme, Rita, and Seph were. They strove to be like her. Zoe, do you remember much?"

"No." Zoe said, blinking back tears. "She passed away when I was very young. I remember as a hatchling, hiding in her long black silky hair that had indigo highlights. And her eyes. Her eyes were the deepest blue. The strange thing is. When I see Zac smile, I see my mother."

"I'm so sorry Zoe." I said, holding her hand. "I wish I had an answer for you."

Zoe hugged me and I was definitely telling them tonight.

Raiden's POV

I was in my room, talking on the phone. "So Thalie." I said on the phone. "It's me Raiden. Of course you know that. Let's cut the crap talk and get to the point. Would you...like to go on a…" I choked on my words. I couldn't even say the word date. "Would you like to…" Looking up from my shaking legs, I saw myself talking in the mirror. I was actually talking to no one on the phone. It wasn't even on. "Ok." I said to myself. "For real this time." I scrolled through my contacts and I was so close to pressing the call button on Thalie's number, but my finger just couldn't do it. It couldn't press that stupid call button. I screamed in frustration, throwing my phone on my bed. I then got my blade gauntlets and headed toward the training center under the house. I worked out for what seemed like hours but it was actually thirty minutes. I needed to hit something. Or a lot of somethings. I had
electrocuted a lot of things, and even set them on fire. "Unbelievable!" I screamed. "I can face monsters, face off other older mermen, shoot down a half blood, survive traumatizing events, yet I can't even talk to a girl!" I put off my gauntlets and sat down. It was then I realized that if you wanted something done, you had to do it yourself. So I got up and I texted Thalie to meet me at the cafe. I sat outside waiting for her.

"You wanted to see me?" I heard an American voice ask.

I gulped as I saw her. She was wearing a blue tank top and jean shorts with flip flops. "Yes." I said. "You might wanna sit down for this." She did so.

"Raiden what's going on?" She asked.

I took a deep breath. "Thalassa." I readied for her reaction. "Would you like to go on a date tonight?"

There was a period of silence before she spoke again. "Raiden Consorzio. I wouldn't like to go." I cringed. "I would love to go." I smiled like an idiot. My fingers were sparking with electricity.

"So..." I said. "7 pm tonight? The beach?"

"Sure." She was also smiling in happiness. "See you then." She turned around and left the cafe. When she was out of sight, I jumped up in pure joy. I did a little victory dance earning some stares. But I didn't care. I GOT A DATE! But what was I gonna wear? Certainly not the purple flannel shirt, jeans and sneakers then. I ran to the city portion and I searched every men's store I could find.

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Thalie's POV

My heart was beating as I went inside the cafe. I went to Carly for some advice. I would have gone to Evie but she was dealing with enough and so was Zac. Knowing that the principal's daughter was going on a date with Erik's brother would result in a bit of a bad reaction.

"Carly?" I asked the blond waitress at the coutner. "I need your help."

"What's up Thalie?" Carly asked.

"Raiden just asked me on...a date." I said to her.

"Alright Thalassa Santos." Carly said, putting her apron away. "Don't you worry. I'm gonna make you a star!"

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Diablo's POV

It was almost nighttime. Almost a full moon. Already my werewolf instincts were starting to literally claw their way in me. It wasn't as bad as the last full moon but I sometimes enjoyed the power and adrenaline rush that flowed in my body whenever the full moon was up. I was just itching to move around a lot.

"Are we all set?" Zac asked.
"I'll get the tinny and meet you guys there." Cam said.

"No Cam." Xandou said. "We need you to cover for us."

"Take this." Xhiva slammed everyone's phones in Cam's hand. "If anyone calls, you handle it."

"Great." Cam deadpanned. "I'm the receptionist once again."

"We'll see you when we get back." Erik said.

"Diablo." Zac said to me. "Anyone in our way?"

I took a big sniff of the air. I didn't sense anyone. "No. We're clear Zac."

"How did you?" Cam asked with his jaw hanging.

"I'm 25% werewolf." I said, flashing my wolf fangs which were almost done growing. I growled like a wolf just to scare him a little more. "Woof." I dived in the water, with Xandou following me. The others getting the picture, they dived in and we swam to Mako. Little did we know that tonight was about to change our friendship.


Thalie's POV

I didn't know what dress I was wearing nor what I looked like. Carly had gone to extreme lengths to make sure that I was in for a surprise. Right then, she was busy painting my face. "Whoa. Easy on the blush."

Carly rolled her eyes. "Please." She said. "I've known how to apply blush since I was 13. Always use upward strokes." She then put some red lipstick on me.

"So what do you think of Raiden?" I asked.

"Well." Carly replied, applying some gold eyeshadow. "I know that he and Erik are complete opposites. He can be a bit of an asshole. And Raiden surprisingly shows up to where he wants on time."

I laughed. "Well Erik is a major late guy."

"You don't know the half of it." Carly said, applying mascara. "What do you think of him?"

"Well he seems nice." I said. "Sure he's got a bad boy exterior but he's actually a kind hearted person inside. He just doesn't like to show it because he's afraid it'll ruin his tough image."

"There it is." Carly said. "You two are really going to do awesome on this date."

"You think so?" I asked.

"You know what they say." Carly said. "Opposites attract." Carly took me to the mirror and I saw staring back at me, a goddess. I was wearing a short royal blue dress with straps that had glitter on them. I wore gold sandals, I had my hair straightened, and I still wore my moon ring. The dress was a little loose but still hugged my chest. I thought I was dead or something.

"Wow." I said.
"Breathe in my masterpiece." Carly said from behind me.

"I… look."

"Say it." Carly demanded.

"Not hideous."

"Not even close." Carly was smiling. "You've grown up so much! Just wait until prom night!" Carly then took me on a bus to the beach. "So Thalie. Your first date. You must be shaking."

"Carly." I said. "You're talking to the principal's daughter. Takes a lot more than a date to rattle me."

"Yep." Carly said. "You're nervous. Don't worry, you have nothing to fear. Don't be so tense."

"I'm not tense." I lied.

"Relax Santos." Carly said. "You're gonna be just fine." We then arrived at the beach. "Good luck! And I promise on your word that I won't tell Evie or Zac." And Carly left, leaving me alone. I saw an orange glow behind the fireworks and followed it. I came to a campfire and next to the campfire, was a picnic filled with regular food. And Raiden. He had gone from charming, to a die hard Italian hearthrob! I couldn't believe my eyes. My heart was screaming at me to at least look at him.


Raiden's POV

I sat by the picnic I set up, fiddling with my purple tie. I had gotten new clothes to look more sharper. I was wearing a white button up shirt that hugged my chest, a shining purple tie, black dress pants, and grey converse. I had my hair combed and I wore a bit of cologne. But my natural cologne is ozone. I was mixed between terrified and scared.

Don't worry Raiden. I jumped hearing my father's voice. You're gonna do great. Just remember to come in one piece. I chuckled a little while taking a big breath.

"Raiden?" I heard an American voice. I turned around to see a goddess there. No, not an actual goddess. It was Thalie with her pretty volume turned up. She gone from beautiful to drop dead captivating. I literally stopped breathing the minute I saw her. The flames illuminated every detail on her perfectly. The full moon pumping through my veins gave me a feeling that she was all the world had to offer to me. But that was probably my hormones too.

"You look beautiful." I managed to get out.

"You're not bad looking yourself." Thalie said. "Raiden, you put all of this for me?"

"Well I wanted to impress the girl." I said.

"I can speak for that girl and say that she is very, very impressed." Thalie said.

I smiled and gestured to the food and we began eating.


Esmeralda's POV
Rita and I were in the grotto chatting. Rose, Yukimi, and Helen were there as well with Zoe.

"We have to go now!" Ondina cried, entering.

"Where's Sirena and Evie?" Helen asked.

"The moon pool." My daughter answered. "Forget them we have to get to Mako!"

"What happened?" Rose asked.

"We've been played like a conch shell that's what." Ondina retorted. "Erik and the rest of Raiden's posse; they're working together."

All of us took looks of surprise. "What?" Kimi asked. "But I thought that they were on our side."

"They've been using us from the start." Ondina said sadly. "They've taken Zac to Mako. Erik took photos of the symbol and now they think that they can start up the chamber."

"What chamber?" A forceful voice demanded. A voice I knew too well.

"Veridia." Zoe said in fear. "What brings you here?"

"From the sound of things I came just in time." Veridia snapped, her green dress flowing behind her. "And I see you have Omegas with you."

"Veridia." I greeted.

"Esmeralda." She said back. "It has been a long time."

"Indeed." I said.

"Nothing much has changed." Veridia said. "Except that your little royal god is dead and thank the moon for that." I wanted to strangle her right there, but she was Judge. So if I even laid a finger on her, I was fucked. "It's good to see you again though."

"Veridia and I competed in the contest of champions." I explained.

"Your boyfriend was there despite the warnings." Veridia said, then turning to Zoe and Ondina. "I told you that you had until the next full moon to sort things out."

"Things have gotten a little out of hand." Ondina said.

"So it seems." Veridia snapped. "You mention a chamber on Mako?"

"The boy…" Ondina said, very terrified. "Zac, found a chamber on Mako. He's on his way now."

"Then we don't have much time." Veridia declared. "We must stop him from reaching that chamber at all costs. Take me there, at once. The moon is rising. I hope I'm not too late."

"Veridia wait." I told her. "Zac...what are you planning to do to him?"

"He's an enemy of my kind Esmeralda." Verdia said coldly. "He must be stopped with all the other scum."

"But Zac's a good kid." Rita defended. "Regardless of what you think of mermen and land people he would never seek to harm anyone."
"You of all people haven't figured it out?" Veridia asked. "No land boy or regular merman could have unlocked the chamber. Not without the blood of war in him."

As soon as Veridia left, I called my husband on my phone, telling him to meet me on Mako, saying that the twins were in danger.

"Esmeralda we must go." Rita said. "You know Veridia, she would never hesitate to make a move."

Diablo's POV

As we approached the forest, Zac stumbled back a little. His eyes, they glowed a bright deep blue for a bit.

"You ok?" I asked.

"Yeah."

I heard Xhiva ask his brother, "What do you think is gonna happen if we start this place up?"

"We've come this far." Xandou said. "You really wanna stop now?"

I took a big breath in stress relief but as I did, I caught a scent I never thought I would smell again.

It's her. She's here.

Thalie's POV

We had laughs and had fun, eating our food. Raiden had gotten food from the nearest Italian restaurant. How on short notice I had no idea.

"Is this your first time?" I asked.

"Um" Raiden said. "We don't really date much back where I come from, and I don't mean in Italy. It's more like...gang activity."

I chuckled. "No I meant, is this your first time eating a jelly doughnut?"

Raiden's eyes widened as he stopped licking the doughnut. "Is that a bad thing?"

"You've got a little..." I wiped some sugar from his mouth. "Raiden, after Italy, where did you go?"

His eyes widened. He hadn't been expecting that. "I...can't tell you."

"Why not?" I asked. "Raiden. I'm trying to help you."

"Maybe there are some people who can't be helped." Raiden said. "Why didn't I just say no to Slade that night?"

"Slade?" I whispered. "You're working for him?"

"Yes." He said. "And God, I've been sick of it for the last 9 years! And I'm sick of lying to you!"
"So why did you?" I asked.

"You know what Thalie?" Raiden asked getting up. "If you wanna help me then leave me alone!"
Raiden got up and walked to near the shore, but he was careful enough to not step near the waves coming in.

I let him think for about 5 minutes before I got up to go to him. I held his hand, and I felt an electric shock that felt amazing. I looked up to him and saw just how handsome he really was under the moonlight. His violet eyes stood out like purple moons. "Raiden, I'm not mad at you. But I want to really want to help you and your brother. I think I know why you joined. You and Erik were forced into it, but why do you do what you do? I think it's a cry for help. I think you're trying to find a way out of the tribe. And I can help you. Raiden, sure, you're a bit rude, snarky, a bit of a jerk, a thief, have a killer edge, but inside you're actually a gentlemen who just has been raised by the wrong people. Sometimes without even realizing it, you actually behave how a prince should act, how a leader should act. You've been through so much yet you're still strong and confident."

Raiden looked at me in the eye, as he held both of my hands. "Thalassa." He said. "There's something I gotta tell you. I didn't kill you that night, because you looked as frightened as I did. I looked at you, and for the first time in my life, I saw myself. Thalie, when I first met you, I thought you were a mermaid who hated mermen because of the sins they've committed. But in all the time I've spent here, I've seen you more than that. I've seen you actually grow up in such a time so short. I know I can be a dick, but whenever you're around I feel safe. I"

"Raiden."

"Thalassa."

"I love you." We said in unison.

No one's POV

Before they could register what they were doing, our lips landed on each other. Raiden's lips tasted like electricity, while Thalassa's tasted like the sweetest of waters. Raiden and Thalassa's hormones raged in their blood and their mermaid/men selves felt whole and complete. What was only a second felt like an eternity. Their lips broke apart, both feeling complete.

"Whoa." Thalie said. "That was amazing. But we can do better." She pulled him in for a deeper more passionate kiss, their tongues battling for dominance. There was a tie. The kiss continued nevertheless, with Raiden's arm slinking around her waist and Thalassa's arms hugging his back, bringing him closer to her. Without realizing it, their legs tangled them up and they fell in the water, instantly, sprouting their tails. The two looked at each other embarrassed before laughing hystically. Quickly realizing that they were in their natural forms, they quickly pushed themselves into the water. They spent a good time nighttime swimming. When they stopped to take thier surroundings, Thalassa looked at him and she couldn't help but smile at the way Raiden looked. He was much more handsome in his real form. His toned body was shown under the moonlight more and his entrancing eyes seemed to sparkle with happiness.

When Thalassa looked away from him, Raiden's blood roared in his veins as he saw her under the moonlight. His hormones were screaming to do more with her. But he knew better than that. He didn't want to rush this at all. She looked truly mesmerizing in that light. Her red hair, her enticing blue eyes, her brave leadership, she was so perfect. He had held this in for so long.

They swam to see the night sky. Thalassa looked at Raiden who looked at her with ultimate seriousness. "Raiden?" She asked. "Are you ok?" Thalassa panicked that the boy she loved who
loved her back was now going to do something bad. She was mistaken as Raiden used his arms to pull her closer to her, as he wrapped his arms around her waist.

"You're so beautiful." He said to her, cupping her cheek.

"Even like this?" Thalassa asked.

"Especially like this," Raiden pulled her in for a more fiery, passionate kiss, this time with their tails wrapping around each other. But they had to break apart.

"So does this mean I'm your girl?" Thalassa asked.

"Thalassa Santos," Raiden said. "You've been my girl since the day I met you."

"I guess charm runs in the Royal bloodline." Thalassa joked.

"I guess it must." Raiden said. "But now, we are one. Let's get out of here. We'll run away together. And start a clan, all our own. Nah I'm just kidding. Wait till our brothers see this. I can't wait to see Zac's face."

Thalassa merely laughed. "Raiden. We have to keep this secret."

"You're kidding me." Raiden said. "But we're finally together."

"Our place is with our clan." Thalassa explained. "If we run away, they'll be divided forever. I know that we come from enemy places but don't forget that fate put us in this spot for a reason. I say it's to help fix the tension between mermaids and mermen. We could change everything. But we're gonna have to keep this secret. At least for now."

Before Raiden could say anything else, they heard shouts of Rita telling Phoebus and Esmeralda to hurry up. "It's them. Thalassa, go down the south way to your house. It's the fastest way."

"Be careful my love." She said to her boyfriend. "Promise me you won't let anything happen to you."

"I won't." Raiden said. "I promise."

"Thank you." Thalassa kissed him on the cheek and swam to her home, feeling more happier than ever could be.

In the chamber.

(A.N Are you guys ready for the shock of a lifetime?)

Zac was still trying to decode the chamber. There was no luck so far.

"Which is it?" Xandou asked impatiently.

"Move your hand away." A political voice commanded. "Now!" She surveyed the room and looked at Diablo with disgust. "Diablo. I should have known you'd be here."

The South American merman stepped out and scoffed. "That's funny. I was thinking the same thing...Mother." He spat out the last word with venom. The others gasped and looked at the two in
disbelief. There was a certain resemblance between them. They had the same scowl, same lips, and same nose and same perfectly arched eyebrows. The truth stood out. Diablo Quasimodo Nagual is the Son of Veridia.

"What?!” Xhiva shrieked. "Diablo, you mean to tell me that the most feared of mermaids is your mother?!"

"Yes." Diablo said.

"What are you doing here Erik?" Ondina asked. "Why are you doing this?"

"Ondina, I'm sorry." Erik said. "I'm not who you think I am. The guy you knew was merely an illusion. A fantasy in reality. I've been working for Slade."

"That's a lie!" Ondina yelled.

"He found me and Raiden. He trained us to become impressive warriors. And then we set out to seize Mako. From the inside out. Tonight was our attempt to truly get its power. But I never wanted you to get in the way, you weren't supposed to find out. Despite this, I have done my best to keep Raiden and Thalassa out of tonight."

"Guys." Xhiva and Xandou said in unison. "It's the truth. We're part of the mission too as is Raiden and Diablo."

Ondina was close to breaking in tears. "Erik, why?"

"I won't tell you again." Veridia finally spoke up. "Stop what you are doing and step away."

"Leave them alone right now!" Esme's voice sounded. She had arrived with her husband and Rita.

"You made your choice long ago." Veridia said.

"Oh I wouldn't do that." Rita threatened, her hand stretched out. "You know who we are Veridia. Members of the order remember?"

"Do you realize what would happen if the direct descendants of Nerissa Bauman controlled the power of this place?" Veridia asked.

That caught everyone by surprise. Everyone looked at each other in confusion. Mostly Zac and Mimmi.

"What is she talking about?" Mimmi asked. "What does this have to do with my mother?"

"You actually don't know do you?" Veridia asked in surprise. "Tell them, they should know"

"Tell us what?" Mimmi demanded.

Phoebus stepped forward. "Zac, Zoe." He said. "There's a reason you two can share visions, there's a reason your eyes change color, there's a reason you two share similar traits, even in appearance. The answer? You're twins. Zac, you're not who you think you are. You never were and never will be a land boy. You are a merman because you were born a merman. But that's not all."

Esmeralda stepped up. "Nerissa had a sister." She said. "A sister who married a European merman and bore two sons."

Rita stepped up and looked at Erik. "Erik, you and Raiden are those two weren't alone. Erik, you
were always Zac's cousin."

Erik and Zac looked at each other and then Mimmi who was standing in shock.

"Why now?" Ondina asked her parents. "Why didn't you two say anything before?"

"We had to be certain." Rita answered. "And now we are."

"This changes nothing." Veridia said. "It ends tonight." She stuck out her hand to the 3 land girl Omegas who had arrived with Veridia, Mimmi and Ondina.

"Veridia what are you doing?" Rose asked.

"I'm sorry girls." Veridia said. "I won't kill you but I can kill your knowledge of us."

"I won't let you hurt her!" Diablo jumped in front of Rosalina, his werewolf instincts taking over him.

"Diablo get back here." Xandou demanded.

"No." Diablo said. "I'm sick of this mission."

"Xhiva." Xandou said. "Tell him not to be an idiot." But Xhiva could only stand still. He looked at the girls and then to his fellow mermen. His heart raced in his chest. He couldn't let those mermaids get hurt, but he couldn't hurt his brother. "XHIVA!" Xandou exclaimed. This was it.

"I'm sorry brother." Xhiva said to his brother, and joining the mermaids. He stood by Yukimi.

"You know the price for disloyalty." Xandou said seriously.

Xhiva took Kimi's hand. "Oh I know what loyalty is."

Suddenly, the full moon from the dome feature of the chamber disappeared.

"We have to get out of here." Erik said.

"You have betrayed your kind." Veridia said. "You are no longer a part of the pod or any pod."

"Not again." Mimmi said.

Veridia looked at Rita and said, "Say hi to your husband and daughter in heaven once you get there."

Rita moved her hand but Phoebus got it in time. "Not today Rita." He said giving Rita a death glare. "Not today." The entire group left the chamber in time.

Xhiva went to his brother but Xandou pushed him back. "Get away from me!" He shouted. "Go on! Get out!" Xhiva ran away.

Ondina sat at the beach, starting to break out in tears.

"Ondina." She heard Erik behind her. "I…"

"Erik, it's not true." She denied. "Tell me it's not true."

"I'm sorry but it is." Erik said, holding her hand. "I'm so sorry."
"You used me!" Ondina yelled. "All this time, you never cared about me!"

"No Ondina that's not true." Erik said. Ondina broke away from him and swam into the sea. Phoebus looked at Erik in anger and said, "How dare you? Stay away from her."

Meanwhile, Xandou kicked rocks on the beach.

"Xandou." He heard Helen behind him.

"What do you want?" He asked.

"Xhiva's gone but he has a future ahead of him." Helen pointed out.

"He left me though." Xandou said, holding back tears.

"You know what?" Helen asked. "I was wrong about you. You really are just like your father. You don't care about anyone but yourself."

"Helen…"

"Oh." She said, starting to leave. "And by the way, I really thought that there could be an us."

That night changed everyone and everything.

The next morning…

Raiden's POV

I swam on my usual morning swim when I sensed with my trained senses, a mermaid. I turned around to see Mimmi. We surfaced to talk.

"Stalking me now?" I asked. "Don't you have something else to do?"

"Raiden." Mimmi said. "I've been looking for you since last night. I wanted to tell you something."

I sighed and checked my wrist. "Ok. Make it snappy. I've got places to be and things to do."

"Raiden, are you familiar about your relatives?" She asked me.

"Only that they're dead." I answered.

"Raiden, they're here." Mimmi said, stroking my hair like a mother would. "I'm here."

I just stared at her. "What? What are you talking about? I don't understand."

"Raiden." Mimmi said. "My mother is Nerissa, who was your aunt." I gasped. "Raiden."

"What are you saying?" I asked, not believing it.

"Raiden." Mimmi said, tears spilling in her eyes. "You're my baby cousin."

I backed away from her, my heart beating out of my chest. I couldn't believe my ears. So I swam to Erik and I kicked down the door; Erik was putting on his shirt.
"What is this about Mimmi being my cousin?" I demanded.

Erik cringed. "Let's talk."


Thalie's POV

"It's not possible." I said. After I had come down from breakfast, they had told me what happened last night. My foster brother was a real merman and now I have a sister and 2 step cousins. And an estranged foster mother who decided to leave her kids when they were babies. I almost didn't believe it. "He's lived here his entire life. They didn't tell me that he was adopted! They would have told me!"

"I know it's a lot to accept." My mom said.

"How can I be a real merman?" Zac asked. "I have been swimming since I could actually walk. How come I never got a tail until last year?"

"Your mother, Nerissa." Mom explained. "She was the Omega of Magic. So only she was strong enough of performing an enchantment strong enough to stop your tail. That spell was broken when you fell in the moon pool."

"Mom." I said. "You knew all this time since last year? Why didn't you at least tell me?"

"I was going to." Mom explained. "But since you all went through getting rid of the Trident, I thought I would wait until you guys were ready to understand. But then everything changed. The 13th cycle, Evie getting a tail, everything became so crazy at once, all of a sudden I was too late."

"Please Zac." Zoe spoke up. "This is strange for me too. I've always felt like part of me was missing. But now we've found each other and the rest of our family. Don't you think it's wonderful?"

Zac however, was clearly showing different thoughts. "I never asked for any of this."

"You're still Zac Blakely." Evie spoke up. "And your parents are still your parents."

"Um technically he's Zacharai Surachai Khatha." Phoebus spoke up. All of us gave him a glare. "I'm gonna shut up now."

"Look Zoe." Zac said to her face. "I don't know who you think I am, but I am not your brother. Do you get that? I don't want anything to do with you. Any of you!"

"You can't just walk away and pretend we don't exist." Diablo spoke up.

"We turned our backs on our families for you." Xhiva defended. "We saved your tail."

"I never asked you too." Zac said. "I'm going home. And I'm gonna find out the truth." He left the grotto but I followed him.

"Zac wait!" I yelled to him once we were outside.

"I have to get away from here." He said. "From the memories of all this."

"I heard about you being related to Erik." I said. "He's your cousin."
"He's also my cousin who did some...terrible things. Some unforgivable things." Zac said. I didn't need to ask what he was referring to.

"Please talk to me." I pleaded. "Blood or not, you are my brother. And you have other family here."

"No matter where I go," Zac said. "That's never gonna change. But I have to get out of here. My whole life is a lie. I honestly don't even know my own name anymore."

"No one understands that better than me." I said. "That's exactly how I felt when I found out about my identity. But you took care of me. Now let me help you."

"Thalassa," Zac said. "Now that I've been told the truth, I don't want to see anyone. I cannot be with you and figure this out at the same time. I'm sorry." And Zac left my yard, clearly going through a lot.


Raiden's POV

"Zac..." I said, almost breathless. "Is my...cousin? Do you grasp how insane that sounds?!"

"No wonder you two share similar personality traits." Xandou commented. We were in the room me and Erik shared with Xandou and Cam. Diablo and Xhiva were kicked out of the house.

"But they said that our relatives were dead!" I exclaimed.

"Don't you at least remember them?" Cam asked.

"No," Erik replied. "According to my mom, they died when I was 3. But sometimes I remember a woman who had blue eyes and long hair."

"But why didn't Mom and Dad say anything to me?" I asked. "Why don't I remember anything?"

"Because Raiden..." Erik said to me. "I...don't think you were born yet."

"Yikes." Xandou said cringing. "That's toughie."

"So let me get this straight," Cam said. "Zac is a real merman, has been his whole life, he's your cousin and so is the Canadian fish chick who is is real sister? And Santos' daughter is your step cousin? I did not see that coming."

"None of us did Cam." Xandou said. "None of us did."

"It all makes sense now." Erik said.


In the grotto...

No one's POV

The entire grotto was in conversation yet quiet at the same time.

"Diablo?" Phoebus asked. "Do you mind if I ask you a question?"
"Of course not." The Argentinean merman replied.

"How is Veridia your mother?" Phoebus asked.

Diablo got up and had everyone's attention. "Years ago, my mom was kidnapped and raped. Somehow out of that rape, she got pregnant. Thinking that I might have been a girl, she kept me. Unfortunately, as you know, I turned out to be a boy by the time I was born."

"How did you know anyway?" Phoebus asked.

Diablo took a big breath before saying, "Because I used to be her property."

"I'm sorry." Esme said. "I hate that you had to go through that."

"I escaped and swam to my uncle when I was 5." Diablo finished.

"What do you mean her property?" Evie asked.

"Some mermen are captured and sold as slaves to some pods." Mimmi explained.

"Unbelievable." Evie said.

"Xhiva are you ok with this?" Sirena asked.

"Guys." The Hindi/Chinese merman stood up. "I have been rejected by the Elite Army, shoved into a toilet tail first and pushed into the girl's locker room wearing nothing but Spandex. But no matter. I am in the world that I love. And with the assistance of my friend Diablo, we know join you guys in the fight against the Ares."

"I just hope that Zac heals like you guys." Mimmi said with hope.

"Mimmi it's not the same." Kimi said.

"What do you mean?" Mimmi asked.

"Face it guys." Helen got up. "It's one thing to know you're adopted for years and then finding out your school principal who is a mermaid is your mother, yeah, that's one thing. But finding out you're adopted after years of living a lie, and that you were never human to begin with, that's a whole different story."

"He needs time." Rosalina understood.

"He'll come around." Mimmi still had hope. "I'm sure he will."

"You really think so?" Rose asked.

"He has to." Zoe said. "He's my brother."

"Zoe." Sirena said. "You're forgetting that like your step sister, Zac was raised on land."

"Sirena has a point." Rita said. "Your siblings are as much land people as they are from the sea. I don't think it's gonna be an easy transition, not just for Zac but for all of us."

"I'm finding it a bit had to accept myself." Evie spoke up.

"Me too Evie." Thalie agreed. "I know Zac better than anyone." She started to break out in tears.
"And right now...he's just learned that everything he ever knew about himself...was a lie. And that he never was...who he thought he was.” I got up and all eyes were on me, as I stopped my little breakdown.

"Everything ends and begins for all of us right now."
You might wanna get a pillow for the feels

Thalie's POV

It had been almost a full week since the big revelation. Zac had shut himself in his room and even skipped school. I guess being pulled from the rug got too much for him. But it wasn't just him, all of us had been shocked. Every day, I would call or text him just to check on him. Meanwhile, I had been continuing to see Raiden in secret. During those secret couple of dates, he would seem a little distant but I understood. Having the shock of having two cousins out of nowhere dumped on you can be a truckload. But then, I was walking to the beach where Zac was. I didn't arrange a meeting or anything, I just biked around when I saw him sitting alone. Quietly, I walked to the merman.

"Hi." I said, causing him to turn his head and look at me.

"Morning." He greeted as I sat down. "Beautiful day, isn't it?"

I smiled. "Yes it is. How are you?"

"I've got a lot to be thankful for." Zac said. "This beach, perfect weather, Evie, you."

I chuckled at him before asking. "And…our sister?"

Zac froze for a minute before continuing. "Oh it's a busy day I better get going. I'll see you later." He gave me a quick ruffle on the hair before he left.

That was just Zac wearing a mask of his usual happy self. I knew deep down, that he was going through the painful process of getting used to his actual identity as Zac Khatha, which had a nice ring to it if you ask me. But he would come to terms, because they always did.

Erik's POV

I leaned against the balcony, still in shock from the past events. I always had Raiden as my confidant for years. Back in the clan, he was so shy and innocent, all those years in the tribe and being shaped into a killer took away not only his innocence but mine as well. While I had been shaped into a commander of a small army, Raiden had been pushed to the limit and eventually pushed more of his power than ever. He was able to do the things he wasn't able to as a child. I got sharper, stronger and more agile, but I had believed what the tribe was doing was right even Raiden.

"Hey Captain." I heard a slight Chinese accent speak behind me. I turned around to see Xandou aka Speed Demon walking up beside me. "What's the hold up?"

I sighed in contempt. "I always wanted to know about my relatives, but now I'm not so sure. What kind of woman leaves her own kids? Did she even care?"

The Chinese speedster shrugged. "Eh probably not."

I stared at him. "How can you say that? I know what your mom has done but maybe there's a reason why my Aunt Nerissa…which by the way sounds kind of weird to say, dumped her kids in separate parts of the world."
"Erik." Speed Demon cut me off. "If my mom can try to make weapons out of her own children and your mom can keep your own brother contained like some sort of prisoner just because he was born with rare powers, and Diablo's own mom can make her own son a slave, then your aunt can dump her own kids and nephews in separate parts of the world."

I just chuckled. "Why can't we just have normal mothers?"

"Erik." Speed Demon said. "We're mermen. Normal is not in our dictionary."

"No time for normalcy huh?" I asked.

"And speaking of time..." Speed Demon nudged me to look at my watch and I swore in Croatian as I ran to the café.

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Zoe's POV

"All this time, we've been so close to your brother and your cousins." Sirena said in wonder. We were all in the moon pool.

"It is pretty amazing." I noted. "Having a brother, but now two cousins as mermen? This is really thrilling."

"You've never felt anything?" Sirena asked me. "I can always tell when Aquata is nearby. I can feel it in the water."

"Not until we started sharing visions." I answered.

"Now we know why we couldn't take Zac's power away." Ondina remarked. "He was never a land boy at all."

Behind us, Raiden surfaced, his brown hair sticking on his forehead. "You wanted to see me?"

I turned to my friends and asked, "Could I have a few minutes with my cousin please?"

The others left but Raiden just looked scared. "No." He said. "No I can't do this right now."

"Raiden please." I begged him when he was turning away. But I grabbed his arm, pulling him closer to me. "I know it's a lot to accept."

"Zoe." My cousin said looking up into my eyes. "What happened to our parents? Why won't anyone tell me anything?" What I saw in him was the real him at the time, alone, scared, and confused. But he hides it behind a cold mask. I knew right then and there how Erik felt protecting him. 15 or not, warrior or not, he was just a kid who had gone through so much.

"There was an accident." I told him. "15 years ago. The people who went to the funeral were all friends of our parents and part of a secret society called the Order of Prometheus. It was a team dedicated to fighting the evils of the sea and land that worked around the world."

Raiden took a breath before asking, "My father founded it?"

"Yes." I answered. "He founded it along with his best friends, Pheobus Marino, Ondina's father, and Jacob, me and Zac's real father, and your uncle. Our mothers were part of it as well...including Rita."
"And just when I thought when things couldn't get anymore trippy." Raiden sarcastically said causing me to smile a little.

"Only I don't think it was an accident." I said. "I think something went wrong and the ones who remain are trying to keep it from us."

"A…" Raiden couldn't even say the word Aunt. "Nerissa separated us." He laced every word with anger. "She didn't want us together. If she did, she would have had you guys live with us. Why?"

I sighed in contempt. "I don't know Raiden." Without warning him, I gave him a big hug before he pulled back.

"Zoe what the hell are you doing?" He asked.

"Raiden….." I trailed. "We're family."

"Zoe, I am happy that you're ok with this." Raiden said to me. "But there is a huge difference between knowing your blood and who carries that blood with you. In other words, you hardly know the people you're related to."

"You're my baby cousin…" I was cut off by Raiden.

"I am not a baby!"


Raiden groaned and rolled his eyes irritated. "You women are so emotional." And then he left, with me shaking my head slightly. Raiden did have a point though. If we were gonna stick together, I had to know them better. So I left the moon pool to go to my brother's first.


Zac's POV

I was working on some homework when I got a call on my phone. I answered it to see Xhiva using his powers to somehow show him in front of what appeared to be the TV. Even for being a supersmart technopath and a merman, I still don't get how he or Xandou could do what they could do.

"Hey Zac." The Hindi merboy greeted. I smiled in response. "I just wanted to check in and see how you're doing."

A snake slithered next to him and morphed into the trickster Latino merboy. "He means, we wanted to check in on you! Unless of course you're being a grumpy gust."

I rolled my eyes. "What are you up to now, Knucklehead?"

Diablo looked stiff. "Hey! I give the nicknames around here! Although that one's not bad." Me and Xhiva laughed at his antics. "Hey, they don't call me Dr. Name-enstein for nothing!"

Xhiva who was done laughing said to him, "Wolfboy, not even Rosalina calls you that."

"Burn." I said chuckling at Diablo's childish pouty face.

"As I said before, we just wanted to check and see how you're doing." Xhiva said to me, his brown red eyes twinkling with intelligence. "Now that you're actually one of us mermen."
I groaned. "Look guys, I don't want anything to do with being a merman. I want to be normal me."

"Zac don't you get it?" Diablo asked. "Mermaid is the normal you. I mean do you realize how lucky you are, to have the powers you have."

"Wolfboy's right." Xhiva agreed. "Zac, you are the luckiest merman alive because you've had the one thing most of us had never had."

"Oh?" I quizzed. "And what's that?"

"A normal childhood." Xhiva answered. I turned the phone off not willing to listen to any more when I heard knocking at the door.

"Zac." My "father" spoke. "We were thinking about going to have lunch at the club."

"It's a beautiful day." My "mother" said. "We can get a table looking over the water."

"No thanks." I said. "I'm fine."

"Come on Zac." Lauren said. "We can have a chat."

There was a knock on my door and I turned around to see my real identical twin sister, Zoe Khatha.

"Hi there." She greeted in her usual cheery North American accent.

"I don't believe we've met." Rob shook her hand. "I'm Doctor Blakely, Zac's father."

"And I'm his mother, Lauren." Said person greeted.

"I'm Zoe." She said. "Zac's…"

"Friend." I cut her off. "She's just a friend."

"Please come to lunch." Lauren pleaded.

"We'd like to explain some things." Rob added on.

"You've already explained." I said. "Just go enjoy your lunch, it's ok."

"If you're sure…" Lauren gave me a pat on the cheek and left with Rob.

"Your foster parents seems just like the nice people Thalie described." Zoe said. "You wanna hang out or go for a swim?"

I pretended not to listen to her. The truth was, I did not want anything to do with my alleged actual family members. I just wanted things to go back to the way they were, normal and quiet. But no, these people have to come into my life and it all started when I became the thing nobody wants to be; a freak. And now this mermaid comes and claims to be my actual sister when she hears the sentence that explains how we're related. And to think that merfolk had common sense.

"No, I'm kind of busy." I replied, not even looking at her.

"Ok." Zoe said. "Hey I'm trying to make an effort. Look Zac, I know this is new to you but you can't let your old life blind you from the truth."

"What truth Zoe?" I snorted. "That we're freakshows in both worlds?"
"Zacharai Khatha." Zoe turned my cheek so I could meet her eyes. "I'm getting used to it by now, and you think you're a freak now? You don't know half the stuff I've been through."

Zac scoffed. "No Zoe, I don't. I don't know you, I don't wanna know you, and I don't want any part of this. So you need to back off and leave me alone."

He left Mimmi there, who was restraining herself not to backtalk and understand that he needed time.


Helen's POV

I was reading a book while eating my snack when Erik came in and took me to the cool room.

"Erik what are you doing?" I asked.

"Hey I know that we're working, but do you know where Ondina is?" He asked me. "I need to talk to her."

"She's not here." I said. "But she did leave me a message." I pulled out my phone and put it on selfie camera mode. "Mirror, mirror, in my hand, who's the biggest git in the land?" (A.N git is the equivalent of jerk in brit slang.) Finishing my sentence, I pushed the phone to his face to show his own reflection.

"Helen I know I messed up big time but I just need a chance to explain." Erik tried to reason.

"If there was an Olympics for being a lying douche." I began. "You didn't just gold medal it mate. You Michael Phelpsed." I left the cool room to go back to my peace. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Xandou leave the café. Had he been stalking me? He made his choice, but I'm not giving him any chance to change his mind until he actually has something worth fighting for and that's something the Ares or Kanhoji does not have.


Xandou's POV

As soon as Helen came within my position of sight, I fled the scene in the nick of time. I was just taking a little walk at normal speed when I saw Helen coming back. I don't know why I still had this…attraction to her. Attraction was weakness and that's something my so called brother allowed in his life. Weakness was the one thing our parents taught us to avoid. My thoughts were cut off by Zac being hassled by some guys. But they walked away and Zac walked along the shore.

"Hey Zac." I said.

"What do you want?" The merman asked me.

"Just happened to bump into you and say hi." I said. "And to make a proposition."

"No Xandou, I don't want anything to do with my ancestry and your little evil groups." Zac said.

"Zac there is no good or evil." I said. "Only choices and those too much of cowards to make them."

"You're the one to talk." Zac said.

"The point is Zac." I continued. "Is that you've just been given a big shock. I can understand how that feels. But this is just the beginning. There is still so much raw talent and untapped powers that
you and your real sister have it's not even funny. Have you even discovered your primary power yet?"

Zac turned his head to me raising an eyebrow. "My what now?"

"Your primary power?" I asked before rolling my eyes. "I forgot, you've had a rock hard mundane boring life that involved getting girls and doing half the thing that is you. A primary power is the power you have that stands out besides your basic merman powers. For example.." I ran at my superspeed, in a yellow blur from here to the Chinatown of the Gold Coast and got dumplings and raced. I was going at 670 miles an hour. "My superspeed, and Xhiva's technopathy. Together we merge together which is a little hard to explain."

Zac nodded, humming in agreement. "So how do you tell what my power is?"

"Well it sort of depends on the person itself." I replied.

"And how…" Zac stopped. "Actually I don't really care."

"Yes you do but you're still trying to cling to the past." I said to him. "Zac, I saw those guys hassling you. You can't always hold back. You want to show the world you're different then do so. Zac, accept it or not, we fishboys all have something in common. You're not the only one who's been affected by a parent. We all have."

Zac just huffed and headed away from me, leaving me alone at the beach. Using my superspeed, I sprinted out, running on the water and diving in the sea, my legs forming into my natural tail. Flapping my tail, I speed towards the basement cave where I met Raiden aka Voltage.

"Hey Raiden." I said.

"Hey." He said looking in the distance.

I groaned. "Raiden, give it up. Thalie…"

"I'm not thinking about Thalie." The Lightning Omega said. "I'm just concerned for you and Xhiva. And Diablo."

"Xhiva and Diablo left us for some girls." I said. "They chose to go against everything we had been taught."

"It was their choice." Raiden said. "I see what's going on here Speed Demon." He swam closer to me, until we sat like the best friends we were. "I know how painful it is to lose a family member but Xhiva never left you. He needs you just as much you need him. You need to support his decision and make one for yourself."

"But what decision will you make Raiden?" I asked. "I mean you spent years getting stronger more agile and now you meet this girl."

"Same as you." Raiden said. "You and Xhiva spent your entire lives together along with your sister. Then she left and you two were more closer than ever. Just like Erik and me. But you two won't always be together."

"Maybe you're right Raiden." I said. "Since when are you this kind of leader? You're mostly a rebel leader of rebels."

He sighed. "I've always had this kind of motif. I just don't use it much."
"Thanks." I said, making a fist bump with him. "I still remember like it was yesterday how it was just the four of us up to no good."

"Remember when we tried rocket boots on Diablo as a puppy?" Raiden laughed.

"Those were the days." I sighed.

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Xhiva's POV

I picked at the tuna salad. I was in the beach house Mr. Marino let me and Diablo stay in at the time. I couldn't help but think of what I had done to Xandou and Raiden. They are like my brothers and best friends and I left them.

"Xhiva?" I heard Esmeralda ask, setting down her fork and knife. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing it's just…"

I was cut off by Phoebus. "Esmeralda could you give the boys the room?"

"Sure." Esme left, giving us the space.

"Alright." He said. "Now we can talk, mer-mano e mer-mano."

I sighed, deciding to open up. "Phoebus, there's nothing more I want than to get out of the life I was raised to be in, a criminal's life. But now that I look back on it, I feel like I did more harm than good."

"Not everyone will agree with the decisions you make in your life but you did the right thing." Phoebus said. "Maybe things will get better."

"It's not that." I said. "The Blade Boys may have looked like a tough package, but we were tight as rope. We each had each other's back, because we were more than best friends. And now, it's like we're just comrades like we were trained to be. I let them down."

"Xhiva don't think that." Phoebus said. "When I was with my friends, we had some falling out at times. Believe me it was bad sometimes."

"Phoebus, you don't get it." I said. "Erik, he was like the dad we never had. We sometimes called him Dad for fun. Raiden, he was more of our leader, whenever we were stuck, he would always come up with a way out with his snarky plans. Not me, not Diablo, not Erik, Raiden. Diablo, he was the goofball and despite being raised in a dark life like all of us, he was the ball of sunshine that kept us going. And Xandou, he is my brother, my twin brother, and my other half, and I let him down."

"As you grow, you're going to have to make some hard decisions." Phoebus said. "And those choices make you who you are. Sometimes, the only way to ensure those relationships is to break apart from them. Xhiva, you're the brains of that operation. You're the most logical and reasonable of all of them. It wasn't easy I will say."

"Do you think Nerissa made the right choice?" I asked.

"Well she obviously wouldn't have stripped her own son of his heritage unless his life probably depended on it, which it must have."

"How do you figure?" I asked.
"We believe that Zac may have been near death when she did it." He said.

"Aren't you gonna tell Zac?" I asked. "He is your godson."

"Well he has to come around sometime." Phoebus said.

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Thalie's POV

I was in my room, reading a nice quiet book when I heard the buzz of my phone. I looked at it to see a text that read, "Look up." I did said thing and I found Raiden tapping on the window, grinning kindly. I opened the window and Raiden jumped in cat like.

"How did you?" I asked.

"Climbed." He replied.

"Couldn't you just have swum?" I asked.

"And risk your mom and our relatives seeing us together?" Raiden asked. "I seem to remember that you didn't want anyone to know yet about..." He moved closer to me, caressing my cheek. "Us." He pulled me closer and landed his lips on mine. I used my arms to lightly massage him, causing him to moan lightly. He did the same thing, as I allowed his tongue passage. It appeared that Raiden had learned in short time how to control himself because he broke the kiss and led me to the bed, his strong hands, protecting me. As we sat down, I laid a small chastise kiss on his tanned neck.

"How are you doing, with the news?" I asked.

Raiden's handsome purple eyes were filled with anguish then. "I don't think any of us are ready to accept it, well, save for Cousin Zoe."

"Raiden." I held his hand. "I'm still getting around this huge shock. We're all gonna need time. Everything has changed."

"Why is it always Zac this and Zac that?" Raiden asked. "Their mother was my aunt, and she didn't even know that I was in her sister's womb. How the hell could she leave her own kids like that and how could someone have her own husband, sister and friends go through so much grief?!"

I shushed him to make sure no one could hear us. "Raiden, not so loud." I warned him. "I don't have all the answers, but from what I'm told, your aunt was an amazing mermaid. I'm sure she loved even Erik very much."

"Not enough to keep her own kids and not run away like a coward." Raiden snarled.

I cupped his cheek, which seemed to calm him down, the lightning dying slowly in his eyes. "It... would have been... a last resort. A way of making sure that all people within her circle were safe."

"Safe from what or who?" Raiden asked.

"Again I don't know." I said. "But don't you find it funny that all of us are here at the same place in the same time? Think about it, we were all separated as children, now here we are after at most, 15 years now, and all of us are finally connecting."

"What are you saying Thalie?" Raiden asked. "Fate or Destiny wants us to be back together?"
"Exactly Raiden." I said. "Like it or not we are connected and more than in blood."

"It's strange." Raiden said. "My dad had a saying; Once a school of fish gets separated, they all get drawn back together."

"But Raiden." I said. "Promise me one thing."

My new boyfriend looked at me skeptically. "Ok?"

"I want you to talk with your cousins." I said.

"But Thalie!" He said. "I hardly know them! And right now they're polar opposites in this whole mess. Mimmi is just on the happy train while Zac is apparently running from it as fast as he can."

"It takes work to make things turn out right." I said. "It's not easy, but not impossible either."

He sighed. "I guess I could try."

"Did I ever tell you how much I love you?" I asked.

"No but keep going." Raiden said as I pulled him in for a deep kiss. No, we did not go far. We were just taking it steady.

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Erik's POV

I carried my peace offering to the house where Ondina was staying in hopes to try to apologize and explain. I rung the doorbell and instantly, the door opened. It wasn't Ondina but it was the last person I wanted to see at the house; her dad. I was a dead fish.

"Oh." He said coldly in Greek. "Eísa eý. (It's you.)"

I chuckled nervously, but he just narrowed his cold blue eyes at me. If looks could kill, I would have been ashes then. I could tell he was restraining to teach me a lesson. "Den énai synithisméno páradóso sas, k Maríno. Énai mia prosforá eirínis." (It's not your usual delivery, Mr. Marino. It's a peace offering.)

He scoffed. "Nomízeis óti ta trófima ston págo tha kánei gia ó, ti kánate?" (You think food on ice will make up for what you did?)

"Egó ... Egó aplá prospathó na voithíso." (I…I was just trying to help.) I said in an effort to try to ease the tension. But it didn't work.

"Me psémata se ólous." (By lying to us.) He said. "Boreíte chrisimopoiithoún óloi mas se lígo to paichnidi sas kai schedón théseis tin oikogénéia sas se kíndyno. Óla giatí den boroúsa na antistátho na eiselthei stin oikíathousa." (You used all of us in your little game and almost put your family in danger. All because you couldn't resist going to the chamber.)

"Prépei óloi na gnorízoun ti énai gia." (We all need to know what it's for.) I said. "Ondina anakalypsei, ítan aplá mia opisthodrómisí..." (Ondina finding out was just a setback…)

"Setback?" Phoebus growled dangerously. "Setback?!" He used his powers to pull me closer to him until he grabbed my shirt and looked me in the eye. I felt like the prey at the mercy of the predator. "Were my daughter's feelings a setback?"
"Phoebus." I pleaded. "I was just trying to protect her. I…"

"No!" He shouted in my ear. "You knew she would find out. My own child spent 5 hours crying because of your arrogance!" He let me go.

"I'm trying to make amends now." I said.

"You can start by getting out of my sight." He slammed the door in my face, leaving me alone. When I walked out of the lawn I passed by Esmeralda.

"Hello Erik." She said coldly.

"Veja Esme." I said in Portuguese. "Tudo que eu queria era ter certeza todos vocês estavam seguros. Talvez eu fui sobre ele o caminho errado." (All I wanted was to make sure all of you were safe. Maybe I went about it the wrong way.)

"Você tem esse direito parte." (You got that part right.) The Romani-Portuguese mermaid said.

"Mas é porque sua filha é importante para mim." (But it's because your daughter is important to me.) I pleaded.

"Você era importante para ela também." (You were important to her too.) Esmeralda said, looking at me in the eye. "Como ninguém jamais tinha sido. Você foi a primeira que ela nunca chegou tão perto. Mesmo ela fecha seus próprios pais às vezes. Você foi a primeira que ela já deixou-se sentir assim sobre." (Like no one else ever had been. You were the first she ever get that close. Even she shuts her own parents out sometimes. You were the first she ever let herself feel that way about.)

She left me going inside and I made a run for the ocean diving in. Swimming I saw Mimmi, or Zoe swim alone. I nearly screamed as I felt a stinging sensation on my fin as a jellyfish started wrapping its tentacles on it. A blast of light came from Zoe's ring, zapping the jellyfish away.

"Thanks for that." I said as we surfaced.

"Yeah?" Zoe snapped. "Well thank you for nothing. It's kind of your fault Zac almost died in that chamber that night."

"Right, because clearly the paranoid mermaid who exiled you and Ondina didn't have anything to do with it." I said as we leaned on a rocky ledge.

"I don't know." Zoe sighed, flapping her tail in the water. "I'm just getting paired up with all kinds of jerks in my life."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked, leaning in to understand her.

"Nothing you'd understand traitor." Zoe said. "Let's just say some merman dweeb's been giving everyone static. Because he's too much of a baby to get his head around the truth."

"Uh, maybe you didn't give him enough time to take it in?" I theorized.

"Or maybe he doesn't understand how lucky he is to even have a friend!" Zoe exclaimed. "Me, I was the outcast in my home, my second home, my third home."

"Three homes?" I questioned.

"Canada, prison, and Mako!" The Canadian mermaid clarified. "I could have been paired with anybody for a twin. And who do I get stuck with? Insensitive! Uncaring! Fatheaded! ZAC"
BLAKELY!" She finished her outburst by creating a ball of water, freezing it and smashing it against the rocks.

"Zoe…" I began before I realized that she needed time to cool off. "See you…cousin." I said, diving into the water back to my job.

Raiden's POV

I can't believe I am doing this. I though as I dried my tail. Keeping my promise to Thalie aka my girlfriend, I tracked down Zac. Walking on the beach, I saw the pouting teenager pick at some leaves. As I walked closer to him, he looked up and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"I figured you were here." I said sitting down. "Being the moody manatee you are being." Still nothing I cleared my throat. "Look man you need to talk."

"No I don't." Zac protested.

"Yes you do." I insisted. "The four of us do."

"Raiden, I don't need you telling me what I need." He said. "I can take care of myself."

"Look I don't know you that very well I can agree." I said. "But like your actual sister, I'm trying to make an effort here by being your cousin."

"I've never had a cousin like you before, and I don't have one now." Zac said nonchalantly.

"A cousin like me huh?" I challenged. "Acting like a dick isn't gonna help. Although I respect and admire your edginess, it's not gonna change a thing. At least accept that you're a merman."

"That's the thing Raiden." Zac said. "I don't want to be a merman, I don't want to be connected to the chamber and I definitely don't want to be Mimmi's long lost twin brother and you and Erik's long lost cousin." He left

Thalie's POV

I ran to the marina where Zac was standing all alone. "I've been looking for you everywhere." I said. "Why is your phone off?"

"Maybe it's because I don't want to talk to anyone." He replied quickly.

"Not even someone who you consider family?" I asked.

Zac groaned turning around. "Thals please! I'm sick of everyone trying to help, it's my life!"

"And it's been turned upside down!" I exclaimed. "Last year, I was in the exact same position as you were. I was confused and unsure of who or what I was. You helped me, now let me help you."

"Well I don't need your help or you." He retorted.

"Fine." I said firmly. "Go jump off another pier, see if I care."

"Hey Thals." Luca called out. Luca and his friend Gabe used to be lifeguards along Zac and they
acted like they owned the place. "Everything ok?"

"No it's fine." I answered.

"Didn't sound like it." Luca said.

"She said she was alright ok?" Zac snapped.

"I don't know why you hang around him anyway." Luca said arrogantly.

"Because he's my brother." I defended.

"I reckon you could do way better." Luca said. I wanted to tell him right then and there, that I was taken and I wouldn't want to hang with a jerk like him. But I knew better than that.

"She doesn't need your advice!" Zac yelled.

"More like she doesn't need you!" Luca shot back.

"Ok guys, cool it please!" I said trying to ease the tension.

"Forget it Luca, he's not worth it." Gabe said.

"You're right." Luca said out loud. "He's not. They guy's a quitter. Can't stick at anything. You'll see."

As the guys left to go on their buggy, Zac stretched out his hand and used his powers to pull back the activated buggy.

"Zac, leave it." I said. "They're idiots." But he didn't stop. His anger and frustration was being taken on the buggy. "Stop it."

"You said they're idiots." Zac retorted. "This is what idiots deserve." He twisted his hand even more, pushing the vehicle back toward the water.

"Zac stop it or so help me, I will splash you right here, right now." I threatened.

"Try me." He challenged.

I stretched my hand and pushed back the buggy. It was a tug of war with the buggy that seemed to go on until Erik ran up.

"Stop!" He cried. "This isn't you Zac, you're better than this! You think you're the only one who's hurting?"

"Easy for you to say." Zac retorted. "Your parents didn't lie to you your whole life!"

"No because when I was a child I lost even the feeling of having parents!" Erik exclaimed. "Until now, Raiden was the only family I had left! You have a mother and a father who love you very much and you grew up in paradise! So how dare you feel so goddamn sorry for yourself! You have absolutely no idea how lucky you are!"

Erik's words seemed to take a toll on Zac as he lowered his hand, cuing me to lower mine as well. In a flash, the buggy sped out, leaving us alone.

"Zac you need answers." I said. "Talk to the people who know your past the most."
"She's right." Erik agreed. "You can't hide in the dark forever."

Zac scoffed. "You're the one to talk."

Erik narrowed his blue green eyes at his cousin. "What is that supposed to mean?" He asked.

"Alright." Zac retorted. "Let me spell it out for you. You wanna know why you hover over Raiden so much?"

"It's because he's my little brother." Erik answered.

"No." Zac said. "It's cause you're scared of being alone."

"At least I'm not trying to hide from reality." Erik said. "Because I am not a coward."

Instantly, Zac punched Erik in the stomach sending him stumbling back a little, before Erik sent a knifehand to his face and a few more to his torso. Zac grabbed his arm and started punching him and Erik was punching back. Behind them, I lifted a mini wave of water and sent it splashing the boys. Getting wet seemed to get their attention as they both stared at each other with fear and dove in the ocean in a leap of faith. Rising from the surface were the two mermen in their natural forms, glaring at me with axes.

"ENOUGH!" I shouted.

"What the hell Santos?" Erik asked. "Are you trying to get us dissected?"

I stood firmly. "You two are cousins. Act like it." I walked away from them, giving them some alone time.


No one's POV

At the Marino house…

Ondina came down after sorting her laundry to the door where she found Zac, Zoe, Raiden and the last person she wanted to see, Erik. Thalie despite Zac and Zoe's pleas, did not come because she decided to leave it to her brother's family.

"Ondina, I know that you don't want to see me here but are your parents home?" He asked.

She nodded. "Mom! Dad! Someone wants to see you!"

Rushing down was Esme. "Come in." Zac and Zoe entered, but the Consorzio brothers stayed outside. "It's ok Erik, you can come in. I know what you're here for." They were led to the living room where Phoebus was there as well and sat down on the chairs.

"Ondina sit down as well." Phoebus told the parting blond teen. "These are your godparents we are talking about as well." Reluctantly sighing, Ondina sat down next to Raiden.

"Zac, Zoe." Phoebus said. "Your lives began 17 years ago, in the North Atlantic sea, when your parents, Jacob and Nerissa Khatha who were on the run from some very powerful enemies who did not want you or your parents around. They searched for days for a place to hide in the sea, where they could raise you. Finally they had no choice but to retreat to land in the last place anyone would think to look for you; San Francisco, California. There, they were hoping to raise you as merpeople in a human's world. Jacob was a police cop who then got promoted to a detective, and Nerissa was a
librarian at the local library. But in order to keep you kids safe, you guys only saw Erik and Ondina 3 times a year."

"Wait." Ondina interrupted. "Are you saying me and Erik got legs as a baby and we all knew each other as small children?"

"Yes." Esme said.

"Why didn't you take me to land then?" Ondina asked.

"I didn't really have a reason to." Esme answered. "Getting back to the point, Zac, Zoe, did you ever have visions of a fire burning a building? With two small children in them?"

"Yeah." Zac replied with Zoe in unison, both teens looking at each other weirdly.

"Those two year old children you saw…"Esme began, choking back tears. "They were you two. 15 years ago, there was a fire and your mother ran in to try to save you and just as Persephone, your aunt, was going in after, the building exploded sending me and Seph back a few feet, and that was the last time we ever saw your mother and you. Until I found you in prison Zoe. After observing you, I realized that you were the daughter of Nerissa and you and your brother somehow survived the fire. I tried to find your brother and your father, but I couldn't. So I adopted you."

Zac stood up, having gone white from the news. "Are you saying, my real father is alive? Well then where is he?"

"We don't know Zacharai." Phoebus said. "Last we heard from him, he was in Asia somewhere but that was 9 years ago. All we know is that he's out there. He was like you Zac. When he arrived back from his work to try to save you guys, he was too late. He shut himself away from everybody and after the funeral he left the airport."

"I can't believe it." Erik said. "All this time, we had other family and we thought that we were orphans."

"But wait a minute." Raiden said. "Where am I in the picture?"

Phoebus cringed. "Um Raiden… you weren't exactly in the picture then. In fact, after the funeral, Persephone found out she was pregnant with you. So you were born nine months after the fire."

"But why would my own mother take away my own brother's magical heritage?" Zoe asked. "He had a right to know who he was."

"That, we're still debating on." Esme said. "It may have something to do with how you and your sister survived."

The teens all looked shocked and taken aback by the news. Except for Ondina they went home to try to digest this information in.


At the café…

It was late and it was the café's second anniversary party. People were gathered, the Sirens Creed patrol was already performed, and David was in for a surprise.

"What's going on?" He asked, blinded by his girlfriend's hands. "The booking Carly made, they'll be
here soon."

"Actually." Sirena said, smiling. "They just arrived." As she opened her eyes, everyone yelled Happy Anniversary and he was presented with an ice cream cake and blew out the candles.

"My wish came true already." David said, holding Sirena's hand.

"Oh go suck face!" Raiden exclaimed, earning a hit from his brother on the arm.

"Raiden, manners." Erik reminded him.

"What manners?" Raiden asked deviously. Everyone then launched into conversations of their own as Zac stepped in with Thalie. After talking with Evie, he went to Erik and pulled him near the dressing room.

"Hey I know things are tight," Zac began. "But now that we're...you know related, let's try to at least not kill each other. So...truce?" He handed out his hand.

"Truce." Erik said, shaking his cousin's hand.

"I'm with Zac." They heard Zoe near them.

"Yeah but don't think this saves you from my electric wedgies." Raiden said. "Oh and by the way Zac, Evie will never love you." Zac pulled Raiden closer to him and the two bickered as Zac put Raiden in an armlock and then a headlock.

Beside them Zoe only smiled and rolled her eyes. "I cannot believe I am related to a couple of immature pinheads."

Next to her, Erik smiled and whispered, "That makes two of us. And FYI, little brothers are a bit of a pain in the tail."

Thalie came up to them as the boys broke up the fight. "Aww look at you guys. Already bickering, being there for each other, you're like a family!"

"Don't say family in front of Zac!" Raiden said quietly. "It gives him gas, like 'clear the room gas."

Zac looked mixed between annoyed and amused. "Does not!" As Thalie left, Zac whispered in his ear, "Uh you do realize that you're crushing on your step cousin right?"

"Actually." Raiden said. "You consider Thalie as your sister, along Zoe. Me I consider her a friend."


Helen looked into those handsome green eyes of his. "Sometimes." She reminded him. The two teens smiled at each other before Helen got a call of her watch that a robbery was going on and the superheroes left the café to fight the crime.


The next day…

Zac and Zoe walked along the beach, them feeling like they had known each other forever.

"I was meant to be with the Blakely's." Zac told his newfound sister. "I know that now."
"Just like we were meant to find each other." Zoe told her brother. "We were so close all that time, even with our cousins."

"Maybe our mother knew I had a connection to Mako too." Zac said sitting down on the sand.

"She wanted to be sure we could still follow our destinies." Zoe said.

"Whatever they are." He said.

"You'll find it." Zoe said optimistically. "We'll find it. I think that's why she wanted all of us back together. We need our whole pack to find it."

Zac could only smile. "You don't give up do you?"

"I want answers." Zoe replied. "To all of this, just like you."

Zac laughed. "Talk about stubborn."

"I guess it must run in the family, Zacharai." Zoe joked.

"I guess it must, Zoe Nightshade." He pulled his sister closer to him, to ensure that he would always be there for her.

Nothing could ruin the moment, for then, the Khatha Twins were finally reunited.
Cam Gets His Wish

Thalie's POV

We were in the Secret Sanctum discussing plans in the lab room. Phoebus and Esmeralda and my mom were there as well.

"Alright." Kimi said, bringing up a board. "This is everything we know about Slade's plans today. Which is actually not a lot to go on."

"Didn't you talk to your step cousins about it Thalie?" Rose asked me.

"Even they didn't know about anything he's planning." I said. "I mean they've been living under his thumb for years and the big takeaway is that he's enigmatic."

"Either that or they wouldn't tell you anything." Phoebus muttered.

"Your godfather, Erik and Raiden's father." My mom began. "Was killed by Slade, who then took them in. That cannot be a coincidence."

"Everything he's done to those two." Esme said. "Bringing them in, giving them the weapons, training them, it's all been to make them his soldiers."

"And to make Raiden stronger." I said. "He told me that Slade once told him when he was a child that he needed more power from Raiden."

"But why?" Rose asked.

"I don't know." Kimi said. "But it's not just the Consorzio brothers. I saw them and Xandou watch the Khatha Twins suspiciously. Slade wants something from those four, we just have to figure out what it is."

Helen stood up, her fists flaming as she punched them. "Then what are we waiting for? Let's find Slade, singe the scales off him and them get some answers!"

"Helen need I remind you that he almost killed you four?" Esme asked. "And I repeat, almost killed you on your first mission. You haven't told anyone your identities have you?"

"No!" The four of us said in unison.

"Good girls." Esme said proudly.

Rose them shook her hand up, like she was in a classroom causing us to laugh.

"Rose you don't need to raise your hand." Kimi said. "This isn't school."

"What if Slade set the fire to Nerissa's apartment?" She asked, her question throwing us off guard.

"Why would he try to kill a couple of infants?" Phoebus asked. "It makes no sense."

"Well don't you guys know anything?" Helen asked. "I mean you spent a long time in the sea."

"Well I actually spent most of my time on land." Phoebus said.
"And according to mermaid laws, contact with mermen is forbidden." Esme said. "Not so much chance of sneaking out undercover."

"And when you live on land, you don't get weekly gossip from the sea." My mom pointed out.

"Whatever Slade's planning." I said. "It started almost 20 years ago. He's been patient. Scary patient. If we're gonna solve this one, then we have to be...Just. As. Patient."

Evie's POV

We were at Ondina's house, with Xhiva and Diablo teaching me how to manipulate. Well they were testing me anyway. I lifted the ball of water out of the sink and returned it without spilling a drop.

"El excellente!" Diablo complemented.

"Now for a different sort of water." Xhiva said, pouring out literal blue water which luckily I managed to catch but it felt like it weighed a ton. "Moon pool water."

"This is harder to move." I noted.

"Well duh Amiga." Diablo said. "It's not called moon pool water for nothing."

"What he means to say is that it holds the power of the moon in it's molecular structure." Xhiva said politely.

"You've been spending too much time with Kimi." I teased, resulting in Xhiva blushing in embarrassment.

"Hey guys, Cam's here." Ondina said to them before going to her room.

"Sup?" He asked.

"Hey Cam." I said. "Check this out." I moved the water closer to him.

"Cool trick." He said reaching to touch it but as he did the water exploded knocking him on the floor. But just as the water landed on him, it dissolved in him, in his skin. "What was that stuff?"

"Moon pool water." I said.

"You ok, dude?" Xhiva asked.

"Sure packs a punch." Cam said getting up. "Let's get to school."

"Thanks for the lesson?" I asked as the boys got out and I followed them to Suncoast where we saw Zac's old swim coach, Norris talking to him.

"Evie." He said to me. "Tell Zac we need him on the team."

"Uh it's his call." I said quickly, already knowing the consequences.

"Sorry Coach." Zac said. "I can't help you."

Norris eyed the Hindi and Latino mermen. "What about you?" He pointed to Xhiva.

"Uh don't count me in." He said. "If there's one thing technology hates, it's water."
"And you Diablo." Norris pointed to said teenager. "I know that the rugby team won't allow you to be away from them."

"You've heard of me?" The South American merboy asked, tugging his lucky orange cap.

Norris scoffed. "Of course! Coach Marolda is constantly bragging about you just like Coach Rodriguez brags about that Italian boy on his baseball team. Marolda tells all the time just how much of a beast you are on the field."

We all laughed. "You don't know the half of it." I muttered.

"What about me?" Cam asked.

"Oh standard's pretty high Cam." Norris said.

"I'm a lifeguard." Cam added on. "I swim all the time."

"You know what?" My boyfriend asked. "He's got great pace in the water, I've seen him."

Norris pondered for a minute before saying, "Alright. Team's training after school, come along then and we'll see what you can do."

"Thanks Coach." Cam said. "I'll be there."

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Thalie's POV

When lunch came, Diablo and Xhiva met up with me in an empty classroom. From what they told me, it sounded urgent that I should hear about this.

"Just suppose someone from our groupie." Xhiva began. "Was practicing magic."

"Which merperson?" I asked.

"It doesn't matter." Diablo said. "Just say they were experimenting with moon pool water and someone else touched it."

"Another merperson?" I asked.

"Not exactly." Diablo said.

"Who else would be in the moon pool?" I asked raising an eyebrow.

Xhiva's ears turned pink. "Just say this wasn't happening in the moon pool."

"Could you please tell me what this is about?" I asked.

The duo sighed before Xhiva explained. "We were testing Evie on her ability to manipulate water."

"So she touched it?" I asked.

"No." Diablo said. "Cam did."

Alarm bells were going off in my head as I stood stiff. "Cam?!" I nearly screeched. "Off all people why Cam?"
"It was an accident." Xhiva said.

"But it couldn't hurt him." Diablo said in his usual joyful tone before turning to a blank expression. "Could it?"

"Moon pool water is dangerous to humans!" I exclaimed. "You have no idea what that stuff could do to you! And Xhiva, don't you know most of your dad's…business? Surely you must have heard of moon pool water."

"I've heard of it." Xhiva snapped. "I've never touched it in my life. Last time I saw it before today was about 8 years ago, when they were trying to invest a teeny tiny vial of it into poison. But the experiment went wrong and a monster was created instead, but fortunately, some agents managed to subdue it and freeze it into one of the safeguarded vaults. Come to think of it, Wolfboy, didn't you ever go near a moon pool?"

"My mother wouldn't let a scale of mine near a moon pool even if my life depended on it." Diablo muttered looking glum. "Believe me, I tried. A lot. I couldn't sleep for weeks."

"You boys alert the others but don't do anything yet." I told them in my leader voice. "I'm gonna find Zac and warn him of this." So I ran down the hall until I found Zac and Cam in a science room. "Zac, I gotta tell you something."

"Cam has powers." Zac said. "Yeah I know." To prove his point, he pointed to Cam who was manipulating the water stream from the faucet before putting it back. I couldn't believe my eyes. It looked like Cam had gotten his wish after all.

"Awesome right?" He said to both of us, before realizing something. "You don't think I've got… stand back, I'm gonna need some tail space." He then turned to me. "Wet me." Getting the all clear sign from Zac, I formed a ball of water out of nowhere, and hit him in the chest, splashing him. Ten seconds went by and no tail. "Maybe it takes a little while longer. But still, do you have any idea how long I've been waiting for this? I've got powers man! I've got powers!"

"This is not good." I whispered to Zac.

Later after school, we met up with Erik and Evie.

"You sure he doesn't have a tail?" Erik asked his cousin.

"Yeah." He said. "But if he can bend water like us, maybe he's got other powers too."

"Well then we better make sure he keeps it to himself." Erik said.

"I know Cam." Zac said. "He can't resist showing off. And he's wanted powers for ages."

"I feel horrible about this." Evie said despondently. "It's my fault he touched the moon pool water."

"Don't be so hard on yourself." I told her. "I'm meeting up with him now. I'm gonna make sure he doesn't do anything stupid."

"Where are you going?" Erik asked me.

"The swimming pool." I simply said.

Erik scoffed. "Not on your own, you're not." He followed me to the pool where we saw Cam stretching to swim.
"Cam." I said to him. "You can't do this. You don't know what's gonna happen."

"Nothing is gonna happen." He told me before getting on the block and diving in on the whistle Coach Norris was using.

He was swimming, well like a merman with legs. He was that crazy fast. As soon as he dove he came back with an impressive time that was 2 seconds under the world record! He was then guaranteed a spot on the team if he swam the team trials on that Saturday. It was Friday that day if you got confused.

"Did you see that?" Cam asked. "This is the best day of my life!"

"Cam." I said sternly. "You can't be on the swim team."

"Uh with a time like that." Cam boasted. "It's a done deal."

"It's not you." Erik pointed out. "It's the moon pool water, it's a total giveaway!"

"Oh I'll be careful." Cam said.

"When you swim like a world champion." I began. "What do you think is gonna happen? People will start asking questions!"

"And that will lead straight back to us." Erik finished.

"Stop stressing!" Cam hissed. "I'll bet you no one even noticed."

"Hi Cam!" Jodie greeted. Jodie was the snobbish girls swim team captain I knew from last year. She tried hitting on Zac for 3 months. She complemented Cam on his swimming skills and asked him to join her and her group of friends at the café.

"No one else will notice huh?" I asked sarcastically.

"Come on." Erik pulled me away from the pool and to the hallway. "Your brother wasn't kidding Thals, Cam is one hell of a showoff."

"What are we gonna do Erik?" I asked worried. "I mean it's not like we're actually going to let him keep his powers."

My words perked Erik up because he got that look on his face that meant that an idea was forming in his head. It was somewhat of a devilish smirk.

"Actually." He said. "We are. We are letting Cam keep his powers."

"You're kidding right?" I asked, my jaw dropping a little.

Erik chuckled. "First of all we don't know how to get it out of him anyway. And second once he learns that having powers isn't everything it's cracked up to be, he'll be begging us to take them back."

"And if he doesn't?" I asked.

Erik only patted my back. "Trust me cuz. He'll be cracking at any second."
Kimi's POV

Cam with powers was a little bad but there was a calculated risk that I was prepared to take, and that risk was that things would get out of hand. Xhiva and I were on our way to the café to try to talk to Cam.

"Sorry to interrupt, but can we borrow Cam for a sec please?" Xhiva asked, flashing his ever cute smile that I found adorable. I had developed a bit of a crush on Xhiva because his nerdness was just too cute.

"Guys, I'm kind of busy." Cam said.

"Oh just a quick word." I said to the girls surrounding Cam. "We'll bring him back." So we grabbed the blonde Aussie by the arms and led him outside. "You have to stop this." I told Cam.

"Are you serious?" Cam asked us. "Did you see those girls in there? I've got groupies!"

"But you don't know what else the moon pool water might do to you." Xhiva said.

"And you're overreacting." He said. "I'm fine."

"Now maybe." Xhiva said. "But magic is unpredictable. Which is why you cannot swim."

"Do you ever get sick of repeating yourselves?" Cam asked us.

"We wouldn't have to if you would just listen to us!" I hissed.

"But how come is I don't have a chance to have the fun?" Cam whined.

"It's not a good idea." Xhiva muttered.

"Ok." Cam walked away from us to a nearby table. "I get it. Just… chill." I raised an eyebrow until I saw Cam use his powers to freeze the drinks in front of him. He walked back in, smiling.

"It took us one month just to master our powers." Xhiva finished. We looked at each other and said in unison, "This is bad."


Rose's POV

We had stopped for break on our night patrol, the wind rushing on me as I landed on the roof of some building. Nothing seemed more natural than flying in my life, I thought as we took off our helmets. We told Helen what happened, because she was out sick that day and her reaction was an expected one. But her outburst still got me by surprise.

"WHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAATTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT?!!" She screamed, her entire body bursting into flames. Thank her lucky star that her suit was fireproof. Well it's thanks to me that her suit is, I should know, I designed all the suits. "Ok." She said, the fire dying down. "I'm cool. Cam with powers?! This night just gets better and better."

"At least he hasn't gotten a tail." I said hoping to keep the joy up.

"Yet." She enunciated, the flames rising a little.
"What are we gonna do about him?" Kimi asked.

"Cam won't give up his powers willingly." Thalie told us.

Helen looked at us with a smirk. "Who said anything about him having a choice?"

Helen's POV

The next day…

All of us kids knew the ordeal. So we split in teams. I was with Sirena and Ondina, while Thalie was with the nerd squad aka Mimmi, Kimi and Xhiva. Rose and Diablo were with Erik, Zac, and Evie.

Cam was talking with Jodie, a swim team bint. (A.N bint means bitch in Brit Slang.) Ondina gave me a thumbs up and I nodded signaling Plan A of Thalie's plan. She's pretty good at strategy. Ondina used her powers to make the air hot and Sirena whispered to me, "Do you think this will work?"

I whispered back, "Best we can do, is woman up." Seeing Ondina needed some help in turning it up, I used my powers to add to hers, and in no time, Cam was sweating like a warthog in Africa (A.N, sound familiar?) He got up to leave and we followed him outside.

"Whatever you're doing just stop!" Cam exclaimed.

"We're trying to steam the moon pool water out of you." Ondina said.

"You're not meant to have powers." Sirena said. "You have to let us remove them."

"Not gonna happen." Cam protested.

"Excuse me tosser." I said. "We ain't asking."

"You guys seem upset." Cam said lifting his hand. "I think you need to cool off." I turned around to see a giant wave heading toward us. I knew that my fire wouldn't stop it so I ran for it. Turning around I saw the blonde mermaids stiff as boards not moving. Groaning, I ran back to them in an effort to try to save them but the wave crashed down on us, each of us sprouting our tails.

"Have a nice day." He said.

"You're gonna pay for this!" I exclaimed, my tail and hair on fire.

Diablo's POV

My team walked up to Cam in an effort to try to change his mind about his powers.

"Guess what?" He asked us. "Coach called in a scout just to see me." He saw our expressions and said, "Oh I know what you're gonna say and you're wasting your breath."

"No actually, I understand why you're doing this." Zac said. "It's a pretty big deal, you wanna enjoy your moment in the spotlight."

"Even though, it'll put us all at risk." Erik added on.
"Even though we're your oldest friends who we trust with our deepest secret." Evie said as well.

"Not to mention that we have always been there for you and we're your actual friends." Rose said.

"Yeah who needs amigos when you have glory like Hercules si?" I said.

"Nice try Nagual." Cam said, clapping my soldier. "No sale, I'm still swimming."

He left us to our thoughts. "I really hope my sisters have something in the works." Zac whispered to me.

"Knowing those smart Niñas, they probably do." I muttered back.


Mimmi/Zoe's POV

We were in the grotto, experimenting with some moon pool water that Kimi said she gotten from somewhere, but I knew she wasn't telling me everything. But I decided to leave it because we had powers to remove. My sister was levitating the water and Xhiva was researching it on his laptop

"So." Xhiva said. "What do we know about moon pool water? And if anyone says that it's water that comes from the moon pool, I'm gonna be a little pissed."

"We're in unknown territory here." I said.

"She's right," Kimi said, who was in her lab coat. She had taken a break from studying the water under a (what do you call it?) microscope. "We don't know where to begin."

"Anyone got any bright ideas?" Thalie asked before we noticed water rising form a glass cup.

"Whoever is doing that, please stop."

"I'm not doing anything." Xhiva said, putting his hands up.

"Same here." I said.

"I can't control water." Kimi reminded us.

"So why is the water rising?" I asked.

"Well the moon pool water has a subatomic concentration of the lunar energy infused with the H2O compound of it's molecular structure, creating an isotonic solution. So therefore, if the mutated compound is around mundane water, it creates a hydrophilic reaction that is somewhat similar to magnetism but instead it rises, creating hydro-magnetic suspension." Kimi explained in what Ondina and Helen have taken pleasure to calling "Nerd Talk." All of us blinked at her weirdly, none of us saying a word. I had no clue what she was talking about but it had something to do with water. "The moon pool water attracts ordinary water." She translated.

"Ah." I said understanding. But suddenly, there was a loud beeping noise and Kimi rushed to the microscope. She looked at it and said, "Oh Choto! That's really not good."

Thalie put the moon pool water back in the thermos and we ran to her. I took a look and I was horrified to see the moon pool water attacking Cam's blood. Kimi had somehow gotten a blood sample from Cam. I had asked her about it and she said she had help from one of those vigilantes who had been making quite an appearance. Specifically the pink one, the one in the pink dress.
"Kimi?" Xhiva asked. "Anaysis?" Kimi was scourging through her notes on her laptop and found what she was looking for.

"A few months ago." Kimi began. "I was studying moon pool water. And I found that all the molecules work together as a colony. Should they get separated, after a long time, they become unstable. And because this sample was separated from the pool too long, it started attacking the thing that stood against it."

"So anyone that absorbs the moon pool water…" I trailed off before we all realized it at the same time.

"We need to warn Cam ASAP!" Thalie exclaimed. "Kimi, Xhiva how much time do we have?"

The two geniuses went to work, grabbing some paper and performing something called algorithms. After seconds, they looked up.

"Less than 10 minutes." They answered in unison.

"You have to beat the clock." I warned them. "Or he'll die." Kimi and I ran as fast as we could to the school where we saw Cam walk away from the rising water of the fountains which returned to normal.

"The moon pool water is becoming unstable!" I cried out. The water returned to normal.

"You have to help me!" Cam exclaimed. "I have to swim in 3 minutes. I don't wanna be a water feature."

"Xhiva and Thalie are working on it." Kimi said.

"They better think of something." Zac agreed.

"Yeah and fast." I said.

"Why?" Evie asked worried. "What exactly happens?"

Checking her watch, Kimi said, "In 7.5 minutes, the unstable moon pool water will start fighting your blood and the fight will lead to your heart and will…squeeze it."

"I don't wanna say I told you so." I began smiling with pride. "But we told you so."


Xhiva's POV

I worked with Thalie with the moon pool water but we still were stuck.

"We still need to get the water out of Cam's bloodstream." Thalie said.

"Ok." I said, taking a sponge. "Let's imagine that this sponge is Cam." I threw it up and soaked it with the special water. "Absorbing the moon pool water, any ideas?"

"We could squeeze it out of him?" Thalie suggested.

I winced. "You might draw some of his blood out of him though. Why don't we give steaming another try?"
"Maybe it needs more than one." She agreed. We held out our hands and curled them to heat it up. All of a sudden, the sea sponge exploded.

"We...probably shouldn't do that." I said.

Thalie got another batch of moon pool water and we tried with another sea sponge.

"What about a moon ring?" Thalie asked me. "Maybe the water will be drawn to it's power."

I shrugged. "Worth a try." Thalie took out her ring and it glowed. It did attract the sponge, but it made it bounce everywhere. Fortunantly, I managed to freeze it mid air.

"If we do that to Cam." Thalie began. "We'll bounce him out of the pool."

"Any other ideas?" I asked. "This is Southern Moon Pool water."

"Wait." Thalie said. "What did you say?"

"I said this is Southern Moon Pool Water." I said.

"Of course!" She exclaimed, grabbing a thermos. "I'll explain on the way, let's go."

Zac's POV

Cam was getting ready to swim. He tried every way possible to squirm out of it. I prayed that Xhiva and Thalie would get here. Looking over I saw Mimmi trembling.

"Hey." I said to her. "It's gonna be fine."

"I'm just worried." Mimmi said. "What if Cam dies?"

"It's not gonna happen." I held her hand, but as I did a massive energy surge ignited in our flesh as our hands touched. We both withdrew our hands and cried in pain at the same time.

"What was that?" I asked my twin.

"I don't know Zac." She said. "But it's quiet. Too quiet."

"What does Erik think?" I asked only to see him frozen as a statue.

"Erik?" Zoe asked. "Cuz?" She waved her hand in front of him but no reply.

"It's like he's a statue." I observed.

"It's not just Erik." Mimmi pointed to the scene in front of me. Everything was frozen. It was as if the world stopped working.

"How is this possible?" I asked. "Unless...." My eyes turned blue as I started freaking out. "Oh God!"

"Zac calm down!" My twin held my hand and calmed me down, my eyes turning back to brown.

"What did we do."

"Zoe..." I began. "I think we stopped time."
"How is that possible?" She asked.

"I don't know." I said. "But we stopped time somehow."

"How do we get it back?" She asked me.

"I don't know how we did it in the first place." I said. "But we have an opportunity here. We can get the moon pool water out of Cam." We walked up to Cam who was on his block.

"Ok what do we know about Moon Pool Water?" Zoe asked me.

"Well it's water that comes from the moon pool?" I said smiling in an effort to try to ease up the tension.

"Zac this is serious." My sister said giving me a death glare.

"I know." I said.

"Well it's Southern Moon Pool water." Zoe said.

"So?" I asked.

"Moon Pool Water from the south feeds on the heat in the climates." She said. "But it hates the cold."

"So all we have to do is freeze him?" I asked.

"Exactly." She said unsure.

"Mimmi." I said. "This is a human being we're freezing."

"It's either that or his heart gets squashed like a bug." She reminded me.

"Alright." I sighed. "There's no choice." We stuck out our hands and froze Cam's body slowly. I knew that if we did it wrong, we would freeze Cam from the inside. The last thing we needed was a Cam-sicle. Pouring out of his feet, was the moon pool water.

"I got the thermos." Zoe held up said item.

"Where'd you get it?" I asked. She pointed to a frozen Xhiva and Thalie who were running, sort of. I moved the water all into the thermos and capped it.

"Now we have to get time moving forward." She said. "But how do we do that?"

"Well we were touching hands." I said. "So I think we have to do it again." We raised our hands and touched them lightly. Nothing happened.

"I think like our other powers we have to concentrate." Mimmi said.

"Ok." I said. We closed our eyes, focusing our energy as it buzzed in our skin to our fingertips. We slowly raised our hands and made contact as the massive energy surge sparked to life and we knew that time was moving forward as we heard Coach Norris sound the buzzer, starting the race. Cam jumped in and he finished last sadly. Xhiva and Thalie ran to us confused.

"I don't understand." Xhiva said panting. "One minute I was holding the thermos and now Cam's without the moon pool water."
"Yeah guys." Ondina said. "How did you do it?"

"Take a deep breath guys." Mimmi said. "Me and Zac took care of it."

"But how…" Even Thalie was at a loss for words.

"Let's just say we had a little…" I began pointing to my watch. "Time on our hands."

My twin groaned. "Seriously?"

"What?" I asked. "It was a good pun."

"Back to plain old Cam." Said person muttered.

"Just the way we like you." Diablo said.

Rita's POV

"Zac, Zoe." I began after the twins told me what happened. "I knew you were powerful but freezing time? This is a whole new level."

"You're Nerissa's kids that's for sure." Esme muttered.

"But freezing the very fabric of the time/space continuum?" Diablo asked. "Forget awesomeness, you guys have read the story of Rachel Summers and Warp right?"

"You and your comic books Diablo." I said shaking my head and trying very hard not to laugh.

"To be able to stop time." Xhiva said. "That is so cool! Well it looks like you've discovered your team primary power."

"I thought we only had one." Zac and Zoe said in unison.

"That's not gonna be a thing is it?" Ondina asked.

"More or less." The twins said together again. They looked at each other scared. "Help."

"Each kid of an Omega has a unique individual power of their own." I explained. "Along with basic powers of a merman or mermaid. But should that child have siblings, there is a power that requires teamwork. Now that you've discovered that power, your individual powers remain to be discovered."

"But what are our powers?" Mimmi asked. "What can we do?"

"I don't know." Xhiva said. "They're something you have to discover on your own. But there are limits. For example, I can only control the technology I can see. Blindfold me in a room of computers…"

"You can't use your powers." Zoe finished with me nodding and smiling.

"So our limit is we have to touch hands." Zac said in understanding.

"Yeah, but freezing time?" Diablo asked. "That's some trippy Twilight Zone stuff." We looked at him weirdly. "Terminator. Back to the Future! Am I the only one who watches movies and reads

Khatha Twin's POV

We walked out of the grotto, both feeling more educated.

"What a day huh little sis?" Zac asked his sister.

Zoe scoffed. "Little sister huh? Tell me, is that because watching over Thalie built that pile of barnacle you call a brain?"

Burned ya Zackie.

No one calls me that!

I just did.

"Oh no you didn't." Zac challenged, smiling.

"Oh yes I did." Zoe waved a finger in his face.

"Get your phony nails out of my face." Zac backtalked her. Who's the loser now?

Shut up Khatha.

"You think you're older?" She asked. "I'm the more mature one and I'm smarter when it comes to our heritage."

"Well I'm the bigger one and I'm the one who actually has muscle." Zac said.

"You're calling me weak?" Zoe asked. "Besides, no matter how many times we're gonna talk about this, I can't remember and you wanna know why? I was a fetus."

"And you still are." Zac said. Boom, drop the mike.

Zoe put her nose in the air and took a whiff. "Smell that Zackie? Smells like a bet to me."

"No I smell." Zac took a big whiff. "You losing a bet!"

"Ok then it's settled." Zoe said. "We find out whoever was born first and then…"

"What happens if you lose?" Zac asked.

"That's for you to decide." She said smirking.

"Alright." Zac said. "If I win, you have to run through school in a tutu, screaming I'm with stoopid."

"Ok." Mimmi said. "If I win, I'm gonna show our whole family the tape I have of you."

Zac turned pale.

Got you brother.

"What tape?" He asked scared.
"You, trying to sing the Cup Song." She answered.

"I never did that!" Zac exclaimed. Why would I do that?

"Scared?" Zoe asked.

Her brother scoffed. "You wish."

"Deal." The twins said in unison and shook hands. Phoebus and Esmé were out of the question because Jacob and Nerissa wouldn't tell them who was older until the twins turned 5.


No one's POV

Neptune's Island…

It was a typical night for the Ares Tribe. Training was happening, meetings were being held and Erik swam to the chief himself as Erik was due to tell the big cheese what was happening.

"Erik." Slade's icy sharp voice rang in the cave. "Report." Slade swam around him, like a snake waiting to consume it's prey. "Why is it that you don't have Mako? Need I remind you of why you sold your soul to war? Your cowardliness is what brought you in my ranks in the first place? Do not proceed to pursue it."

Erik had to summon every amount of strength he could muster just to keep a stone face. Slade's evil could be felt a mile away. "Sir, we have tried, my team and I, but there's been someone who's powerful enough to stop us and maybe even you."

Slade stood stiff and grabbed Erik's face, bruising his jaw. "Speak. The. Name."

"Zac." Erik answered. "Zacharai Khatha."

The silence that followed was almost merciless like the tribe was itself. "Khatha." Slade's voice took a demonic tone to it. "Does the boy have any relation to Nerissa and Jacob?"

Erik gulped. "He's their son. His sister, Zoe aids him."

Slade's cold black eyes bore into his very soul as the water around him started to thrash violently. "Get out." He whispered loud enough to hear.

"Sir?" Erik asked.

Slade conjured a sword out of water and slashed Erik, sending him hitting the wall. "GET OUT!"

Erik swam under the water, holding his stomach.

Slade used his powers to destroy a boulder nearby. He was steaming with rage as he could not believe that the prophecy was in motion despite his plan to stop it all those years ago. "Batalo!" He yelled. The merman general swam to him, saluting.

"What are your orders?"

"Bring to me the merman known as Zacharai Khatha." Slade boomed. "His sister you can kill for all I care but Zac must be brought along with that brat Raiden."
Batalo saluted while Slade shouted loud enough for the heavens to be heard.

"FIND THEM!"
Xandou's Agenda

No one's POV

The Gold Coast night was silent. But it was good enough to let two teenagers jump from rooftop to rooftop. One of them jumped up and changed into a pterodactyl. They jumped into the roof light to reveal a Hindi boy with a leather jacket over his green t shirt, dark jeans and green sneakers. The other boy was a Latino with a brown leather jacket over his orange shirt, jeans and sneakers. He wore his lucky orange cap.

"Are you sure the Creed is gonna be there, Diablo?" The Hindi merboy asked the Latino who was practically jumping with excitement as he shifted back into his regular self.

"Of course Network!" He said, grinning like an idiot. "I'm telling you. I can smell them, although one smells oddly familiar."

"Wolfboy, we don't have to go all this way for nothing." Network reminded one of his best friend.

"It's not for nothing Amigo!" Wolfboy said hanging on the billboard. "This is our first chance to see real live superheroes in action! Do you know how awesome that would be? Oh I'm getting more goosebumps than a full moon! Vaminos!" He changed into a monkey and jumped.

Network could only laugh and shake his head at the goofball of a merman. He was practically fanboying at the idea of comic books come to life. But he was only going just to keep an idea on Diablo. In many ways, Diablo was the baby brother of the Blade Boys.

Unbeknownst to them, a team of Kanhoji soldiers were lead by none other than Xandou Tiraken. He was wearing his old mission suit that was friction proof and was somewhat of a black ninja uniform with some yellow streaks and accents. "Zhī'ān wéichī huì chéngyuán yǒu bèn fāxiàn zài zhè fùjìn." (The vigilantes have been spotted in this neighborhood.) He said to his troops in Chinese. "Yīncǐ, bāochí jǐngtì duì tāmen de rènhé jīxiàng." (So stay alert for any sign of them.)

The two teams raced on up ahead until Diablo's enhanced senses took them to the superheroes who were fighting some bank robbers. Just some crazy crooks. Xandou stopped for a minute as a vision of Xhiva jumping off a very high building and then flipping as he landed on a side of the building to join Diablo in watching the superheroes fight. Sensing the trail, he jumped to the spot on the far side near where Xhiva and Diablo were. They all saw each of the superheroes fight. Amitaf used her water to beat back some guys, Quetzal danced all flirty and used her air to propel guys away, Kione used her hockey stick to beat back some guys and Lizira punched away some thugs.

Xandou watched with great interest of the girls. Especially the red one. She fought with a ferocity that he had only seen somewhere before: Helen. Except this was greater power and he liked it. He couldn't help but be reminded of the black British beauty he knew. She was fierce, strong, brave, and yet a loyal friend. Things he was not. He although has a bit of feelings inside him, his hormones took every opportunity to make them grow. The feeling was mutual in Helen.

Xhiva watched the heroes with fascination. The one in teal reminded him of Kimi, always calculating her moves.

Diablo eyed the pink one carefully as he stopped fanboying over the others. She reminded him of Rosalina a lot. Her girly fashion, apparently embracing her feminine side and still managing to stay lady like while kicking butt. Yet her scent smelled exactly like Rosalina but it was hard to tell
because of the perfume she was wearing. But his comic book intelligence knew better. There were 
vague similarities between Rose and her friends and the Creed. They wore the same colors, had the 
same fashions, had the same powers as them. He wasted most of his education reading comic books 
and it was paying off hard. Now he just needed to find the secret lair.

The superheroes were done with their fight, having put away the crooks in the police department 
who did not trust the Creed at first but then grew to like them because of their superpowers. But 
some were still hesitant and still called them a menace and needed to be taken down. So the girls bid 
each other good night and took off on their flight as Amitaf conjured a water board, Kione slid up on 
an ice rail, Blaze activated her rocket boots and took off, and Quetzal just flew using her natural 
powers. When the others left, Quetzal did some flips and loops before flying away.

"Spying huh?" Network and Wolfboy turned around to see Xandou without his cronies. "I knew 
you still had it in you."

"Xandou what are you doing here?" Diablo/Wolfboy asked.

"Can't an old friend drop in?" Xandou asked. "I also wanted to know that Dad is waiting for you and 
Diablo to come back."

"Get Raiden or Erik in." Diablo said. "I'm done."

"And read my thoughts!" Xhiva sent his thoughts to his twin, "Forget it."

Diablo shapeshifted into an owl and flew away. Xhiva looked at his brother and met him in the eye. 
"I never asked to be born a criminal. Did you ever?" Xhiva leapt off and ran to the Marino house. 


Xhiva's POV

The next day…

Me and Diablo arrived after school to Rita's house where we were told to meet the four Omegas. 
They said that they had something in surprise for us.

"So you ready?" I turned around to see only Kimi smiling, wearing a lab coat and holding some 
papers. Not gonna lie, she looked pretty cute.

"Where are the others?" Diablo asked.

"Down in the place where I'm taking you." Kimi answered. She led us to this supply closet and I still 
was confused.

"Why are we in a supply closet?" I asked.

Diablo facepalmed. "I thought you of all people should know this. The secret lair is always in the 
most unexpected place. Now we just have to find the elevator."

Kimi only laughed. "I should have known you of all people would have figured it out."

"Exactly!" The comic book geek jumped up and down with excitement. "I've wasted a third of my 
life in comic books and it's about to pay off!"

Kimi reached for a mop and pulled it back. The wall split in half and revealed a silver elevator. It
opened, waiting for someone to come in.

"You ready?" She asked before seeing Diablo already in.

"Come on! Come on!" He was practically fanboying about this. "I wanna see!"

"Alright." I said smiling. "I'm coming." They went in the elevator and went down to the already open Secret Sanctum.

Diablo was smiling like crazy and my mouth dropped like a fish. Well I was already am half fish.

"Amigos." Diablo said. "I think we just hit a level 9 of awesomeness!"

"What is this place?" I asked once Diablo ran inside.

"You know those reports of those vigilantes?" Kimi asked me, leading me to the lab area.

"Yeah?" I asked not seeing the picture.

"Well this is their secret lair." She said spreading her arms.

I laughed until she looked at me seriously. "How did you get access?"

Kimi leaned in and whispered, "Because…I'm the one in teal."

A million thoughts rushed in my head as I pieced it together. "Stop playing."

"It's true." Kimi said.

"Oh my god!" I started hyperventilating in excitement. My all time crush was a superhero who could kick butt? I had never been more into her.

"Calm down." Kimi said putting her hands on my shoulders.

"I… love you." I said in amazement but I wasn't thinking straight. Kimi looked at me in bewilderment and then started laughing. "I mean…I love the way that you and your team… beat up criminals but wait…why are you telling me this?"

"Me and our team need some technical expertise." Kimi explained. "The police have been able to sever the police line and we've been trying very hard to get to all the crime scenes. We were hoping for a team behind the lines who could help us."

A thousand ideas raced in my head as I smiled in front of the Japanese Omega mermaid. "I think I might have some ideas."

Helen's POV

Me and Santos were sparring in the dojo. Both of us were wearing our training suits that consisted of black flexible shorts and blue and red tanktops. I wore the red while Thalie wore blue obviously. We had our weapons, my tonfa and Thalie's katana.

"You knew the Kanhoji were watching!" I exclaimed, sending a hit to Thalie.

"Not the Kanhoji!" She exclaimed. "Xhiva and Xandou! And Diablo as well."
"Diablo I can forgive." I said. "It's those twins! They are the Kanhoji! You knew they were watching and you didn't retreat. Number one rule of being a vigilante, never let anyone see you! What if they already know it's us?"

Thalie looked pissed and then used her katana that was trapped under my tonfa to flip me over. "I didn't see Xandou but I was just fighting. We had some bad guys to attack and besides, I knew they weren't going to attack us."

I scoffed. "Of course not! They're studying our moves for next time! You don't make friends with the enemy Thalie. You take them down."

"And that's where you're wrong Helen." Thalie scolded me, launching a water attack but I blocked it with a literal firewall. "They have a good side, they're just hanging with the wrong crowd that's all. If Xhiva can make his own life, so can his twin."

"Oh yeah?" I challenged. "If that's true, why haven't made their choice to turn on us? Because they're waiting until they have the thing they're after."

"Or maybe you're still mad at Xandou and you're taking it out on Xhiva simply because he's his brother!" Thalie said.

"Listen Thals." I said, getting angry. "I know what the fuck I'm talking about!" I punched her back but we used our powers on each other and I got wet. Steaming dry really fast, I put her in a headlock.

"You have to trust me." She said.

"Why should I?" I argued.

Suddenly, a blast of wind knocked us to the ground. I looked up to see a fuming Rose. It was rare that she got mad. "Guys, I don't know what is going on, or why you're fighting, but we're a team and how can we fight evil if we're fighting each other? We're all best friends, so knock it off!"

I sighed and whispered sorry to Thalie before leaving the dojo.


Thalie's POV

After Helen left, Rose asked me, "What was that about?"

Before I could answer I heard a rough British voice yell, "BLOODY HELL YUKIMI!" We ran outside to see Helen standing in front of Xhiva, Kimi, and Diablo. "What world do you live in that it's ok to bring the prince of the Kanhoji to our secret lair?"

"Helen, we can trust them." Kimi said.

"He's Xandou's brother." Helen pointed at Xhiva who had by then lost it.

"Helen let's get one thing straight here." He said, his eyes glowing red. "I am not my brother, my father or my mother. I will never be. To my father, I was always a disappointment because I always was sort of a pacifist. To my mother, she wanted to bring out more of my powers and always caught me trying to run away. I admit I can feel my brother hurting, but it my choice and chance to escape it, and I have a chance to start over. Do you have any idea what my life was like? Growing up in a criminal life and then being forced to MIT? It was like I didn't even choose my name!" Xhiva's eyes glowed brighter. "I abandoned my brother, my other half because I was scared of spending the rest
of my life as part of an evil plot. At least I'm different now. So if you think I'm just like my brother, you're sadly mistaken."

Helen stood still before Rose said. "Go out tonight. Clear your head. I'm sure you'll find a new wind." Helen donned her suit and took off, out of the car entrance.


Helen's POV

I flew across the city before stopping and landing on a rooftop. Maybe Xhiva did have a point. Maybe I was too mad at Xandou because I still liked him. My heat senses tingled as I felt someone behind me approach.

"Nǐ zěnme zhīdào nǐ huì chūxiàn?" (How'd I know you'd show up?) I asked in Chinese. I felt Xandou's heat go up in a form of a blush. I didn't know it but Xandou was apparently turned on by me speaking in one of his two native tongues. It was a good thing my helmet was on and my voice was deepened.

"Yǐnwèi nǐ bù yǐncáng nǐ de huǒ hǎole ma?" (Because you're not that good at hiding your fire?) The Asian merboy asked smiling.

I turned around to see him in some kind of yellow and black ninja suit. The top was Japanese style but the pants were normal. He had the ninja mask but only on the bottom part so his mouth was covered. "Hǎobǐ shuō, zuó wǎn de lǐzi ma?" (Like say, last night for example?)

"Oh." Xandou replied. "Dāngshí nǐ zài nàme? Wǒ méiyǒu kàn dào nǐ yǒuyī duì qiū de nǚhái. Shēnme shì nǐ de jiāoyì? Wèishéme yào lái dào zhège xiǎo zhèn?" (Were you there? I didn't notice. I did see you with a bunch of other girls. What's your deal? Why come to this town?)

"Wǒmen de xiéyì shì wǒmen zìjǐ de shì. Wǒ jiānyì nǐ guǎn hǎo nǐ zījī." (Our deal is our own business. I suggest you mind your own.)

Xandou sprinted using his superspeed in front of me. "Wǒ xǐhuān nàxīn nǚrén huǒrè." (I like them ladies fiery.) He said before going into serious mode. "Dàn wǒ bù huì líkāi, zhídào wǒ yǒu dàān. Shǒuxiān, nǐ zěnme lián ràng nǐ de quánlì?" (But I'm not leaving until I have answers. First of all, how'd you even get your powers?)

"Wǒ shènzhī bù nàme kēndìng, wǒ yīnggāi gāosù nǐ le. " (I'm not even so sure I should tell you anymore.) I said. "Wǒ de zhūjūe shuō, wǒ bùnéng xiāngxīn nǐ. (My instincts say I can't trust you.)

"Tāmen zuò de hǎo diǎn." (They make a good point.) He got out his twin sai, and took a stance. In breakneck speed he knocked me down, but I wasn't giving up so easily. So I took out my special tonfa and created slicing fire blades that nearly knocked him off the building but he sprinted and created a mini tornado with his superspeed. I increased the heat and blinded him, allowing me to land a kick on his jaw.

"Nice!" He complemented. "You've gotten better than last time."

I unleashed a fire blast that he avoided. "What do you mean? You hardly know me!"

"You think I'm that stupid Helen?" His comeback made me freeze.

"How did you?" I didn't have time to finish because Xandou nearly slashed me. And he jumped off
the building and supersped down the street. I managed to find him and jumped in front of him. "You wanna play games? I can handle it! But I need you word that you will not harm my best friends."

"You know I can't do that." Xandou charged at the same time as I did.

"Then understand this." My eyes glowed bright gold. "If you come after them, I'll come after you. Hear me?"

Xandou narrowed his eyes before running a few meters away from me. He lowered his mask before saying, "Loud and clear, Blaze." He put up his mask before running in his usual metal blur.

I flew into the sea, letting my mermaid form take over. Blaze. That wasn't a bad name.

Thalie's POV

"Kimi why did you bring them in?" I asked.

"Well we need a backup team and these two can help us on our missions." Kimi reasoned.

"Still you should have told me." I said.

"Don't worry." Xhiva said to me. "I can help you."

"We won't tell anyone." Diablo said smiling. "Number one rule of being a superhero: Never tell your secret identity. Besides, I knew it was you guys all along."

"How?" Rose asked.

"Comic book geek?" Diablo reminded us. "With Xhiva's technopathy, my genius, Kimi's nerdness, Rose's stealth, Thalie's leadership, and Helen's rage, we'll be…" He threw out his arms for emphasis. "UNSTOPPABLE!"

"Speaking of which where is Helen?" Rose asked.

"Don't know." Diablo said. "Don't worry Ocean Girl, your secret is safe." Diablo's face brightened as he made his discovery. "Ocean Girl! Ok, that's your name, end of discussion."

Later…

Helen came back later feeling less steamed and we were having lunch in the kitchen in my house above the Lair. Diablo was still trying to come up with names and Rose was cooking.

"Ok guys what do you want?" She asked. "Omelet Pizza or Pizza Omelet?"

"What's your difference?" Helen asked.

"Ok you call my bluff." Rose said as all of our phones buzzed.

"Hey did you guys just get a text from Evie?" Xhiva asked.

"Yep." We all answered.

"Does yours also say she's being attacked by an old lady?" He asked again.
"Yep." We all answered.

"Diablo, is that considered an emergency?" He asked the Latino.

"I guess." Diablo replied.

"Let's go then!" I ordered.

Line break…

We arrived at Evie's house. Mr. McLaren was out all weekend and we were in our superhero suits. Xhiva and Diablo were in the lab in the Lair. We didn't see Evie or Haru. But we did see a middle aged lady.

"Ok. I feel stupid." Helen said. We still had our names but Rose got nicknamed Windglider. Suddenly, the woman's head turned around 180 degrees and the eyes glowed red.

"Aw crap." Rose said.

"Guys that's a robot." We heard Wolfboy who had told us the merman's nicknames.

The robot lady's arms bent back to reveal an open metal compartment. Out of it, rockets fired, each of us landing all over the place. We fought with the robot with Kimi almost getting sliced. Soon we were face to face with the robot.

"Alright guys." Wolfboy said over the comm. Links. "Let's put old mother hubbard back in her cupboard."

We all groaned, most of it was Helen. "Dude it literally hurts to hear you sometimes." The rockets fired, but Helen blew them up in mid flight with her fire blasts. I used my water to slice her arms and face off. Literally. Behind the face was some sort of hardboard. Out of nowhere, Rose used her air to slice the body in half.

"Evie!" Kimi cried. "Haru? Where are you?"

Evie and the 10 year old boy came out of a closet and Haru kicked the robot's head. "And stay down!"

"Thank you." Evie said to us. "I knew you guys were real. The police are wrong, you're not a menace, you saved our lives."

"You're welcome!" Windglider said in her cheerful tone.

"So what's the deal with Robo Bint?" Helen asked.

"Well she came to the door asking for people I know." Evie answered. "She listed names of everyone I knew."

"Why would they be after people you know?" I asked.

"Don't know." Evie said.

"Someone's after you Evie and who knows what else they want." Kimi said.

"Evie." I said. "You better head to the café, where it's safe. We'll go see what this is about."
As we flew out, Rose stopped to say, "How are we gonna explain to Evie how we showed up instead of regular us?"

"We'll think of something." I said.

"Like?" Helen asked.

"I'll just say that we owed them a favor." I said using my water board to go faster. "Network, picking up anything?"

"There's a strong signal coming from the docks." Network said.

Line break…

We flew to the docks and Network led us to the 5th one. It was locked so we couldn't get in. Luckily Xhiva used his tech skills, the door unlocked and we got in. But we didn't know that someone jumped in and narrowed his eyes as he saw the vigilantes go in.

We walked around under Networks directions. We went into this big room full of computers that had some mermen. But with Windglider's stealth, Helen managed to beat the crap out of them and put them nearby. Kimi found a plug nearby and inserted a device that Network invented and Network got to work on hacking the mainframe of the warehouse.

"Why would they try to go after Evie?" Windglider asked.

"Yeah it doesn't make any sense even for me amigos." Wolfboy said.

"Guys." Network's voice carried a fearful tone. "They weren't after Evie."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"They were after Zac." Network responded.

"Why would they be after him?" Kione asked.

"Whatever the reason." I said. "It can't be good."

"Uh where's Lizira?" Windglider asked.

"Gotcha!" We all heard a British rouge voice yell out. Helen landed in front of us, holding a struggling ninja in yellow and black cloth. He looked up to reveal to us a pair of green eyes shown through a ninja hood. Green eyes in a pale face that I knew of one place. It was none other than Xandou Tiraken aka Speed Demon. Diablo told me the nicknames he gave the Blade Boys.

"Speed Demon?" I asked.

"Bet you think you're pretty slick huh?" She asked before he turned her over and got close to her face as if he was about to kiss her.

"I have my moments."

Helen growled before jumping up and charging at him but Xandou using his superspeed as the ultimate cheat code, beat her a lot. She fought back landing a few punches.

"How the hell do we beat a guy who moves at superspeed?" Windglider asked.
Kimi's POV

"Kimi listen to me." Network said. "Like me, he is the kid of an Omega. Kids of Omega mermaids have great powers but when they use them they are also at great vulnerability."

"Why are you telling me this?" She asked.

"Because you're the only one who can do this." Network replied. "And I have faith in you. Xandou cannot run if there is not heat. Limit the humidity in the air."

The gears in my head turned at mach 9 before I got the idea on how to do it. Opening my palm protectors, I concentrated on making the air 4 times cooler than a meat locker. Xandou tried running in his enhanced speed but he looked like he was vibrating and stuck at the same time.

"No." He whispered. Helen took the hint and started fighting, but Ocean Girl got in the way and stopped Helen.

"Enough!" She cried. "You're gonna set off..." She had accidentally pressed a button that signaled more mermen to come. "One of those."

"Nice going OG." Helen snapped as more mermen filled the warehouse with guns and floating water. "Although this day just keeps getting better."

"Could not have said it better myself, Blaze." Speed Demon agreed, making Helen smile.

Network's POV

I was in the lab with the array of computers in front of me when I heard Diablo huff. "What's the problem?" I asked.

"Xandou named something without me!" He exclaimed. "Naming is my thing!" I only rolled my eyes. If there was one thing Diablo took in pride, it was his ability to name things. "We're gonna find Xandou and send his tail back to Shanghai. No one names something without me and gets away with it."

"What about Blaze?" I asked. "It's a good name."

The Latino merman stood silent before saying, "Ok you have a good point. At least I named two of them."

"Now to think of a name for Kimi." I reminded him.

Diablo's eyes went wide and his usual goofy smile appeared in his face. "Oh snap! You're right! Oh this is gonna be a challenge! And when it comes to names, I love a challenge!"

I only laughed at his childlike antics.

Rose's POV

The battle begun as Speed Demon sprinted and knocked down some guys. Ocean Girl blocked back
and pushed back some attackers. I phased through the floor and tripped some mermen. Kimi used her hockey stick to freeze some guys while Blaze just punched and kicked back the mermen.

"See?" I asked blasting some wind. "He's on our side!" After Ocean Girl told me what happened, I believed that Xandou could come around.

"Do you even hear yourself?" Blaze asked.

"I like your blonde friend." Speed Demon said, killing some mermen. "She's almost as entertaining as you."

"Oh when this is over, I'll show you just how entertaining I can be." Blaze snarled. But the door opened and in poured in Kanhoji soldiers.

"We're trapped!" Ocean Girl cried as we were all squarmed in a corner.

"No." Speed Demon said. "You're trapped." He hovered his finger over a button on a panel. "What happens if I do this?"

"No!" Network cried in our comms. "Do not let him press that button!"

"Don't do it!" I cried.

"Well now I gotta." Speed Demon smirked. He pressed the button and the room filled with green smoke. Speed Demon sprinted to us and out of the steam came some sort of octopus with jellyfish eyes. But it meowed. That's right. An octopus meowed.

"Aww!" I cooed because I found it completely adorable. "He's so cute!" But the octopus head rose and elongated and screamed, revealing a giant mouth with a giant set of sharp teeth. "Not so cute!" It charged, attacking at first the Kanhoji.

"Whoa!" Blaze exclaimed. "That is wicked!"

"How is Wolfboy gonna name this?" Kimi asked.

"That is a good question." Xandou said. "Well, see ya." He started to run but Ocean Girl stopped him.

"You're really not gonna help us?" She asked. "It's your own fault you know."

"I'll let the heroes handle it." He replied.

"I trusted you!" I exclaimed.

"I know!" He shouted. "That's messed up right?" And he disappeared leaving us to fight it. We fought but this beast was tough as nails.

"Nice try octo punk!" Blaze shouted, breaking free and then getting pummeled.

"No!" I said. "Call him...octo-eyeball-jellybug!"

"Nah." Wolfboy said. "Let's just call him Justin. Wait, Windglider, I think there's something coming to you!" I turned around to see a tentacle which I managed to push back but I was knocked to the ground cold.
Diablo's POV

My inner wolf howled in rage as I snarled and screamed in rage. My eyes were glowing bright amber orange. Because my love was hurt, my inner wolf was pissed, meaning I was pissed. No one hurt my Rosalina and got away with it.

"Diablo, I know what you're thinking." Network said. "But you can't go out there."

"I don't care." I snarled. "Rosalina is in trouble. I have to help her."

"It's too risky." Xhiva argued.

"Xhiva." My orange eyes met his red as he grabbed my wrist. "You'd do the same if it was Yukimi."

Xhiva's eyes widened as he let me go. "You really love her don't you."

I smiled a little. I said, "Yes. I love her."

Kimi's POV

I watched in horror as I was getting up, all the rest of my team knocked to the ground. No holding back anymore. Yelling, I charged, jabbing and hitting the creature.

"Hey Justin!" I screamed. "This ends now!" I opened my hand capsules, and froze the creature solid. I then fired a massive energy beam from my hockey stick, destroying it.

"Guys!" I screamed, running towards them. "You ok?"

"Yeah." Ocean Girl groaned. "We're good."

"Guys." We all heard Speed Demon's voice. "Come with me."

"I don't trust him." Helen said.

"I don't care." Windglider said. "He's got something in the works and I'm gonna see what it is." She got up and flew away towards him. Nodding reluctantly, we all followed her and Speed Demon to a cell.

"These were the only two people I were able to set free." He said, placing his hands on the door and vibrating it so it opened all the way. Inside were the unconscious Tadashi and Kira Hamasaki. Kimi's parents.

"Mom! Dad!" Kimi exclaimed picking them up. Blaze held her father while she held her mother.

"You're helping us?" Windglider asked. "Why..." We turned around to see Speed Demon who was gone.

It was then that I realized that this was all planned. "Holy crap." I breathed.

"What?" Windglider asked.

"Xandou set us up." We all heard Wolfboy behind us. "I got here when you were knocked out. Rosalina are you ok?" He touched her arm.
"I'm fine." She said.

"Let's get out of here then!" Blaze said.

Helen's POV

After we carried Kimi's parents back home, I swam in the ocean, my tail flapping in the ocean. I stopped to surface and think of Xandou. Why he helped us, I don't know.

"Konnichiwa Helen." I heard a familiar slight Chinese accent behind me.


Xandou's jade green eyes twinkled. "Nani? Anata wa, watashi wa itotekini anata ga kanojo o hozon shite sōko ni kuru shitte, īvu~ī-go ni sono robotto o settei suru to omoimasu. Tada, watashitachiha sono shūtai o torinozoku koto ga deki, soshite watashi wa anata no ryōshin o kaihō surudeshou ka? Watashi wa 11-sai de MIT ni itta riyū ga arimasu, sā. (What? You think I purposely set that robot after Evie, knowing you would save her and then come to the warehouse. Just so we could get rid of that abomination, and then I would free your parents? Come on, there's a reason I went to MIT at age 11.)

"Doshite?" (Why) I asked. "Naze anata wa, shikashi, watashitachi o tasuketa nodesu ka?" (Why did you help us though?)

The Asian teenage merman blinked and looked flabbergasted. "I...don't know."

"Tell me." I said. "How did you end up working for your father if you helped us?"

Xandou chuckled. "It went like this."

Flashback...

A 13 year old Xandou Tiraken was in his car approaching the Korean black market race. It was the fastest car he ever built. He smuggled the car without his father knowing.

"Xandou Tiraken." One of the other Korean racers sneered in the car next to him. "geulaeseo igeose-eun dangsin-i jalang han ttong ui jogag ida." (So this is the piece of shit you were bragging about.)

The teen smiled. "ne, geugeose-eun ida. naneun dangsin-ui manghal eongdeong-i meonji hu ulineun yeojeonhi meosjin su issseubnida." (Yes it is. We'll still be cool after I dust your motherfucking ass.)

A Korean teenage girl then got the racers ready and blew the horn, starting the race. Xandou did not use his powers to win, but by the time he was almost at the finish line, one of the racers, a Korean merman, made the tires go flat, causing Xandou to crash in a tree. Luckily he survived the crash and
later came out of the Koran infirmary with his fuming father and a fractured wrist Xhiva was still in MIT and graduation was right around the corner. The accelerated healing factor mermen had combined with his superspeed made his arm heal in 3 hours

"Nāṉ nīṅkaḷ itai nampa muṭṭiyavillai." (I cannot believe that you did this.) Agni spoke in his native tongue, Tamil to his son. "Mīṇṭum." (Again.) Even in silence, Agni could be pretty strict. Especially to his children.

"Father." Xandou said. "Enṉai ēmārṭiviṭṭarkal pōkīrēn. Cila kuṭṭuttuṭṭu iyakki enṉai mītu mōṭiyatu." (I was going out for a ride. Some drunk driver crashed in me.)

"Teruvil oru cavāri illai pōla vēṭikkai, nāṅ kār āyvu valiyil iruntu, atai pārttu." (Funny, from the way I inspected the car, it looked like it wasn't for just a ride on the street.) Agni countered.

"Oruvēḷai nīṅkaḷ kavaṅṅkka mīkaum pisiyāka iruntīraḷ." (Sometimes us mermen have to cool off.) Xandou said.

"Nām oru nīntu pōka vēṇṭum." (We should go for a swim.) Agni said, once they reached the harbor. "Cila nēraṅṅkaḷukku mīnaum kuṅṅkaḷ pōkiṟēn. Cila kuṭṭuttuṭṭu iyakki eṉṉai mītu mōṭiyatu." (I was going out for a ride. Some drunk driver crashed in me.)

Nodding, Xandou dived in along with his father. The two mermen then swam to the surface after swimming in the reef.

"Xandou." Agni said to him still in Tamil. "Nāṅ nīṅkaḷ viṣayaṅṅkalai cuṟṟi tiruppu eṅa nīṭaṅṅēn. Itu eṅṇa? Nīṅkaḷ uṅṅkal vāḷnāl muḷuvatum irukku vēṇṭum eṅṇa itu? Nīṅkaḷ mīkaum atikamāka ceyya cāṭṭiyam māṟṟum IQ pōtu nīṅkaḷ veliyē naṭippu." (I thought you were turning things around. What is this? Is this what you want the rest of your life to be? You keep acting out when you have the potential and the IQ to do so much more.)

"Ō nīṅkaḷ Xhiva pōṅṟa arttam?" (Oh you mean like Xhiva?)

"Nāṅ uṅṅkaḷukku ciṟanta eṅṇa teriyum eṅṟu nīṅṅaikkiṟēn eṅṟu eṅṅakkur teriyum āṅṅal nīṅkaḷ illai." (I know you think what's best for you but you don't.) Agni told his son. "Nīṅkaḷ emaiṭṭi veliyē kaiviṭṭaṭṭatu ēṅ atu tāṅ." (It's why you dropped out of MIT.)

"Appā, nāṅ Xhiva illai." (Dad, I'm not Xhiva.) Xandou argued.

"Cari mīṅkaḷ mīṇṭum kār peṟṟavillai." (Well you're not getting the car back.) Agni said.

"Excuse me?" Xandou asked.

"I said you're not getting the car back." Agni repeated.

"I built that thing from scratch with my own two hands and powers." Xandou insisted.

"With my money." Agni reminded him, his tail swishing. "My money, my car. You want it back, you're gonna have to earn it. You're gonna have to continue working for me."

End of flashback

"So your own father blackmailed you into getting back into his work after you dropped out of MIT?" Helen asked me.

"Yep," I smiled. "That's how my dad rolls with his kids."
"But still why did you set Kimi's parents free?" She asked.

"I don't know!" I exclaimed. "I just felt like I had to do it. Oh and FYI, I won't tell anyone about your secret." With Helen blushing and looking down, I leaned in and kissed her on the cheek of her rich chocolate skin. 3 words: It. Was. Glorious. My hormones were roaring for more but I knew better. I wasn't going to be some creep. Before she could see me, I dove in and swam back.

Helen's POV

Xandou's kiss was somewhat strong yet kind at the same time. I kind of liked it. So I swam to the moon pool feeling giddy when I realized what I was doing. "What's the matter with me?" I asked. "You'd think a girl could learn."

"A girl could learn what?" I heard Rita who had Esme leave. "What's going on?"

"I think I have these…" I trailed off. "Feelings for a boy."

My mentor/principal only smiled. "I'm not gonna ask you the name of this boy but I am going to tell you this. When the universe wants something to happen, like having a bunch of mermaids become vigilantes, or putting two people together, it has a way of doing those things. My advice? Don't deny your heart."

Xandou's POV

I rolled in my bed, moaning and groaning. I couldn't think of anything else other than Helen Carter. Helen, the name sounded like good seafood. Her rich hair, her enticing eyes, and her smile? She was something else. She was smoking hot inside and out. But I couldn't put her in danger. At least not then.

Xhiva's POV

In the grotto…

Nighttime had fallen and we were done with our lesson with Thalie whom Evie had taken a liking to calling Coach. Just as we were leaving, Kimi stopped me to talk with me.

"Xhiva." She said. "Thank you for being there for all of us. You and Diablo. We couldn't have done this without you two. Especially you Xhiva."

"You're welcome, Dr. Frost." I said back.

Kimi looked taken aback. "Say that again."

"Dr. Frost." I said before realizing it. "I think I just found your name."

"I love it Network." She said. She then gave me a hug which I enjoyed, followed by a kiss…on the cheek. So awesome! Fireworks were going off in my sight, alarm bells were in my head ringing, and there I was, smiling from ear to ear.

"Xhiva you ok?" Thalie asked me.
Slowly turning my head, I said all slurred, like I was drunk, "Did I mention how much I love being a merman?"

At that moment, I did the only thing any noble and brave merman would do if they ever got their first kiss.

I fainted.
Zac's POV

I woke up, not feeling right. It felt like I was missing something, so opening one groggy eye, I used my powers to open all the curtains, letting the sunlight hitting me. Whenever I was in the water, I felt like myself and…alive. But then, when I was letting the light hit my body, it felt like something was vibrating in me. Mostly because something on me was vibrating. I got up only to realize that the things vibrating were my hands. That's right. My hands were vibrating, like a cell phone. Think of your most horrific case of pins and needles and multiply it by 10. Thinking of nothing else to do, I ran out of my garage and into the canal, allowing my natural merman tail. Kicking it hard and fast, swimming to the middle of the ocean, I stopped to surface. As I ran my head through my black wet hair, I asked myself a big question.

"What's happening to me?"

Zoe's POV

I woke up in the moon pool. Deciding to go for a swim, I went out of the pool only to be greeted by the thing I hate the most: The morning sun. For some reason, I've always hated the sun and the day but I've always been, what do the land people call? Oh, a creature of the night. Don't worry, I'm not a vampire or a werewolf. Or am I? Just kidding!

Anyways, I hissed in annoyance as the sunlight wishing that it could be winter when the glorious nights were longer and the annoying days are shorter. I've always loved the night and the moon. I mean I'm a mermaid, who wouldn't?

When I was putting on my clothes, which was this really stupid white dress with these patterns. When I first came to land, I never really had a reason to complain about my clothes because I didn’t want to sound like a spoiled brat. But now that I'm banished from something I never considered my family, I have my brother and my cousins, I finally have a chance to express myself with style. And the first step to that, was getting that stupid, girly, dress off!

I went to the living room and dialed Helen's number. She dressed in English punk so I needed her goth as my new style.

"Hallo?" I heard the familiar British voice greeted.

"Hey Helen." I said. "I need your help?"

"You sure?" Helen asked. "I major in the streets. You sure you can take the heat?"

"Helen." I said. "I want to get out of this…girlness. I want to get edgier."

I could feel Helen smiling. "Then you've come to the right place. Meet me at the bus stop near… where are you?"

"I'm at Ondina's house." I answered.

"Good." Helen said. "I'm taking you to the nearest store I trust."
So I grabbed my wallet containing my money and I rushed to the bus, where Helen was waiting. "How'd you get here?"

"Oh I flew." She said with sarcasm, but I had this feeling that she wasn't using it. My thoughts were distracted when the bus came and the black teenager took me to this dark and street store that looked edgy and I liked it. Helen grabbed my arm and pulled me inside where it was the supervillan of a clothes store. Goth and villain styles of clothing were in racks and there was so much more than clothes.

"Why are you even doing this?" The British mermaid asked.

"Because Helen." I said. "I'm sick of being girly. Now that I have a chance to be myself, I wanna express that. But most of all, I wanna get out of the sun."

Helen smiled. "I knew you would come to this place." So she grabbed my hand and walked me into the dark interior of the store. Instantly, I felt like I belonged in the darkness, but I needed the full moon more for some reason. "Alright, what edgy clothes draw your eye?" As I got some dark clothes and outfits, Micheal Jackson's "Bad" started playing on the radio.

(Your butt is mine, gonna tell you right. Just show your face, in broad daylight. I'm telling you, on how I feel. Gonna hurt your mind. Don't shoot to kill. Come on. Come on. Lay it on me. All right)

I tried on a few dresses and leggings and shoes, but nothing spoke to me. I needed something basic and fitting for the summer. So I kept poking around until I found the perfect outfit.

(Your lyin' eyes, gonna tell you right. So listen up, don't make a fight. Your talk is cheap, you're not a man. You're throwin' stones, to hide your hands.)

I was in the dressing room and I smiled at the reflection. Looking back at me was a strong, independent, confident, courageous, and strong both mentally and physically. I was wearing a black leather jacket over a black crop top with silver patterns of the moon, black jeans shorts, and knee high black leather boots. I felt more free and strong, like the goddess Artemis.

(But they say the sky's the limit. And to me that's really true. And my friends you have seen nothin', just wait 'til I get through)

"Let me see." I heard another voice say. I strutted out, high and mighty. There was a clerk and Helen.

"I'm proud of you." Helen said. "You've got guts."

"So..." The clerk said.

"Zoe." I said, finally sick of using Mimmi.

"So." The clerk said. "How does it feel?"

"I'll tell you guys." I said. "It feels kind of good...to be... bad." I finished with a sly smirk before singing out loud in my mezzo voice and danced to the chorus of the song.

Because I'm bad, I'm bad come on
You know I'm bad, I'm bad come on, you know
And the whole world has to
Answer right now
Just to tell you once again
Who's bad?

"That's what I'm getting for girl!" Helen high fived her.

"Here." The clerk handed me a bunch of coupons of the store and I paid for my clothes. I walked to
the café, and I could somehow feel that boys were staring at me. I was not trying to be a slut because
I also put on silver leggings and no makeup.


No one's POV

In the reef…

The reef was swirling with life and beauty with tons of marine life going about their lives. Even that
could not stop two certain Omega merfolk swimming together, Raiden and Thalassa. Raiden looked
over to the love of his life, as he pulled her in for a passionate kiss, making Thalassa's hormones go
wild. The two lovers looked at each other with intensity as they held hands and swum together. For
Raiden, nothing could make him more happier than Thalassa. Thalassa felt like she was complete
with Raiden, the most amazing merman she had ever met. She didn't see him as the rash boy but as a
true merman. The two lovers got onto Mako and dried off to take a walk.

"No one's here that's good." Raiden noted. "When you're in the Ares Tribe, you're trained to case
every inch of a new environment."

"Raiden." Thalassa said. "You're a natural born merman, it's your sixth sense that does that."

"But still." Raiden said. "Damn, that part of the reef is so beautiful. I don't remember much of
Zannone. It was a long time ago."

"It's a special place." Raiden's girlfriend said. "It's special."

"I hope that they won't mind bringing a dangerous merman like myself here." Raiden said.

"Why would they even mind what they don't know?" Thalassa asked.

"Thals." Raiden began. "I'm a trained assassin, and assassins are trained to keep secrets but I know
that some secrets don't last long. So why even bothering to complicate the inevitable?"

"Because it is complicated." Thalassa said. "You know this."

"You're gonna have to tell them." Raiden said in sweet sing song voice which impressed his love.

"You have an awesome voice." Thalassa said smiling to the love of her life.

"I don't sing much." Raiden admitted. "But grazi."

"How is it you guys know so many languages?" Thalassa asked.

"Well it's actually depends on which continent you were born in." Raiden admitted.

"What?" The Western mermaid asked.

"It's the funny thing about how internationalism works within mermaids and mermen." Raiden
explained. "Whichever continent you were born in, you have the ability to learn the languages of that
continent 5 times faster than a regular person. Other languages take the same time to learn."

"No wonder you and Erik and the Tiraken Twins know so many languages." Thalassa said. "But isn't that racist?"

Raiden put his hands up in surrender. "Hey don't look at me. I'm not the one who makes the rules."

Thalassa only laughed at him. "I know." Without warning, she kissed him on the cheek and they continued their walk, holding hands together.

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Kimi's POV

I was out getting some coffee, when I saw what looked like a summer gothic Mimmi?! My head rushing with millions of theories, I ran to her and took off my teal short cardigan. I was wearing that over a white tank top, jeans and cyan flats. I had my rectangular glasses on and my hair in a fishtail.

"Take my card." I said. "You look cold."

The Canadian mermaid only smiled. "It's fine. Don't you like my new look?"

I raised an eyebrow. "Don't you think it's a bit much? I mean, I think that guy a few stores back broke up with his girlfriend, just so he could stare at you."

"Come on Kimi." Mimmi said. "I just am sick of being so girly. Besides, this is the real me, all dark and silver, like the night."

I laughed. "Come on Mims. You and I both know that you can't pull off Goth."

"Sure I can." Mimmi said. "Now I have to get out of this glorious shade because café is a few streets up ahead. God I hate the sun."

"Since when?" I asked.

"Since I was born." She answered. "Zac for some reason, loves it. I mean what's there to love about a blinding ball of light? The moon is much more calm and awesome that way."

As Mimmi left me, I couldn't help but wonder about this. Zac loves the sun, but Mimmi loves the moon. What could this mean?

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Rose's POV

I was in the grotto painting my new canvas. I had started taking art lessons and I had a few accidents. Besides cooking, I love painting. It's one of my few hobbies. Right then, I was painting a calm sky with wisps of wind.

"So what do you think?" Sirena's voice broke my thoughts.

"Huh?" I looked up from my work to see Sirena in a nice hair doo.

"My new hairstyle." She said. "It's for the gig tonight."

"Esta muy bien." I said in Spanish.
"David wants to try a new jazzy soul set tonight." The blonde mermaid explained. "And I need a new look to go with the new music."

"And a new dress perhaps?" I suggested.

"I like the way you think." Sirena said. "I'm off to the café."

Behind us, Rita laughed. "You know Sirena, you're just like Persephone." She said. "She was so fascinated by other cultures, she loved trying every look there was."

"Hi." We heard an American voice and turned around to see Thalie walking down the stairs. She was wearing a blue and grey t shirt, bright blue jean shorts and flip flops.

"What have you been up to?" Sirena asked.

"Swimming." The red haired mermaid asked. "I needed some alone time."

"Again?" I asked, putting my paintbrush down.

"I uh…" She began. "I met up with Raiden."

"Raiden?" Rita came over. "He didn't do anything?"

"Mom." Thalie said. "He didn't do anything. We had a good time."

"Still." Rita warned. "I don't want you seeing that boy."

"Why not Mom?" Thalie asked.

"Do I need to make it clear?" Rita asked. "He's a delinquent, he leads a pack of trouble making punks, he's a bad influence, he doesn't listen to anyone, and he's one of those kids I have to give detention to almost every while."

"Still." Thalie argued. "He's a good kid underneath."

"Thalassa Santos." Rita's tone took a deep tone. "Do I even have to remind you that he and his brother are trained assassins?! I don't want you seeing Raiden Consorzio."

"But he's Caesar and Persephone's son!" Thalie exclaimed. "Not to mention Nerissa's nephew."

"Blood doesn't make you who you are." I said stepping in. I know it wasn't my place but I had to make a point. "Take a look at Diablo, my boyfriend. He's the son of the woman who killed your father. Do you see me and you hating him for being who his mother is? No."

"Wait." Sirena said. "You seem to be protecting Raiden. Are you seeing him?"

"No." Thalie said.

"Ok." Sirena and I left so we could talk in private. "She's lying."

"How do you know?" Sirena asked me.

"Same as I can hear people from a distance." I said. "I can feel the air patterns."

"Do you think we should confront her about it?" Sirena asked me.

"No." I said. "I'll get the other girls and ask her when the time is right."
Raiden's POV

I walked around and paced near the café. I was so bored out of my mind, I felt like electrocuting something. But of course, that would result in me getting in trouble. Wait, I wanted not to get in trouble? Thalie's getting to me. It's ok, I love her but she's too much of a goody goody as far as I can tell, but she's got a rebellious side, she just needs to find it. I was just at the café, kicking back with my black converse sneakers. I was wearing a purple plaid short sleeved t shirt, jeans, and I had my hair messy.

"Hey." Erik said, getting me my mineral water before speaking in one of the languages we knew, Turkish. "Eğer daha üretken bir şey yapıyor olması gerekmez mi?" (Shouldn't you be doing something more productive?)

I just pulled my headphones away and smirked at my older brother. "Bilmiyorum. Eğer çalışma değil ve benimle konuşuyor gerekmeyor mu?" (I don't know. Shouldn't you be working and not talking to me?)

Erik looked taken aback, but then put on his devil smirk, indicating that he wasn't going down without a fight. "Gerçekten? Peki ben sadece sana bu arada 3 yıl senin ağabeyi olur içkinizi , hizmet eden garson değilim. Yani bu nedenle, benimle konuşuyor olmalı." (Oh really? Well I'm the waiter who just served you your drink, who by the way happens to be your older brother by 3 years. So therefore, you must be talking to me.) I rolled my eyes as he sat up to ruffle my hair but I deflected his arm but he tried his other arm and I sent a small shock. He left back inside to go to work. We speak several languages, English, Latin, Greek, Catalan, Portuguese, Turkish, Italian, French and Arabic.

"Hey Raiden?" I heard Cam's voice as I took a sip. "You got a sec?"

"Make it short and sweet please." I grumbled.

"No this is something I have to show you." Cam persisted.

"Give me a three word synopsis." I retorted. "I'm already getting bored of you."

Just as I was inches away from putting the earbud back in my ear, I heard 3 words that got my ears to perk up; "Operation: Merman Chamber." I put my phone away and followed him to the cafe. He showed me on his iPad, a photo of the pedestal in the chamber.

"Here is the pedestal in the chamber." Cam said flipping to the next photo. "Here's Mako Island. Is that amazing or is that amazing?"

"Whoa." I breathed. "You're onto something here."

"And that's not the best part." Cam remarked. "You see the inlays? Where they sit? They correspond to the five major rocky outcrops. The fishing's always good there."

"Maybe there's more than good fishing there." I observed.

"My thoughts exactly." Cam said. "I'm gonna call Zac. No wait, I should tell Erik."

"Wait." I said. "Let's hold off on the broadcast."

"I think even your older brother would like to hear about this." Cam said.
"There's not a lot to tell them." I said. "Let's see if there is something before you're wasting their time."

"Makes sense I guess."

Just as we were about 5 inches from the door, I heard my brother's voice call out, "And where do you think you're going?" Cam's face turned pale as I turned around to see a slightly fuming Erik.

"Oh Cam just wanted to take me on a fishing trip since I've got nothing to do." I quickly covered up. I had never been so thankful for all the brutal training I've gone under.

"Alright but be careful." Erik said after consideration. But he pulled back Cam for a bit. Luckily I turned invisible (it's kind of the same effect as the regular effect with the water shimmering but with lightning) And crept closer to see my brother giving Cam a glare that would make Slade cry. "If anything happens to my baby brother out there, you're dead."

I had to hold my breath and my invisibility at the same time just to keep from laughing. But I could tell that Cam had peed his boxers.

"That's supposed to be an expression right?" Cam asked in fear.

"Nope." Erik's face reverted back to his usual self. "Enjoy your fishing trip." Cam, with his eyes still wide, walked out as I did and turned visible. Cam approached me and said, "Your brother is the most terrifying merman I've ever met."

I scoffed and said, "You haven't met Slade." I shuddered at his threatening memories.

"Have fun Raiden!" Erik called out.

But what I said next would remain a mystery to me for years to come. "Thanks Dad!" I yelled out.

"Did you just call me Dad?" Erik asked, walking to me.

I laughed sheepishly and said, "Erik...I said Erik. I gotta go. I ran off to where Cam was getting his dive gear and tried to erase that incident from my mind.

In almost no time, we had arrived.

"The outcrop's right below us." Cam told me.

"What are we waiting for?" I asked, before gasping in horror. "Do I sound like Xandou?"

Cam shrugged. "More or less." We dived in, Cam was wearing dive gear into the ocean.


"Zac's POV"

I went inside the café to meet up with my girlfriend. She had just finished handing a nice dress to Sirena.

"Hey." I greeted her.

"Have you seen Raiden?" Evie asked me. "Usually he's here causing trouble."

"Usually he would be." We turned around to see Erik walk over to us after handing some drinks to a
"Table. "But he's occupied with Cam at this moment."

"Why?" I asked.

"Well they were looking at this new fishing app Cam's got and seemed really excited about it." Erik explained. "And they left together."

"Why would Raiden care about fishing app?" I asked. "I mean this is Raiden we're talking about."

"Well even after years of practically raising that bonehead." Erik began. "I don't know why he even does half the stuff he does."

"Shouldn't you even know?" Evie asked him. "I mean, Raiden's gang of...special boys are practically your sons." Me and Erik's eyes widened as Evie cringed. "That came out wrong didn't it?"

"Yeah." I wheezed out, while Erik left.

"Hey Zac." I heard Xhiva call out. "Wanna hang?"

"You mind me leaving you?" I asked. "I don't wanna make you feel meaningless."

"Of course not!" Evie exclaimed, pushing me out of my seat. "Go and talk with the boys."

Shrugging my shoulders I walked to where the Hindi/Chinese and Latino mermen were. "I gotta say, it's so nice to be around other boys instead of a bunch of other girls."

"It must suck having only Cam around to feel like a guy or a merman."

"Yeah man." Diablo piped up. "You need to spend time with the pack."

"Uh don't you mean pod?" I whispered.

"Hey as part wolf." Diablo complained. "I think I'm entitled for a little spillover."

I chuckled at his antics. "Hey Xi." I said to the nerdy merman. "Can I ask you something...about Omegas?"

"Sure." He answered.

"So how does the concept of kids of Omegas work?" I asked.

Xhiva cleared his throat preparing his lecture. "Well as the child of a merperson with divine power, they get half of the cut. If 2 Omegas got together and had a child, that child would be an Omega. If an Omega mermaid mated with a regular merman, that child would get a specific power that is unpredictable. If 2 Omegas got together, that specific power would be a part of the element that child would have. For example, my power would have been a part of technology, I wouldn't need to see to control tech. Because you and Zoe have been far apart too long, your primary powers will need some time."

"How will I know my power?" I asked.

"Well it's actually something that you have to discover on your own." Xhiva said. "But first, you're going to experience some symptoms. For Xandou, his body wouldn't stop shaking for a whole day, and I got migranes until we could control it."
"Well that's why I wanted to talk to you." I said, before the vibrating started. But it was light.

"What's wrong?" Diablo asked, noticing me brush my hands.

"My hands are vibrating again." I said. "I went to Rita but even she couldn't tell me what it was. But this time, it's not under sunlight, just regular light."

"That's it!" Xhiva exclaimed. "Your primary power is coming and it comes from light. We just have to find out what it is."

"Or what happened to sweet Mimmi." Diablo noted.

"Why?" Xhiva asked, eyebrow raised.

"Because she's right here." Diablo pointed to an apparent summer goth version of my twin. I walked right up to her.

"What is this?" I asked.

"This Zac." She said with confidence. "Is the new me."

"Who are you and what have you done with Mimmi?" Evie asked.

"I'm Zoe Khatha and Mimmi died." She said. I had to admit that she really looked like she was blossoming.

"Is this true?" Sirena asked, getting out of the dressing room and standing in shock. "You are in a different image."

"Well I decided to stop being so girly and get out of my own way." She explained. "I think I've always been afraid to dress like myself because I never felt like myself."

"Nice outfit." Erik complimented.

"For the record." I whispered in his ear. "I blame you."

"You know who I also blame?" Erik whispered back. "Xhiva."

"Zoe?" I heard Thalie ask from the entrance of the café. "A word?"

Thalie's POV

I walked out of the café, near the railing, where my older sister was.

"I assume you're going to ask me about my clothes?" She asked me.

"No." I said. "I don't judge people because of how they look."

"So what did you want to talk about?" She asked me.

"Hypothetically..." I trailed off. "What would you guys think if Raiden and I were...seeing each other?"

"Well we would be a little off because he is your step cousin." Zoe told me. "And it would be kind of awkward."
"I guess." I said. "But I like him. What do you think of him?"

"I don't really know him or Erik that well." She said. "But I do know that they're people who can be jerks."

"You'd really like him if you just spent a bit more time with him." I said.

"Well we'll hang out then." Zoe said. "The three of us. As friends."

I had to hold back cringing, because if that were the case, it would be extremely awkward and the secret would get out.

"We're doomed." I whispered.

We swam in the reef searching for the outcrop, until Cam led me towards it. I pushed back some weeds to find a rock with a trident symbol on it. The Symbol of Triton himself. Fun fact about Slade, he's not only Triton's descendant, but he's also his reincarnation. If there is one merman you don't want to get steamed up, it's Slade. Anyways, I touched the symbol, nothing happened but I felt like something was pulling me and the next thing I knew, I was in this giant pool of water, that apparently, had no limit. I was trapped.

I swam around frantically, even surfacing to yell out Raiden's name. What would Erik…My eyes widened as I said the honest truth.

"Erik's gonna kill me."

"He's gonna kill me."

I heard a stern voice behind him. He turned around to see Erik crossing his arms. "I'm going to ask only once. Where is Raiden?"

"Gone."

"What do you mean he's gone?" He asked his voice rising. "What did you do with my baby brother?"

"We were diving, he touched a trident symbol on the reef and he disappeared."

"There's a trident symbol on the reef?" Kimi asked.

"That's what I discovered." Cam said. "The pedestal and the reef are connected."
"Why didn't you tell me?" Zac asked with Xhiva and Diablo next to him.

"Or more importantly, me?" Erik asked.

"He thought we should check it out first in case it was a false alarm." Cam clarified.

"But how do we know where he is?" Kimi asked. "People don't just disappear."

"Remember the first time you were in the chamber?" Sirena reminded her.

Kimi processed the question first but Xhiva beat her to it. "Then maybe we can bring him back, like you brought Ondina back."

"Let's go." Thalie ordered. "Girls, Zac, Erik, go with me to the chamber. The rest, stay out on the reef in case he reappears." Rose was done with her shift anyway.

"Aren't you supposed to be working Erik?" Carly asked before cowering down at Erik's glare.

"My baby brother is missing and for all I know he could be dead." He told her.

"Go." David said. "Get your brother back. We got you here."

"Fine." Carly said.

"Let's go then." Thalie ordered. The merteens and Cam left for Mako, faster than ever. Erik was panicking inside and out, but Thalie looked at him and told him that it was gonna be ok.

Line break…

On the beach, the mermaids and mermen were drying off. But Thalie came running to the seniors.

"Guys." She said. "We have a problem. I did a head count."

Sirena's eyes widened. "Did someone get left behind?" She asked.

"No." The half blood replied. "We have an extra." She pointed to an arguing Xandou with Xhiva.

"Āpaṇṇa yēthē käya naraka karata āhēta?" (What the hell are you doing here?) Xhiva asked his brother in his native tongue, his eyes glowing red.

"Helping all of you." He shouted for everyone. "I read my brother's mind, and saw that Raiden was in trouble. I may be your enemy and Raiden may be too, but he's my best friend too and I'm not gonna abandon him."

The boys, save for Zac and Erik, ran to the ocean, and disappeared, blue tails flapping and disappearing under the surface. The rest went to the chamber.

"I'll stay out here." Sirena said, using her moon ring to open the chamber, allowing Team A to go in.

"Raiden!" Thalie cried. "Raiden!"

"Obviously he's not here." Ondina snapped.

"So where is he?" Erik asked before stopping Helen from stepping in the circle.

"What did you do to bring Ondina back?" Rose asked. Zac stepped and waved his hand over the pedestal and it glowed, signaling it's activation. He pressed a glowing symbol, but nothing happened.
"When you vanished." Mimmi began to Ondina. "You reappeared in the jungle. Maybe Raiden's there too."

They went out of the jungle to where Ondina led us. "This is it." She said. "I woke up here."

Erik kept calling out Raiden's name but no luck prevailed. The two mermen left to go to the reef and the four Omegas split from the trio.

"What if we never find him?" Thalie asked in fear.

"I'm sure we will." Rose said soothingly.

Out on the reef, all the mermen gathered up while Cam was preparing his dive gear.

"This is the place." Cam said. "The bommie to the left."

"Let's go already." Xandou said impatiently, as usual.

"Wait." Xhiva said. "There's a highly calculated risk of an 87% chance that he will disappear too."

"Well then it leaves me an 18 percent chance that I won't." Zac said. "I'll be careful."

"Better be mer-mano." Diablo said concerned, his bright amber orange eyes showing concern.

"Gracias." Zac said smiling. All the boys dived down to the bommie. The twins and Erik took a moment to case every inch and any possible traits of it. Xandou reached to touch it, but Zac pulled back, shaking no at the fellow merman. Zac reached for the symbol and it glowed instantly.

They surfaced in amazement. "Did you see it light up?" Diablo asked in awe.

"Just like the pedestal." Erik observed.

"Maybe that's what we're looking for." Zac said. "How many other outcrops are there on your map?"

Cam looked at his iPad for a bit before answering. "Four."

"Maybe it's some sort of code, to get Raiden back." Xhiva said.

"And there's only one way to find out." Xandou said, diving back in the water along with the other boys.


Thalie's POV

I tapped into the water of the air. Nothing. Next to me, Kimi made her ice slide disappear while Helen ran back to us and Rose landed from her flying.

"Did anyone see you?" I asked.

"No." They all answered. "And we couldn't find Raiden." Helen finished.

"Oh this is bad." I started panicking. "Raiden, he must be bored by now or scared. I just hope he isn't dead."

"Since when do you get all lovey dovey on that punk?" Helen asked.
"You should talk Helen." Kimi earned a threatening almost punch from Helen.

"I'm not lovey dovey about him." I denied.

"No, you don't think we haven't noticed you've been a little checked out lately?" Kimi asked.

"Thalassa." Rose's tone took a rare serious tone. "Tell us the truth. Are you seeing Raiden?"

I stopped to think. Raiden was right. The time for secrets at the moment was over. But the aftermath of this revelation would turn out to be one of the biggest fights of our lives. "Ok." I said. "I've been secretly dating Raiden ever since last full moon. God forbid we've done anything far."

The girls looked like they had been punched in the chest. "Ok." Rose scoffed. "Why would you keep something like this from us, your best friends?"

"BECAUSE YOU'RE OBSESSED!" I exclaimed. "You all are! We're leading triple lives here and the only one thinking of having an actual life around here is me!"

"That's because it's always about you!" Helen exclaimed. "You think because you're a special mermaid that you're automatically our leader. Guess what? You're not that special."

"I cannot believe after everything we have done for you and you have done for us." Kimi began. "You do this to us!"

"How can you be so..." Rose trailed off. "So selfish?"

"Me selfish?" I asked. "I only hid it to make things less complicated."

"Well too bad, because you just made it more complicated." Kimi said.

"I'm sorry guys." I said. "But I'm not the only one with fault. Kimi, you're so brilliant when it comes to science. But you're so clueless to the human emotion of love, you don't even realize that Xhiva likes you. A lot even!"

"Hey, leave Asian out of this!" Helen exclaimed. "I can't believe you would side with someone like Xandou's friend! He's my enemy!"

"Yeah because you're too scared to admit your feelings!" I exclaimed.

"Guys let's try to calm down." Rose tried to diffuse the tension as always. "Let's just talk this out."

"Oh we're talking alright!" Kimi snapped. "And FYI, stay out of this. It's not your business anyway!"

"I just want you guys to stop fighting!" Rose said.

That's when Helen delivered the final blow. "Rosalina Gomez, will you stop being so childish and grow up for once in your life?"

It was as if the forest itself grew quiet. The blond Latina stood stiff, jaw dropped and hazel eyes threatening to spill tears. "Oh that's it? That's all you think of me? A child? That's your problem Helen, you're so stubborn and hotheaded, you never actually think about what you say. Kimi, you always think you never act because you let your head get in the way. And Thalie, you think that because of your mom being Rita Santos, you're in charge? You're not. Because as of now, you're not in charge of me because...I'm done with all of you!" She flew up away from us.
"Was that necessary Helen?" I asked.

"I don't care." She said. "Someone needs to give a wake up call to her."

"The same can be said for you hothead." Kimi said. "You're always acting out. And maybe that's why you always take your anger on people. Because you're scared of admitting your fears and insecurities."

"You know what?" Helen asked. "I have just about enough of your nerdness. And I'm tired of being told what to do. I call my own shots now, get used to it."

"Oh my God!" I exclaimed. "If you think that you can do better on your own, why don't we all stop being friends for a change?"

"First good idea you've had throughout the entire bleeding day!" Helen exclaimed. "Cause I'm out of here!" She ran off and I started to walk to the beach.

"Oh you're just gonna leave now Santos?" Kimi asked.

"We all have to Kimi." I called back. "It might as well be now!" I continued to walk away, feeling the drama of one of our most drama fights in our lives. But we didn't need each other…did we?

Zoe's POV

We looked around for Raiden. He and Erik may be with the enemy and dangerous, but they're family. And I don't give up on family. Though Zac may have to come around on this, I never knew why he even helped out.

"If Cam's right about this." I said. "We could have found the key to starting the chamber."

"You really think it's a good idea?" Ondina questioned.

"Isn't it better to know what it does than not know?" Sirena asked.

"Erik says that if he, Zac and Raiden control it." I began. "They can protect us."

"That's what he says." Ondina mumbled. "And frankly I don't give a damn about Raiden."

My blood froze and my eyes began to turn blue in anger. "What did you say?" I asked in a dangerous yet threatening tone.

"Zoe…" Sirena tried to cut in but I cut her off.

"No!" I exclaimed. "I want to know what Marino thinks. Do you want Raiden back or not?"

"Why do you give a fuck about what I think?" Ondina challenged.

"You're my friend!" I exclaimed.

"And apparently you're Erik's too because he's related to you?" Ondina asked.

"I get it." I said. "You're still mad at Erik and you're taking it out on Raiden, who by the way did nothing to you!"
"He's a member of the Ares Tribe!" Ondina exclaimed. "What's worse is that he's a member of the Consorzio royal family and he and Erik turned their backs on them, regardless of how young they were!"

"They were just children like you were!" I exclaimed.

"I have nothing to do with his treachery!" Ondina exclaimed.

"That's probably why he hurt you." I said. "You never gave him a chance to explain himself, instead you just attached to him."

"Come on you too." Sirena said. "We should be focusing on getting Raiden back."

"I don't think my so called friend wants him back." I said.

"I didn't say that." Ondina quipped.

"See?" Sirena asked, smiling.

"Do you?" I asked.

"I don't want him hurt." Ondina said.

"Good." Sirena said. "It's settled then."

"That is not the same thing!" I exclaimed.

"What the hell do you want me to say then?" Ondina asked. "That I wish you weren't related to them?"

"I don't think she wants that." Sirena tried to stop it.

"Sounds like it to me." I said.

"Think what you like." Ondina said. Just then we heard rustling and we turned around to see all the boys and the four Omegas.

"We didn't find him." Diablo said. "But we did find something pretty amazing."

"We need to get back to the chamber." Zac said.

"Is that a good idea?" Kimi asked. "Nothing good has come from that place."

"If it will help find my brother, there is no question about it!" Erik exclaimed. "Let's go."

We all entered the chamber, save for Sirena who was out, holding the door open, metaphorically speaking.

"What's the amazing discovery?" I asked.

"So there are 5 symbols on the reef." Zac began. "Just as there are 5 inlays on the board."

"How does that help us find Raiden?" Thalie asked.

"I think it's the activation sequence for the chamber." Xhiva explained. "If we figure out the combination and activate the chamber…"
"We can bring him back." Helen said.

"We know which symbol goes with which point." Zac said.

"So we have to press them in the right order." Erik said. "Right to left."

"I thought it was left to right." Cam said confused.

"It's one or the other." Zac said.

Zac put his hand out but Kimi stopped him. "What happens if you go the wrong way?"

"You realize once you do this, there is no turning back." Xandou said. "You will activate the chamber."

"Fine." Ondina mumbled turning her back.

"Do you know the order?" I asked her.

Erik moved towards her. "If you do, Ondina please, tell me. I know I hurt you, and I had no right to. But Raiden has done nothing to you. You wanna hurt me? Fine, but please help my brother."

"It's simple." She said, taking the IPad. She studied symbolism back in Mako. So she showed all of us how and what goes where. "This is the order."

"Thank you." I whispered to her.

"You're welcome." Cam said bluntly. "Without me, you wouldn't be here."

"Yeah and without you, Raiden wouldn't be in trouble." Erik snarled at him.

"Zac do it." Thalie pleaded. Zac did so and within seconds the trident in the giant circle glowed, and just when nothing appeared to work, a bright light shone and out of it came Raiden. Erik immediately ran up to him and hugged him as he got up.

"What the hell were you thinking you bonehead?" Erik asked hugging him.

"Hey I'm alive aren't I?" Raiden snapped. I chuckled, giving him a slight hug. Raiden felt like a baby brother to me. Zac just shook his hand and Raiden ran out.

"Wait where's Thalie?" Diablo asked.


Raiden's POV

I ran out past Sirena and to the beach where I saw my fidanzata. That's Italian for girlfriend. She ran to me and I ran to her, embracing her in my arms as she wrapped hers around my torso.

"I'm so happy right now." She said with glee.

"The feeling is mutual amore." I said, taking in her love.

"You what else is mutual?" She asked, before leaning in and capturing me in a kiss. After being cooped up in that water dome, all I needed was my family and Thalassa. "You sure we shouldn't go to the moon pool?"
"Relax Santos." I said. "No one's gonna notice."

"Busted." We heard a loud voice say. We looked over to see a fuming Zac and Erik and the rest looked disappointed.

"I knew it." Erik said. "You two have been dating behind our backs."

"You knew?" Thalie asked.

"I am his brother remember?" He asked. "And Raiden, you talk in your sleep. Mostly about Thalie."

I felt like being disintegrated, right there because of two reasons. One, embarrassment, two, from Zac's hate glare. "Raiden, you're coming with me and you're in big trouble and Thalie is too."

"Another grounding?" I asked.

"With TV and pizza?" Erik asked. "That's not punishment, that's camp."

"I never liked Camp." I tried to worm out of it. But I knew it wasn't going to work.

"Nice try." Erik said dragging me. "You're not leaving my sight. In fact, you and the rest of the Blade Boys are going to have a special talk with me, Cam, and Zac. And believe me, it's going to be more awkward for us than it is for you."

"You mean..." Diablo trailed off. "The birds and bees?"

"Both human and merman versions of it." Zac said proud yet somewhat strained.

"I so don't need to hear this." Xandou turned and tried to use superspeed but Xhiva, knowing his weakness, managed to generate enough cold in his body to make him not move at all. All the boys went to Zac's house to begin our torture.

Thalie's POV

I swam back home but as I surfaced in my sea entrance, I met a very angry mother. My mother.

"Seeing someone of late?" She asked coolly. After I got dry I was forced to give her my moon ring as I was not allowed it for a month and I was grounded until then.

"I'm sorry." I said.

Mom looked at me with complete disappointment. I had never felt so ashamed except for when I made the choice last year about my families. "If you ever lie to me about something like this ever again, you will regret it every second of your life." She said in the most stern voice.

"I promise I won't." I said.

"There's a reason why we talk about these things Thalassa." Mom said. "This is a serious commitment, a relationship. It's bad enough that he was trained by Slade, you're just putting yourselves and him in danger."

She left the grotto, leaving me to ponder about what I had done. In a single day I managed to break my friendship with the other girls, I got busted along Raiden and now I'm grounded. This has to be one of the worst days of my life.
No one's POV

In Zac's garage…

The Talk was finished and Zac, and the boys had never looked more mortified.

"I never thought you would go into every detail." Zac said, looking embarrassed.

"Ok." The twins said in unison. "Gross."

"Congratulations Erik." Diablo said. "You've scarred me for life. First my own mother, and now you."

But it was Raiden who had the most epic reaction of all. "I put my what….in a girl's where?!

"Ok." Erik said. "Let's all just go home." Zac pulled back Raiden.

"So you're dating my baby sister huh?" Zac asked, his eyes glowing a bright blue. "Well know this: If you ever hurt her mentally or physically, or emotionally, I will hunt you down and tear you apart. Do we have a deal?"

Raiden gulped. "Yes."

Zac's glowing eyes died as he walked to his bed. Erik came in and took Raiden and they dived out to the sea.

"Unbelievable." Erik said to his brother as they surfaced. "I spend most of my life looking out for you and this is what you do out of it? Almost get yourself killed and lie to me about something like dating?"

"Do I even have to ask you permission to breathe or have a tail?" Raiden snapped.

"Raiden." Erik said. "There are sometimes when you don't think things through. That's going to catch up to you, and you need to be careful. It's my responsibility to keep charge of the people I care about."

That's when Raiden couldn't take it anymore. "Erik non sei Padre. Ti devi smettere di agire come sei." (Erik, you're not Father. You gotta stop acting like you are.) Raiden ducked underneath the waves as Erik swam north.

"Trouble?" He heard Zac and Zoe as they surfaced.

"What are you doing here?" Erik asked.

"We were swimming and we saw you." Zoe said.

"Guys this isn't a good spot." Erik warned them. "This is near Neptune's Island, that's the Ares Tribe's base. And I can't have you here." But suddenly, they were approached by Aresmen. "Let me handle this." He conjured an ice staff and swung it. The Khatha Twins followed him and they fought vigorously, but General Batalo came and he attacked them brutally, to the point of open bleeding wounds and fractured bones. But the twins refused to give up as Erik pushed them out of the way into the clear space. "You've got to get out of here. I'll hold them off as long as I can." Erik continued fighting them, but he was outnumbered massively.
"We're not leaving you." Zoe said.

"You have to!" Erik cried as he was apprehended by some Aresmen. Zac and Zoe promised him with a look that they would rescue him. As they were about to be captured, something amazing happened. Mimmi stuck out her hand to reach her brother, but a mass of silver energy escaped from her finger tips, causing her and Zac to vanish in apparent moonlight.

Line break…

In the grotto…

Zoe appeared in moonlight in the pool. Before she had time to process what happened, she noticed that Zac wasn't there.

"Where could he have gone?"

A burst of silver light burst in the Southern part of Asia, in the Gulf of Thailand. Out of it came a battered and bruised Zac. Luckily a nearby mermaid swam to him.

"Khuṇ khǔ khù?" (Who are you?) She asked in Thai.

"What?" Zac croaked.

"Oh sorry." The mermaid said. "You're gonna be fine. What happened to you?"


"Do you know who you are?" She asked.

"My…" Zac panted. "Name…is…Zacharai Khatha." At that moment he passed out from exhaustion.

Line break…

A group of merpeople on legs carried the unconscious merman to the infirmary where they laid him upon a bed.

"What the hell happened to him?" A merman asked.

"He was attacked by Slade's men." The mermaid asked. "I don't know how he's alive or how he came here.

A Thai/Caucasian merman about in his late 30's stood by the bed, where Zac was bandaged up and resting. He was sleeping though. The merman looked at Zac with wonder and sadness seeing how he missed out on so much.

"Khuṇ nèći wā khuṇ rû wā kheā?" (Are you sure you know him?) Another merman doctor asked him.

"Chăn mì nèći." (I'm not sure.) The merman said in his native tongue, Thai. "Chăn rû wā kheā pên khùr." (I know who he is.)
"Kheā rû ḡā khuṇ mê?" (Does he know you?) The doctor asked.
"Xać ca mê." (Probably not.)
"Sexr." (Sir.) The doctor said. "Phm khè ḡyāk ca terīym khwām phrăm dēk tē khuṇ khey rû xać ca mê pēn ġnụng tē'hūk phb." (I just want to prepare you. The boy you once knew, might not be the one that was found.)

Zac's POV
I woke up, feeling sore in all places, in what looked like a tropical infirmary. When I tried to get up, I was pushed back down by this man.

"Take it easy." His deep baritone voice shook me, grabbing my attention. "You're lucky to be alive so conserve your energy." I looked up to be shocked at what I saw. He was a man who had a tan deeper than mine, and a short cropped black beard. He was wearing a tropical shirt and khaki shorts. But he had the exact same eyes and muscle build I had. It was like I was staring at an older version of myself.

"Where am I?" I managed to get out.

"The infirmary." The man answered, sitting on my bed. "I can't believe Nerissa would do this to me. To you and your sister. All this time you were alive and I was too stupid to try and go looking for you." He turned to me with regret. "I'm sorry Zacharai."

"Hold up." I halted him. "How do you know I have a sister? How do you know my mother's name, and how do you know my name? Who are you?"

The man took my hand and squeezed it, before delivering 4 words that shook me to the bone.

"I...am your father."
Erik's POV

Right after Erik's capture and the Khatha's disappearance...

I was dragged by the Aresmen to Slade's chambers, wondering where my cousins went. I struggled to get out of the glowing rope that bound my powers useless. Usually when someone took a member of the tribe by force, it wasn't to get a promotion. But when Slade took you by force, you wish you were never born. But I couldn't show it for my pride. Slade swam towards me, his black armor covering his pale scar ridden skin. Just by breathing, he scared the living shit out of me. Let's call him a merman version of Hitler. He swam behind me and I screamed in pain as he manipulated the water inside my back, causing the water to slash me from the inside. Think of it as being whipped but from the inside. I also had scars littered on my chest. But I lied to the others saying that when I was a kid I was accident prone, which I sort of was in the clan.

"From the moment I took you and your worthless brother in." Slade's quiet yet menacing voice said after my torture. "I knew you were a weak coward. All these years, I never needed you. When you were a child, I planned to take Raiden, not you. You were a waste of my time as you tried to save your brother. It was then you realized that the only way to save him, was to join my forces. But that is to be expected when you have an arrogant and pathetic ruler such as your father or your mother. Now years later, I have molded you and your brother into one of the finest soldiers I have ever trained. You were never of importance to me."

"Because you wanted my brother's power all along." I realized in horror. "It's why you've been training him all these years. You want him to get stronger, faster, and harness his lightning element." I looked up into his coal black eyes. "You're fattening him up like a whale."

"The more power he has." Slade began. "The more I can take. But now that I know of a water Omega who is quite a rare mermaid." My blood boiled at the mention of Thalie in Slade's interest. "I understand that your brother has shown weakness by begging me not to touch her. But you? Even after all these years, you still act responsible over the brat, when you should be focusing on commanding my armies. You were once one of my strongest generals. But you only focused on your blood relations like your weak willed father."

"At least I had a father, you monster." I growled. Big mistake as he did his water torture again but this time in my stomach. "Why did you bring me here?"

"Because after consideration." Slade said. "I will kill you rather than let you lived like I had planned. You see, I had heard tale of the last descendants of the oldest clan that would rise to stop me and that wretched Veridia. I suppose you and your cousin, the son of a traitor, have been preparing for the fight that is about to come."

"What fight?" I gasped out after coughing up blood. "What the hell are you talking about?"

The entire cave was motionless until Slade started laughing a cold, merciless laugh. "You actually don't know? You haven't figured out why I actually attacked your home?"

"Know what?" I asked. "What do my cousins have to do with your plans?"

Slade continued laughing. "The very thing that you don't know. The destiny that has your four written in it! The tale has been passed down for generations!"
"Ok enough!" I exclaimed. "Will you just spill the beans?!"

"Since you amuse me," Slade said. "I suppose I will let you live a little longer to hear the tale. But your fate and the fate of your "family" is still to be decided." He turned to General Batalo. "Take him below." Before I could blink, I was dragged to the prison hold and locked in a cell, with the rope that restricted my powers.

"I will break out of here!" I exclaimed. "And when I do, you will be sorry you messed with the Consorzios!"


3 days later...

Zac's POV

I sat in the infirmary, looking out to the sea. According to my dad, I had spent about 3 days in Ko Ban, Thailand which is near this island called Ko Samui. Apparently, his father was born there. I was still numb from the shock that the man who had took special care of me, was my biological father. He seemed like a nice guy but anyone could see that he was suffering from shock and outrage. He hardly called Nerissa by her name, just as his wife. The infirmary was more like a tropical closed off room with lots of windows and medical supplies.

I heard knocking at the door and an American woman came in with some food. I had not left the infirmary and I was healing rapidly. According to the doctor, mermaids and mermen can heal much faster than humans.

"Hey sweetie." She said, settling the food down.

I smiled at her as I devoured my squid. "Hey Nurse Cass."

"Well I understand that this is a shock." Cass said. "But you really should get out of here, explore the place, and more importantly, see your father."

"Maybe later." I said.

"Zac I know that change is tough." She said. "But I promise you things get better." She left, leaving me to figure that she did have a point.


Raiden's POV

I swam looking for Erik. No one had seen him and none of the Aresmen I saw would tell me anything. I searched for hundreds of miles but nothing. I tried to sneak in the Ares Tribe itself but that kind of didn't go so well. I almost lost my life. I was sitting at the rented house, looking out into the sea. Me and my brother, we were close, real close. But he needed to learn that I'm not a little merboy anymore and he was not the boss of me. I make my own rules. But we could survive without each other. At least that's what I hoped.


Zoe's POV

I paced around the grotto, thinking of ways to get Zac back. Not really to rescue Erik. Considering
what he did to us and Ondina, I'm not so forgiving of him. I was also coming around the shock that my sister was dating my cousin behind our backs. Xhiva, Diablo and Kimi were comparing theories of what to do. Diablo was just making the mood a little brighter by telling jokes.

"How can we stand by like this when Erik needs our help?" Thalie's voice rang.

"Hi." Kimi said distastefully to her. Kimi told me that they had gotten into a massive fight and now Kimi is clinging onto Xhiva. Since Diablo and Rose started dating right after, it made sense for them.

"I don't think that the rest of my family wants him back." I said. "I'm still debating."

"We still have to rescue Raiden's brother!" Thalie exclaimed.

"Look." Xhiva said. "Maybe he's finally come to his senses after all these years, but he was still raised by the Ares Tribe. Do you really think he and Raiden are just gonna turn their backs like that?"

"Yes I do." Thalie said. "I know he's made some pretty bad choices but everyone deserves a second chance."

"And you're saying you do?" Diablo scoffed. "After what you put Rosalina through?"

"I only lied to make things less complicated." Thalie explained.

"Like that helped." Kimi said.

Thalie groaned as she left saying, "I'm gonna swim towards Mako. See if I can get any leads as to where Zac is."

"Speaking of Zac." Xhiva said, walking up to me. "Haven't you used your twin telepathy?"

"I tried as you showed me." I said. "But his mind is clouded by shock and confusion. I think he discovered something big."

"How did you poof back here anyway?" Kimi asked.

"I already told you." I said. "We were in combat and we were wounded, Erik told us to run and I raised my hand but a silver light powered out of it, and poof, I was here, Zac was gone."

"Try to recreate it." Kimi said. I stuck out my hand, concentrating on my energy. But nothing happened.

"Any ideas?" I asked Xhiva.

"Well each child of Omega's powers are different from their sibling's." He said.

"Since Zac's draw...from...light." Diablo's bright amber eyes widened and I swear I heard a million gears work in his head. Xhiva seemed to get the message as he manipulated the technology to make the lights dim halfway. He then stood by the door, after moving me back a little further. "Try to focus your energy. Think of what you were doing when your power came."

"Zoe." Xhiva said walking towards me. "Your power draws from night, since twins tend to be opposites in order to maintain balance. Try and focus on the shadows."

I closed my eyes and felt the energy from the shadows and the night. When I felt like my insides were moving, like they were being drawn to something, I gasped, opening my eyes. "I need some
air." I ran to the roof, with my leather heels making some noise but I didn't care. I went in the shade to find that my body was turning into this black mist. "What's happening to me?" I ran toward the sun but this time I didn't actually run. It was a miracle. One minute I was turned toward the light and the next thing I knew, I was there, near the railing, which I almost fell over. I looked at the grill and imagined going there, and in just a snap I was there. I even move my feet. I looked over the railing down at the front lawn, which was about 7 feet below. It was a huge risk, but if I had the power I thought I had. I would survive.

"Ok." I said. "Think positive." I looked at the railing which I was preparing to jump over. Yes it was crazy. "No. This is insane." I ran as fast as I could and dived over the wall in a leap of faith. I knew the ground was coming fast so I closed my eyes and concentrated on getting somewhere safe. I didn't see it, but I disappeared in a flash of silver light. The next thing I knew, I was falling in from 3 feet above the water. Feeling my legs fusing into my tail, I surfaced to find that I had apparently vanished and reappeared 4 miles away from Rita's house. I couldn't have been more excited.

"Awesome." I breathed.


Zac's POV

Deciding that it was the time was to get out of that room, I went down the hallway but along the maze of corridors and rooms, I couldn't find...Dad. Just thinking of the word made me a little unsure. Knowing my dad was in the dark all this time just as I was made me pity him, but I hardly knew him, other than I was the spitting image of him. Out of the corner, I noticed a boy, about 9 years old who was getting out of the bedrooms in a white tanktop and brown shorts.

"Hey." I called out to the kid.

He turned his face, enough to let me see that he was from Pakistan. "Hello?" His voice carried a thick Pakistani accent.

"I'm..." I trailed off. "A little lost. Do you know where to go for a newbie?"

The boy's face scrunched up. "Don't remember, but I do know where to go for the morning."

"Where is that..." I asked before realizing that I didn't know his name. "What's your name?"

"Umar." He answered. "We're supposed to be at the lake. Come on!" He grabbed my hand and walked me past some corridors to some slide doors. He opened them and I was in an outdoor cafeteria with kids near ages 6-18 all at long tables eating breakfast and talking. There were some kids running around but they were restrained a little. There had to be at least 50 kids. There were some adult chaperones but it looked more like a tropical summer camp.

"This is amazing." I breathed.

"You ain't seen nothing." I heard Jacob speak.

"This is where you've been?" I asked. "For 15 years? You've not only been taking care of kids, you've been rescuing them."

"Actually I've only been here for 12 years." Jacob said. "But yes."

"Jacob..." I said. "I don't know how to act."
"Jacob?" He asked. "You're not threatened by our...connection? Seeing as apparently you were raised in a different life?"

"Well I don't know." I admitted. "It's a bit much to get my head around to be frank. It's not every day your dad is some sort of head of a foster care for kids."

Jacob chuckled. "Well at least I'm not boring...right?"

"Well I suppose there is that..." I said. "One specific thing."

"Do you at least like it?" He asked a little unsure.

"I...don't have the words." I said, causing him to laugh and clap my shoulder like we were old mates.

"Come on." He said. "Let me get you some breakfast."

Raiden's POV

I walked around the beach, all alone. I felt really guilty for hiding this secret. Sure I've done worse things, like kill a few mermaids and mermen here and there, but Erik did the same thing. But I've never felt so much guilt about lying to the only family I had left. Thalie was going worse, she's trying to think of ways to get my brother back from wherever he is. Zac and Zoe are not talking to me and Rita's just avoiding me. Luckily this was a 4 day weekend with teacher development days. Zac's parents were out of town on work. Evie's been hectic to trying to find Zac and me? Sure I think Zac is a dweeb and he's not as experienced as I am, but being family makes an exception. I pulled out my phone and dialed Rita's number. After the voice said to leave a message, I took a breath and said my piece. "Hey, Miss Santos. I guess I should call you Aunt Rita since technically you are my step aunt. But anyways, just know that I never wanted to hide it in the first place, it was Thalie's idea. But she did have a point. We're easily divided and I guess we ended up complicating things and now you see me not only as a merman or your student, but as your daughter's boyfriend. But still I was going to tell you when the time was ok. We did what we have to do, what we knew was right. I hope that you can accept me, because there is not one other girl in the world that I love other than Thalassa. She's my everything and without her, I'm nothing. I love her. And she loves me. I hope that you can understand at least that." I sent the voicemail and continued trekking on the beach.

Erik's POV

I had been there for One of the things you learn as you train to be a warrior, is to use whatever your surroundings can provide you. Since my prison cell was a cave, and there tended to be rocks near by, I managed to break one into a sharp small dagger. My best weapon was usually a spear. It wasn't much but I was cutting off a bar to reinforce the cage door open. My merman sense spiked someone coming to swim through the water. It's a sixth sense us merpeople have. I immediately put the knife behind me and I sat, my blue tail tucking itself. To be honest, I liked my tail more than legs. But that's the way I am.

Well. I said using the mental link to the guard that approached me. If it isn't the sushi I ordered. That was one of the rare times I ever used smack talk. Raiden though along with Xandou used it all the time.
Speak for yourself. The guard grumbled, slipping in some old squid in a bowl.

Ugh. I said. And whatever that is. Can't you get some squid ink sauce to add some flavor?

The guard stiffened. The last time I woke up, this was a dungeon, not a bed and breakfast. Which means you will eat, whatever I bring!

I smirked. You mean whatever Tchorah tells you to bring. Tchorah was the head guard of the prison.

If Chief didn't need you, I would teach you some manners. The guard said.

Oh really? I asked sarcastically. And what, I may ask, could he possibly need me for?

Just watch your tongue boy! I smiled in victory as the guard left. Using every amount of strength I had, I lifted the bar out and reinforced the cage open. My powers were still rendered useless because of the glowing rope so there was no way I could turn invisible. I continued swimming using my sixth sense to guide me in the dark tunnel but I felt something push me back hard. I was sprawled on the floor but I wasn't giving up.

Where do you think you're going boy? I still had the bar so I used my training to fight General Batalo. He was a pretty damn good fighter but I still was not giving up. I did the best I could, but he had the field advantage of using his magic when I had none and he had the keys to my chains.

As I was knocked to the ground, I saw another fight being brought into here. A guard was fighting a mermaid and it looked like she was winning. Yet this mermaid looked oddly familiar. She had brown chestnut hair, a light tan, and she had an eye patch over her left eye, with only one blue eye to show to the world. Yet somehow I knew who this mermaid was I could feel it. As she was hit hard and fell unconscious, I could only say it out loud.

Mother?


Kimi's POV

I walked around the Secret Sanctum feeling a little lonely heading towards the dojo. Ever since our big fight, no one really has come down here together. Sure I still practice and we all patrol but we don't really do things together, and it's been 2 days. I walked in the dojo and I set up some statues, but this time I was using my powers, not my hockey stick. I began training, firing some ice beams, and using my ice to carry and I used some of the martial arts I learned along with my powers. I finished a kata, out of breath, ice and snow everywhere. My training suit, which consisted of a teal tanktop and black shorts.

"You're arms are off." I heard Xhiva speak from behind me. I did a front flip and fired some ice beams but he dodged and pushed my arms back to punch me to the ground. "You look like you did a serious hardcore training session here."

He held out his hand which I took, causing him to flash that adorkable smile of his. "You look awful."

"Thanks." I said. "I've just dealing with stuff." I walked out of the dojo with Xhiva following me, getting a little close, which caused me to blush. "Hey, what's your best weapon?"

The Hindi merboy shrugged. "Bo staff."
"Oh cool." I said, turning around, and noticing that he was right next to the sea entrance and he didn't know that his back was facing it. "You know, you have a cute smile." I said seductively before pushing him in the water. I knew he was a merman, but I needed to see it for myself. Out of the mass of bubbles that appeared in the water, came Xhiva Tiraken in his true form. He was the skinniest boy I had ever met. And yet he had some muscle to his arms and he had a flat board of abs! His tail had the same build, skinny yet built at the same time.

"Really?" Xhiva asked smiling. I just laughed but my joy was cut short when Xhiva used his powers to send a jet of water at me. No time to waste, I jumped in, allowing my legs to fuse into my tail, my eyes to change into teal and my hair streaks to increase. "Now we're even." He said.

"Really?" I asked and before I knew it, he tackled me in a splashing contest. But I pushed back, and yet surprisingly, out of his skinny body came the strength to tackle me to the ground. It felt good to be around him. I like him, I really do. But I just don't know how to say it. We leaned on the edge, his arm laying on my back.

"Dakara." (So.) He said in Japanese. "Naze anata to on'nanoko ga mawari mopingte imasu ka? Sore ga tame ni sono tatakai nodesu ka?" (Why are you and the girls moping around? Is it because of that fight?) I sighed. "Watashi wa sore wa wareware ga hontōni otagai o yoku rikai shita koto ga nai dakeda to omoimasu. Hotondo no tame ni... Otokonoko," (I guess it's just that we've never really understood each other that well. Mostly because of...boys.)

Xhiva looked at me, his brown red eyes meeting my own. "Bōizudesho? Anata ga kurasshu no mae ni... Ever... Arimashita ka?" (Boys huh? Have you….ever...had a crush before?)

I blushed madly, scooting away from Xhiva. "Well….I...."

"Kimi, otokonoko no hoka ni." (Kimi, besides boys.) Xhiva began, his fin flapping. "Naze anata wa tatakai ni natta nodesu ka?" (Why did you get in a fight?)

"Watashi wa chīmu no otakudearu koto no unzarida gen'in!" (Cause I'm sick of being the nerd of the team!) I exclaimed. "Watashi wa tsuneni subete o shiru koto ga kitaidesu! Watashi wa watashi no yūjin de issho ni itakattanode, watashi wa guōdo o suikippu suru 5 chansu o kotowa–tsuo shitte imashita ka?" (I'm always expected to know everything! Did you know I turned down 5 chances to skip grades because I wanted to be with my friends?)

"Watashitachi wa onajidesu." (We're the same then.) Xhiva told me. "Modoru bureido otokonoko de, watashi wa, sōsa no nōdeshita. Watashi wa watashi no kyōdai wa, T 3 to yoba reru kono chīmudeatte mo nō ni shiyō sa remasu." (Back in the Blade Boys, I was the brains of the operation. I used to be even the brains of this team me and my siblings called the T3.)

I snickered. "T wa nani o arawashita nodesu ka? Tiraken?"

Xhiva blushed a little. "Hidoi, sore wa hidoi no tame ni tatte imashita." (Terrible, it stood for terrible.) I spent about 2 minutes laughing. "E e, soreha namae o omoitsuita watashi no imōto ga imashita. Shikashi tonikaku, yukimi wa, anata to karera wa anata no sōi-ten ga aru kamo shiremasenga, subete no chīmu wa, nō ga hitsuyōdesu. Dakedenaku yukimi, sono. Karera wa, setchaku-zaï o hitsuyō to shite imasu. Soshite, sore wa anata ga yukimi Ayumi iru monodesu. Anata no chīmu wa anata nashide barabaradeaou. Sore wa watashi ga anata o aishuru ryū no hitotsudesu." (Yeah, it was my sister who came up with the name. But anyways, Yukimi, you and them may have your differences, but every team needs a brain. But not only that, Yukimi. They need glue. And that is what you are Yukimi Hamasaki. Your team would be falling apart without you. It's one of the reasons why I love..."
My heart stopped beating as Xhiva's eyes widened. "Watashi wa. I wa anata no chisei o aisuru... Imi shimasu." (I mean...I love your smarts.) As he continued rambling, I shushed him as I put my fingers on his lips. "Watashi mo anata o aishitemasu." (I love you too.) Xhiva and I smiled brightly before we embraced in a kiss.

No one's POV

Yukimi felt like she was on cloud 9 as she embraced Xhiva in her arms. His lips tasted so sweet and she felt so complete with him, he understood her and she understood him. She had never loved anyone more before.

Xhiva's soul had ignited with passion as he tasted Yukimi's fresh lips. She was no land girl to him, nor mermaid, she was Yukimi, the most beautiful and amazing girl he had ever laid eyes on. And he loved her just as much as she loved him.

They broke apart, seeing each other as lovers for the first time. "Yukimi." Xhiva said. "I've been waiting to ask this for a long time: Will you be my girlfriend?"

The Asian mermaid gasped before saying, "Yes. But I don't know how this works."

Xhiva's tail wrapped around her own, causing the two merpeople to feel more attracted to each other in love. "Me neither." He said. "But I'm sure it starts out like this." He pulled her in for a more intense kiss and they both enjoyed every last second of it.

-Zac's POV-

Me and Jacob finished our prawn salad in the cafeteria, which I knew instantly where I got my love for prawns from. Jacob and I talked and he seemed like a really good man. And an amazing father. I mean, he has been rescuing children.

"You run this whole place?" I asked in amazement.

Jacob nodded. "In San Francisco, I never realized at how much I was of being a father. After the fire, I couldn't stay there, so I moved to Thailand. Where my father was born, where no one knew me, or could remind me of what I had lost. And then I missed raising kids. So I made a career out of it."

"Gangway!" A Korean teenager yelled on a skateboard. "Coming through!" He zoomed past with an older girl yelling something in Korean. But I swear that she was swearing.

Jacob sighed and rolled his eyes. "Although kids can drive you crazy. Thanks to them, I used to have many sleepless nights. You get used to crazy after travelling with 2 other mermen, one who's from land and one who used to be a literal royal pain."

"Caesar and Phoebus." I clarified. Jacob flashed a sad smile before checking his watch.

"You must feel like cooling off." He said. "I mean, you haven't been in the water, you're gonna dry out." He did have a point. My hands were papery and I did feel a little lightheaded.

"Uh yeah." I said. "I could really use a swim."

"Good," Jacob said, ruffling my hair, but I swatted his hand slightly, causing him to chuckle. "It's
swim time anyway."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

Jacob laughed. "I'm not surprised. Your uncle once told me when you were born, "I'm sure he'll be just as oblivious to the obvious as you are." Come on."

But we were stopped by a Malay woman who told Jacob that some kid was having trouble getting cereal off his tail.

"There are other mermen here?" I whispered to him.

"You'd be surprised." He said. "Stay here." He ran with the woman leaving me to wonder what he meant. But it was then that my hands started vibrating. I ran outside in the sunlight to try to shake it off.


Erik's POV

I was still with shock but not before I was knocked to the ground again. It didn't matter. My mother really was alive and here. My heart was beating too fast to register the pain I was getting. But then, I saw my mother swim up to me but was slashed with a sword on her stomach, leaving her unconscious. Anger seethed in me as the guard raised his sword about to kill her. With strength I didn't even know I had, I used my tail to knock Batalo back and swam faster than I ever had up to the guard in time to block his weapon.

Do...not...touch...my...MOTHER! I screamed mentally. The guard lowering his weapon, I punched him back, and bashed his head in, killing him, before I took the keys off him and unlocked my chains, letting my magic flow back in. I looked around and no one else was coming. I swam to my mother, and used my powers to heal her, using the water, but I couldn't heal the pain she was going to be in. She rose her head, looking at mine.

Caesar? She asked.

I only smiled before speaking in my native tongue. No. Sono io, Erik. (No, it's me, Erik.)

My mother gasped. Erik? Sei vivo? (Erik? You're alive?)

I just chuckled. So che questo non ha senso, ma io sono vivo. Così è Raiden. (I know this doesn't make sense, but I'm alive. So is Raiden.)

My mother smiled. Oh ... il mio bel ragazzo. (Oh...my beautiful boy) She cupped my cheek, and I started crying with joy.

Andiamo. (Let's go) I said. I carried my mother and swam out, but soon we were surrounded by Aresmen. I was pretty injured, but I had to get my mother out of there.

"Surrender and no harm will come to her." One of the generals said to me. I did the only thing any mature merman would do. I spat in his face. Big mistake as he used his powers to start choking me. I thought I was gonna pass out but then the general was knocked out as was other generals. I looked up to see the Marinos attacking the soldiers.

"Ondina?" I asked before speaking in Greek. "Ti káneis edó?" (What are you doing?)
Ondina looked at me blankly before saying, "Saving the douche who broke my heart."

Rosalina's POV

I swam with Diablo, enjoying every minute of it. Diablo was my soulmate, my boyfriend. After Thalie told us her secret, I asked Diablo to start dating me. He was overjoyed. He really was my wolf in shining fur. I looked over to see a turtle swimming towards me and then it changed into Diablo. He was pretty charming in his merman form. We surfaced into the moon pool, with it all to ourselves.

"Este lugar es tan hermoso." (This place is so beautiful.) Diablo noted.

"No tan bella como usted." (Not as beautiful as you.) I replied.

"Vaminos." Diablo said, captivating me in a kiss. He was a pretty damn good kisser. And not to mention a charming merman. He had a slight build, not too muscular, but not too skinny. His tail mirrored that of his upper body. His bright amber orange eyes shone into mine. As we continued the kiss, his hand circled my waist, making me mewl slightly which in turn pleased the werewolf as he let out wolfy growls. I stopped the kiss to think about the fight I had with the girls. "¿Lo ha mal mi flor?" (What's wrong my flower?)

"Todavía no puedo creer que Helen me llamó un niño." (I still can't believe that Helen called me a child.) I said. "Yo sólo estaba tratando de ayudar y hacer que dejen de pelear." (I was only trying to help and make them stop fighting.)

Diablo sighed in contempt. "Sé cómo te sientes. Cuando yo era un niño, cuando comenzó a los muchachos de la hoja y cuando vivía en Argentina, siempre traté de hacer a personas felices con lo que describe, mi imaginación loca y salvaje. Te, Rosalina, tienes el corazón más amable que he visto, eres hermoso dentro y por fuera. Humanos o sirena, Rosalina, tus amigos te necesitan porque es tu dulce alma que mantiene el equipo de caer aparte. Tú eres el que les da vida y alegría y serían sólo cáscaras sin ti." (I know how you feel. When I was a kid, back when the Blade Boys started and when I lived in Argentina, I always tried to make people happy with what people described, my crazy and wild imagination. You, Rosalina, you have the kindest heart I've ever seen, you're beautiful inside and out. Human or mermaid, Rosalina, your friends need you because it's your sweet soul that keeps the team from falling apart. You're the one who gives them life and joy and they would be just shells without you.) He gave me a quick peck on the cheek before he left me to think about this. Maybe Diablo had a good message.

Zac's POV

I shook my hands to try to stop the vibrating as I ran to where no one could see me. It was only when I flexed my hands that something happened. I put my hands outward into the sunlight only to feel not heat, but something solid yet it shimmered as I pressed into it. I reached out to touch it but it wasn't there. Yet I couldn't help but wonder if I had caused that. I took a deep breath and stretched out my hand to connect with the sunlight and as I did, I felt as energized as I did in the water.

"Come on." I said. "Work with me light." I concentrated and as I thrust out my hands, and opened my eyes, I was surrounded by this force field dome that was shimmering blue/gold. I looked at my hands which were surrounded by this blue/gold energy aura. The answer was clear: I, Zacharai Surachai Khatha had discovered my primary power to create force fields out of light.
"Whoa." I breathed.

Helen's POV

I sat alone in the park, balancing a flame in my hand. Hey my powers are pretty cool, but I got stuck with the most dangerous one. Rita once said that an Omega's element mirrors the person that they are. And yet I got stuck with the one that hurts people. But I never say that I care about people's feelings because I'm the tough one around here. I just tell people in times of trouble to toughen up. It's what I do. But it's not like fire needs companions, does it?

"Hey Helen." I heard a familiar slight Chinese accent sound. "Need someone?"

I rolled my eyes. "I don't need anyone."

"Your tone says otherwise." Xandou said sitting down next to me. I really didn't want him around. Problem was, whenever I felt Xandou next to me, I felt understood and protected. What was I going to do? "What's the hold up here?"

"I'm sick of fixing everything the girls do." I admitted. "I'm sick of being their bodyguard. Who does Thalie think she is? I don't need anyone. I call my own shots."

"Helen." Xandou said. "You say that, but what does fire need? Someone to keep it going. You may manage on your own fine, but once in while you need someone to help you. You're one of the strongest people I know but you need your friends and they need you. In the Creed, suit on or off, you're the protector. You always find a way to get them not to give up, no matter the situation. In fact, if they never met you, they would be more of the biggest losers than they are. You think you're a badass? Well you sort of are and I'm the original badass. But it's not about me. You're like me, we both want to be in charge, but that's a big responsibility that I don't think that you're ready to handle. You're the second in command. Think about it."

"Before you leave." I said, taking his arm. I leaned in and gave him a quick peck on the cheek. Xandou blushed a little before using his superspeed to run from me. I was still there, sitting and thinking on what he said.

Zac's POV

After I sort of got my power under control, Jacob found me. We swam away from the island to the far out sea. Once we surfaced, I looked around curiously. "Hey why are we stopping?"

"We have to wait for the others." Jacob said smiling hugely. "We're not the only ones with a tail you know."

"We have to wait for the others." Jacob said smiling hugely. "We're not the only ones with a tail you know."

"What?" I asked. I heard some whooping and I turned around to see all the kids in tails! And the adults too! My jaw dropped, causing Jacob to laugh hysterically. Some jumped in the air, some did tricks and some swam down to do some races. I felt the jet whoosh of some mermaids and mermen racing. I dived down to the deep reef to be surrounded by little mermaids and mermen swimming around and goofing off. It clicked in my head. The place that Jacob was running was not just a foster care for kids. It was a foster care for children who had tails. Every boy and girl there had a tail and there was not a single sign of any of the feud. But I also saw some kids with scars, prosthetics even on one fin and scars. It was utterly breathtaking. This how it should be. No fighting, no deaths, just kids having fun.
My thoughts exactly. I heard Jacob from behind me. I turned around to see him as a merman. His tail was almost an exact replica of mine but much older and more built. Jacob clapped my shoulder like we were old mates. That's why I founded Full Moon Bay. A safe haven for orphaned children of the sea. So many lives have been uprooted because of the feud. Few mermaids and mermen of mine swim around the world, saving children and bringing them here. Here we teach children that not everything they were taught is true, it's here where they learn to accept and not fear. We all work as a community. All for the young ones of course. He pointed to a group of little mermaids goofing off. Who listen to no one.

Umm… I trailed off unsure if it was my place to ask.

Yes? Jacob said soothingly. It's ok, you can ask whatever you want.

What happened to some of these kids? I blurted out.

Jacob looked at me like he had expected that question. This Irish young merman lost one of his arms in an accident that destroyed some of his island and tribe. He pointed to a merman who had a missing arm. This Hawaiian mermaid had her fin sliced with razor netting. And this poor Polish mermaid was born blind and left alone at birth.

What do they do? I asked. When they graduate?

It's their choice. Jacob said. Rejoin the world as educated young adults, or stay on to teach others.

This is incredible! I exclaimed.

It's cool being on land. Jacob said. But whenever I'm in the sea, I don't even have a reason, I just feel Free. I cut him off smiling.

This is what it means to be a merman Zacharai. Jacob said. This is who you are.

I still think it should be called Camp Fish-Blood. A 10 year old Canadian merman said.

And Dylan, I said, God forbid that horrible name. Jacob replied.

Want to see who's got speed? I asked mischievously. Just in case you got it, old man.

All the mermaids and mermen stopped, going oooooh. Some just were still with jaws open.

You wanna go, boy? Jacob asked.

Hit it. And both of us took off at superspeed.


Erik's POV

After the Marino's helped us to their home, we stopped by the shores of Mako on the south side. Luckily, there was a small lagoon, where I laid my mother to rest while the Marinos looked for food. I stayed there for a long time, taking care and healing my mother. I still couldn't believe that my mother was here. I knew she was alive but to see her in the flesh was both amazing and terrifying.

"I got her." I heard Ondina say from behind me, tending to Mom's tail that was pretty bruised up.

"How did you find us?" I asked.
'Well we were taking a family swim and we heard something going on on the north side and we followed that dolphin." Ondina said quickly.

"Ondina." I said in Greek. "Giatí me voíthísei ? Xéro óti parakálese na pároun ólo to thymó sou se ména kai óchi ton adelphó mou ótan ítan pagidevménos mésa sto thálamo . Pes mou Ondina , eíste akóma treloí sostá ? Boró na anaménoume óti, allá den échei simástí pósés forés eímai tha po óti lypámai , efíai trelos akóma . Tóso giatí voíthontas ti mitéra mou?" (Why are you helping me? I know I begged you to take out all your anger on me and not my brother when he was trapped in the chamber. Tell me Ondina, you're still mad right? I can expect that, but no matter how many times I'm gonna say I'm sorry, you're still mad. So why are you helping my mother?)

"Efímai mónó voíthontas Persefóni giatí ítan vasílissa tis pragmatí mou spíti kai egó tis chrostáo pollá." (I'm only helping Persephone because she was queen of my real home and I owe her a lot.) Ondina replied. "Ektós aftó , theoróntas óti den échoun apodeíxei se ména óti sas axízei mia défteri efkairía méta apó ósa échete kánei , efímai akóma ligo avévaioi gia esás." (Besides, considering you haven't proven to me that you deserve a second chance after what you've done, I'm still a little unsure of you.) After applying some gel, Ondina looked me in the eye. I was always drawn to her crystal blue eyes before speaking in Portuguese. "Eu definitivamente ainda tem alguns sentimentos por você . Eu só não decidiram se são positivos ou negativos ainda." (I definitely still have some feelings for you. I just haven't decided if they're positive or negative yet.)

I smiled. "Bem, você me avise quando você descobrir isso." (Well you let me know when you figure it out.)

"Você não será o primeiro." (You won't be the first.) Ondina said slyly, leaving the lagoon.

My mother groaned, waking up. "Where am I?" She asked.

"Mako Island." I said.

Mom chuckled. "I haven't been to Australia with you since Rita and Harry's wedding."

"You knew Thalassa's parents?" I asked.

"They're your godparents of course." She said.

"Yeah." I said sadly.

"Erik." Mom said in Italian, cupping my cheek and looking me in the eye. "Cosa c'è che non va?"

I took her hand and squeezed it tight. "Dopo anni di vita sotto il suo pollice, ho finito. Io sono fatto lavorando con il mostro che ha ucciso papà. Ho cercato di proteggere Raiden proprio come papà ha detto al suo ultimo respiro . Ho anche creduto Slade per un po' . E io ero un idiota per farlo. Ogni giorno speso da solo è a causa sua. Fino ad oggi , ora stai male e così è tutti gli altri ed è per colpa mia . Mi dispiace molto." (After years of living under his thumb, I'm done. I'm done working with the monster that killed Dad. I tried to protect Raiden just as Dad said to in his dying breath. I even believed Slade for a while. And I was an idiot for doing so. Every day you spent alone is because of him. Until today, now you're hurt and so is everyone else and it's because of me. I am so sorry.) Unable to hold my emotions back any longer I started crying until my mother embraced me in her arms. I missed my family terribly, but I know I let them down. "È colpa mia." (This is my fault.)

"Erik." My mother said. "Non potrei mai essere arrabbiato con te . Ti ho sempre amata e Raiden con tutto il cuore. È essere vivo è tutto quello che serve." (I could never be angry with you. I have always loved you and Raiden with all my heart. You being alive is all I need.)
My eyes widened as I facepalmed. "Oh ma, Raiden!" I exclaimed. "Aspettare qui." (Wait here.)

Zac's POV

We must have swum for 100 miles because we were racing for the big title for fastest swimmer. Just as we were almost done, Jacob did something amazing. He swam up and leaped in the air, like a dolphin and swam back down, earning a massive advantage. I swam up, trying the same thing but I ended up landing on my belly. Hard.

"Ok." I winced in pain. "Didn't really think this through."

I heard Jacob laughing as he helped me get up from lying face down. "Gee, you think?" He asked. "It takes practice." Just as he was checking up for injuries, he cupped my cheek. I leaned in to accept the fatherly touch and it felt like I had a guardian angel. "All this time you've been taking after me. And where was I? I'm so sorry Zac. Can we start over? Will you give me a chance to try to get to know you for a bit?" I smiled and nodded. "I... I can teach you all I've learned. And I can show you so much about yourself that you don't know. Think fast." He used his powers to send a jet of water, but on some battle instinct, I sliced in half. He swam up to me and clapped my shoulder as we looked out into the setting sun. "You have natural gifts that you are unaware of. I know that you've been through much and probably so has your sister, but let me tell you this. Struggles and tragedies is what brings people together and it makes you who you are, son. Who we are. But you have a life already and I don't want to get in the way of that."

"No. No." I said. "I really really want to get to know you. I mean, you seem pretty cool, Dad." And then it happened. The second I called him that for the first time, he gave me a big hug. I returned it, and both of us were blinking a few tears. I never realized how much I missed my biological father. So this is how Thalie felt that night. "But." I said, breaking the hug. "I don't want you to give me space. Ever since I found out who I was, I wanted a father. Zoe's wanted one all her life. Come back to Australia. I've got Rita as a close friend of mine who's got this giant house. It's perfect for one more."

Dad looked unsure and torn. "Zac...I want to. I really do. But I just don't know how it would work."

"Dad, I have to get back to Australia anyway." I reminded him. "At least think about it." I swam back to the foster care where the kids were having dinner and I joined them.

Raiden's POV

I was training in the gym, in my martial arts. I spent 3 years in the Kanhoji along with Erik, but we were trained separately so we couldn't see each other. We were close to second degree black belts. When I threw a punch, Erik turned visible and blocked it and then performed a slide sweep kick to knock me down.

"Seriamo?" (Seriously?) I asked in Italian. "Interrompere la mia sessione di formazione individuale?" (Interrupting my individual training session?) I paled as I realized I had reenacted the scene when I saw Thalie for the first time at the cafe. "Deja-vu, that's almost what Thalie said when I first met her again."

When Erik helped me up he asked in Italian, "Come hai conosciuto la prima volta?" (Well how did you meet the first time?)
"La trovai nella barriera corallina." (I found her in the reef.) I sort of lied. "Lei è stato colpito e ferito." (She was shot down and wounded.)

"Voglio che tu incontri qualcuno." (There's someone I want you to meet.) Erik told me as we walked out. We jumped off the dock and swam to the south side of Mako Island. "Before you meet her, just be ready for her."

"Who is she Erik?" I asked.

"Just trust me." He said. We swam to this lagoon and when we surfaced, there was no one.

"Well you've wasted my time." I said.

"Raiden?" I heard a voice, that seemed oddly familiar. For some reason, my scales prickled and my breathing grew short.

I turned around, and right behind me, was a mermaid with a fair tan, chestnut brown hair, and one eye in an eye patch, leaving one sapphire blue eye.

"M...Mo...Mother?" I whispered. I started freaking out, causing sparks to fly, one hit Erik, causing him a little pain. And my mother wrapped me in a giant hug that calmed me down.

"Mi sei mancato, la mia piccola scintilla." (I've missed you, my little spark.) She said in her soothing motherly voice.

I tried to prevent from crying but, my mother's embrace just broke my walls and I crumbled. "Ho tante domande, ma ... Mi sei mancato tanto. (I have so many questions, but...I've missed you so much.) I switched to English. "I love you, Mommy."

She shushed me. "I'm here, my baby boy." I felt another presence join in the hug and it didn't take a genius to figure that it was Erik.

I choked out a few tears as I said, "I wish Dad was here."

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Thalie's POV

I paced on the roof, the nighttime falling already. I thought about what Raiden said, but mostly what my dad would do. My mom did the same thing. She had to hide the fact she was dating an enemy just like me. And I had a dream last night of my dad telling me that a leader doesn't impose her will but helps the followers flourish and grow. I really loved them being my friends so much that I was so scared of losing them, but that's the irony. I did. I may be a leader, but what is a leader without her team? It was my fault that we got into a fight, so it was my responsibility to fix it.

I pulled out my cell phone and texted everyone to meet me at the cafe. I just hope no fighting was gonna happen again.

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Persephone's POV

I sat on the edge of the lagoon, listening with great difficulty. "I… can't believe my own sister, would do this to me. I can't believe she literally played dead."

My eldest, Erik swam up to me and said, "It's ok Mom. Both of us couldn't believe it either." I smiled
at him. When I first saw him, I really thought it was my dead husband. Erik had grown so much to such a handsome young merman. He had gotten more serious and kind.

"I still am in part of the denial stage." Raiden said. I chuckled at my baby boy. Raiden had grown too, probably more than his brother. He used to be a scared and shy little bo but now he was a teenager and a confident one at that.

"Boys." I said, looking them in the eye and switching to Italian. "So cosa due stati attraverso . Ogni decisione che due, specialmente voi Erik avete fatto negli ultimi 10 anni è stato a causa mia e per lo più a tuo padre. Quello che si sia studiato in, perché tu diventati i tritoni entrambi sono oggi, anche con Ondina." (I know what you two have been through. Every decision you two, especially you Erik have made in the past 10 years has been because of me and mostly your father. What you both studied in, why you became the mermen you both are today, even with Ondina.)

Erik looked at me curiously. "Ondina?"

"Erik." Raiden said to his older brother. "Tu sei mio fratello. Non credi che io so come ti ami? Ma il suo non avete mai perseguiti. Perché eri troppo consumato con quello che è successo con mamma e papà e me a lasciarsi essere felice. Lascia perdere ora Erik." (You're my brother. You don't think I know how you love her? But you never pursued her. Because you were too consumed with what happened with Mom and Dad and me to let yourself be happy. Let it go now Erik.)

"Ragazzi." I said to my children. "Qualunque cosa voi due avete fatto , non è stata colpa tua . Non importa quello che fai , voi due sarete sempre i miei figli, i miei figli." (Whatever you two have done, it wasn't your fault. No matter what you do, you two will always be my sons, my children.)

"Ma ora." (But now.) Erik said sadly. "Ho incasinato grande tempo . Ecco dove Zac è. Siamo stati aggrovigliati con gli uomini di Slade e ... lui sparito." (I've messed up big time. That's where Zac is. We were tangled with Slade's men and...he disappeared.)

My heart filled with worry. I had just learned that my niece and nephew were alive, and now my own nephew was missing. It was all Slade's fault. "Then we have to find him. Slade's taken enough from us already." I said. "But Erik, you have to lead the team that is finding Zac."

"Me?" He asked. "Lead? I'm not sure I can."

"Erik, I've seen you be a leader when you were a child and I see it now." I said.

"She's right." Raiden said. "You're the boss. So what's the plan?"

Thalie's POV

At the cafe...

I was met with an awkward silence with the girls at the cafe. It was nighttime so no one could see us.

"Girls." I began. "Before you say anything, just know that I never wanted us to break apart. I thought that if I told you guys, I would lose you all. But that's the irony I did. I've always had feelings for Raiden but we've all been torn apart by our feelings. That's why we're friends. Helen, you've always been the one who's always motivating us, Kimi, you're what freezes us together, no pun intended. And Rosalina, we need your optimism, we need you to be yourself. I'm sorry, all of you and what I did was way out line. I lied to you, I know I did, and I deserve the guilt. You three will always be my best friends." It was then I got a call saying that Hell's Angels were robbing a
Zoe's POV

In the grotto…

Erik called us for a meeting in the grotto. Ríta was hesitant at first and she almost forbade Raiden from going through the door. But when I reminded her that she kind of did the same thing 20 years ago, she froze and let Raiden in.

"We may be enemies." Erik said. "But we all come from the same family. Slade has his eyes targeted on the four of us. And when I say the four of us, I mean Zac as well."

"But we don't even know where Zac is." Raiden said.

"Exactly." I said. "What are we gonna do?"

"I'll tell you what we're gonna do." Erik said in his leader voice. "We're gonna find Zac...and then Slade's gonna pay for what he's done."

"Erik are you insane?" I asked. "Slade's cruelty is legendary even in Canada."

"But what could he possibly want with a bunch of teenagers?" Raiden asked.

"I don't know." Erik said. "But for now, this isn't about preparing for battle. This is about getting our cousin back."

"And how do we do that?" I asked. "We don't even know where the hell he is!"

"And whose fault is that?" Raiden asked. "You were the one that made him disappear."

I was about to say something when I remembered what Raiden said. "What did you say?"

"You heard me." Raiden said.

"You said I was the one that made him disappear." I said. "Oh Raiden you're a genius!" I gave him a big hug and kissed him on the cheek.

"Ok." Erik said breaking the awkwardness. "What the hell are you talking about?"

"The answer to how Zac disappeared." I began, smirking devilishly. "It's not something I can tell you. I have to show you." I raised my hand and dimmed the lights a little. But I didn't need that. It was night so my power was at it's full. I then teleported from being in front of them to the door, to the bookshelf, all disappearing and reappearing in a flash of silver light. I stopped when I teleported behind them. "Crazy cool right?"

Erik and Raiden turned around and looked at me in shock. "What the frack?" Raiden asked.

"How…" Erik asked. "Did you do that?"

"Grab my hand." I said. They did so and I teleported them, all disappearing in a flash of silver light onto the rooftop.

The Consorzio brothers looked at me, jaws hanging open. "How the hell Zoe?" Erik asked.
"It's my primary power." I said.

"Zoe…" Raiden said speechless. "You can teleport?! That is so cool!"

"Yeah I had Diablo train me." I said.

"Ok you can teleport." Erik said. "But how does that help us find my cousin?"

"Erik." Raiden said. "You're forgetting that I was the head of the big time merman gang, the Blade Boys, and I had a pair of twins in them. Xhiva and Xandou Tiraken to be exact. They're just like Zoe and Zac. Mer-twins have a telepathic bond they can tap into, like a cell phone or a walkie talkie. Zoe have you tried that?"

"No." I said.

"Ok." Erik said, sitting me down. "Concentrate. Imagine you're having a vision but instead your channelling your energy to find him. Remember you twins have almost the same mind so use your magic to connect with his and sense his own energy." I did so and it was like my mind had left my body and I was flying fast to Zac's own energy, in wavelengths like a ripple. Once I had gotten the information, I gasped from the use of my energy.

"I know where he is."


Thalie's POV

Gold Coast bank…

I landed on the roof and snuck inside. I waited and listened until they were in the process of their robbery.

"Excuse me boys." I said. "I think you forgot to ask to make a withdrawal. But don't worry, I accept requests...of surrender."

"Where's your posse?" A member of Hell's Angels asked. "One of you and 15 of us."

"Actually Dunk." Another member said. "I counted 20."

"Doesn't matter the numbers." I said bravely. "Cause you're going down!" I jumped off and used my water to whip them. I did some martial arts moves with dancing and the technique of bending the water. I seemed to be going pretty good, until my arms were grabbed, I tried to make my whole body turn into water, but when I did, I started to wobble from exhaustion. It wasn't often I did it, but apparently, I could only do it when I was in near death. A gunshot fired and I fell down in blinding pain, clutching my right leg.

"Why don't you go home to your mommy?" One of the members asked, prompting laughter. I lifted my visor up and spat in their direction. I got up and took out my katana, limping wasn't gonna stop me. But as I tried to fight with a recent bullet wound, I was knocked down. But a group of the angels were knocked down by a blast of fire. I looked up to see Blaze in full suit and ready.

"Lesson number one, Ocean Girl." Blaze shouted, surrounded by an aura of fire. "Never go into a fight unless you make sure I'm there."

A bunch of other members were knocked down by mini tornados. Floating in the air was
Windglider. "Lesson 2; We stick together!"

The ground froze, and the leader was stuck with it. Skating and skidding to a stop was Dr. Frost. "Lesson 3, we share the same police radio."

I smiled, using my water as a board that helped me get up. I cried, "SIRENS, TOGETHER!" And we charged. Dr. Frost froze the Angels, Blaze trapped them in a literal firewall until she handcuffed all of them. Windglider made them dizzy by carrying them in a vortex and I used my water board to ram them and knock them out.

"I already informed the police." Blaze said. "Let's go."

When we were on a building looking at the scene, with our helmets off, I asked, "You guys helped me?"

"Well duh!" Helen said. "You've only been helping us forever!"

"Plus every team needs a leader." Kimi said.

"Yeah." Rose agreed. "We need you to guide us."

"Thanks for forgiving me." I said, pulling them close. "I know how hard it must have been for you, but we won't let the boys get between us. Friends forever?" I put my hand out which they applied with.

"Friends forever." They all repeated.


Zac's POV

I walked inside the open hallways of the island that apparently I owned. The kids were all sleeping. Turns out that when my dad founded this place, he gained possession of the entire island. It wasn't easy for him at first. Tracking down all these kids took a really long time. But as much as I wanted to stay there, I couldn't. I had to get back home. But first I need to find Dad. Suddenly, I felt a hand over my mouth.

"Hey." I heard a familiar deep voice sound. "Don't squirm."

I broke away to find my cousin and sister there. "You kidding me? How did you even get here?"

"Same way we're getting you out." Zoe said.

"We?" I asked.

"All clear!" Raiden whispered.

"Come on." Zoe grabbed my hand and led me through the hallway.

"Uh." I said. "Zoe, guys, there's something you need to know."

"Tell me on the way." Zoe said.

"Uh sis." I said cringing. "This isn't an on-the-way kind of news."

"Seriously?" Erik asked. I dragged my family to where Dad worked.
"Guys." I said. "Unlike most surprises I spring upon you, this is one you will like. You just need to handle it delicately." Raiden ran right ahead and peered in through the open door and nearly stumbled in shock.

"Uh…." Raiden said. "You might want to take this one." He was clearly in shock. Erik and Zoe stepped in to my father working at his desk, looking up and gasping in shock.

Dad got up and stood in front of his desk. "I know what you're gonna say, Zoe. How could I have done this? Stayed away all of these years and why didn't I try to find you? My own son and daughter? Well I didn't know you two were alive ok? My own wife, practically lied to me. For years I have been blaming myself for the fire all those years ago. I know that I left my nephew alone, but I thought he would be better off without me. Whatever you want to say, dish it out, I can take it."

Instead Zoe did the most ironic thing: She ran up to him and gave him a big hug. "I've missed you so much, Daddy." Dad, feeling tears well up in his eyes, gave his daughter a hug. He looked up to Erik who in turn, smiled.

"Hi Uncle Jacob." He said. Dad walked over to him and gave him a hug as well.

"You look so much like your father." Dad said.

"Oh and there's one more thing." Erik said, walking to Raiden. "This is my little brother, Raiden. He's 15."

Dad walked up to my cousin and instead of giving him a handshake, he started ruffling his hair, which caused Raiden to try and swat and laugh. And then Raiden hugged him. We all joined in our family hug. It was awesome to be with my family.


Persephone's POV

I walked down the hallway, invisible of course. I walked through the door and said, "I can't believe we're all together."

My boys looked at me in shock. "Mom?" Erik asked. "What are you doing here?"

"Making sure my boys are safe." I said walking to my niece and nephew.

"You're Aunt Persephone?" Zoe asked.

"I can't believe it." Zacharai said smiling.

I chuckled caressing his hair. "The feeling is mutual. Look at you two, has it really been that long?"

Zac smiled. "Dad, please come back to Australia."

"Your son is right." I said. "Look at all of us. We can be a family again."

Jacob sighed. "I want to. I really do. But the kids...I can't leave them."

"We'll find a way." Raiden said.

"We've been apart too long." Erik agreed.

"I need to think." Jacob said, walking down the hall.
Jacob’s POV

I walked down the hallway, thinking hard on this. I really wanted to go back, see my son and daughter and my nephews. But these kids, I worked too hard for them. Should I really abandon them for the idea of spending time with my family? I didn't know what to do. So turning south, I went to a mermaid who I knew I could ask anything. I knocked on her door.

"Sarah?" I asked.

"Jacob?" The Thai mermaid came out. "Thī dī kwā nī cadi." (This better be good.)

"Chăn òxngkār thī ca phūd khuy." (I need to talk.) I said in my native language.

"Mạn sāmārī thī cõnhūng chēă?" (Can it wait until morning?) She asked, irritated.

"Phm phb wā khrxbkhr̄aw khxng chăn filāngcāk thī thuk pī hēlā nī." (I found my family after all these years.) I said.

Sarah was instantly awakened. Sarah was an 18 year old orphan who treasured family. "Crīng«?" (Really?)

I chuckled. "Chı̀læa txn nī phwk kheā thī ca mā thung xxsterleīyyy kāb phwk kheā chăn òxngkār thī ca chăn òxngkār crīng«thē phm m j thēb wă." (Yeah and now they want me to come to Australia with them. I want to, I really want to but I don't know.)

"Cā khxb p̄hmca h̄yxud khuṇ xyū thī năn." (Jacob, I'm gonna stop you there.) Sarah said. "Khuṇ òxng reım khid keīyw kāb t̄aw xeng khuṇ dī răb kārnă sēnx thī mī xokās wā swn hūy khxng reā thī nī m j dī mī pēn xokās khxng khuṇ thī ca xyū kāb khrxbkhr̄aw khxng khuṇ lēa thă hák khuṇ khid wā chăn ca płxy fū khuṇ phăn kār khuṇ ca khēācī phid ŝēră." (You need to start thinking about yourself. You have been presented with an opportunity that most of us here don't have. This is your chance to be with your family and if you think I'm going to let you pass that up, you're sadly mistaken.)

"Tē dēk." (But the kids.) I said. "Phm mò òxngkār fū phwk kheā khid wă chăn dī thēng phwk kheā wį." (I don't want them to think that I've abandoned them.)

"Reā ca khid wā ŝīng thī." (We'll think of something.) Sarah said. "Khuṇ sāmārī thăngān phăn lēptīxp fū pēn xokās khxng khuṇ thī ca xyū kāb lūk «khxng khuṇ." (You can work via laptop. This is your chance to be with your children.)

I gave Sarah a hug. "Khxbkhuṇ. Chăn ca klāb mā." (Thank you. I'll be back.)

After she went back to bed, I walked to my office where they were. "Good news. I'm coming with all of you.

Line break…

When we were all ready and I had gotten all my stuff, Zoe offered to bring us back home in a snap. When I asked her what she meant, she showed us her apparent primary power of teleportation. I was beyond amazed at my little girl. We all joined hands and we vanished to Rita's house. I knew her well. But when me and Persephone looked around, the kids were gone.

"Where did they go?" I asked.
Persephone shrugged. "When I overheard their plans, they said something about making him pay for what he's done to their family."

It took me a minute to realize what they were talking about. "Great. They're going after Slade.

No one's POV

Four figures crept through the Ares Tribe's archives. They saw hundreds of pictures and tablets of inscriptions.

"What are we looking for again?" Zoe asked.

"We need to find this prophecy that Slade mentioned we were in." Erik said.

"Maybe he was just messing with you." Raiden said.

"He may have a point." Zac said. "Let's get out of here while we have the chance."

"Uh guys?" Zoe said. "Do you feel that?" They felt a gut pull and followed it to this glowing orb. Erik took it and examined it. Just as he was about to do something, it flew out of his hand into a Hindi merman.

"I know you." Raiden said. "You're Xhiva and Xandou's father."

"Please." He said. "Call me Agni. Sneaking around I see? You four display the amatuer pinach of a thief. But there is nothing you can hide from Slade."

"Why are you even doing this?" Erik asked. "You're theives, not killers."

"No boundaries." He said. "I took the job to work with Slade because he offered me to push anything beyond what science had ever seen. Beyond what any government allowed. Looking for a prophecy?"

"What prophecy?" Zac asked.

"You really don't know?" He asked. "I'm surprised you don't even know why you're connected with that chamber on Mako. Don't you even want to know why you four are so special? I mean honestly, did you think that the fire was an accident? Did you really think that the Consorzio Clan was attacked for no reason?"

The four looked shell shocked. They certainly hadn't been expecting Agni to play those cards.

"Get away from my kids." They all heard Jacob grown before Agni was punched back. Persephone trapped him and the guards in a frozen state with her moon ring, and they all grabbed onto Zoe who knew exactly what to do. They all teleported out of the Island and into the moon pool.

"Are you ok?" Jacob asked them. "Are you hurt?"

"Yeah, we're fine." They all chorused.

"Good." Jacob said before making the water rise in four pillars and slapping them in the face. "What the hell were your four thinking?! I told you Zac that we would find a way to deal with him."

"We're alive aren't we?" Raiden groaned.
"You're extremely lucky not to have even a scratch." Persephone said. "You four cannot do something that dangerous! Our lives are on the line as they are!"

"You think I don't know that?" Erik asked. "In the past 3 days, I've had my tail handed to me multiple times by the guy that tortured us me and Raiden as kids. If we could stop him then, we would have done so already."

"Erik's right." Zoe said. "Even with our new powers, we're still powerless against him!"

"What were you hoping to accomplish?" Persephone asked.

"No save it." Jacob said. "Zoe, until you earn back my trust, you're not allowed to teleport out of Australia without telling me first!"

Line break…

The family went to a motel for the night that had four beds in one room. Zac and Zoe of course fought over who got the bed next to the window but Erik stopped them and they all got ready for bed with the nightclothes they had brought. They turned off the lights and lit a candle in the center of the floor and sat in circle.

"It's been a crazy day." Zac said, the others agreeing.

"But at least we're together." Zoe said.

"Raiden." Zac said. "You've earned my trust. You can date Thalie, but I'm warning you…"

"Yeah yeah." Raiden brushed it off. "You'll rip me limb from limb."

"That's right." Zac said.

"Guys I have a confession to make." Erik said. "All my life, I wanted to become my dad, but at the same time I was afraid I would. Mostly because I thought I never could be. How do you become someone that great, brave, selfless? I guess you can only try. So I'm out of the tribe. I won't be following their orders anymore, because a king protects his own."

"I'm proud of you man." Zac said.

"I never thought I'd have more men in my family than women." Zoe admitted.

"Is that gonna be a problem?" Raiden asked.

"No." Zoe said. "It's awesome. Me and Zac have been surrounded by too many women."

"You can say that again." Zac said, high fiving his sister.

Erik was chosen to blow out the candle because he was the eldest and he was picked as the leader. He did so and the lights turned back on.

"Well." Jacob said to them when they were in the bed. "Look at you guys, all ready for bed. Looks like Erik is a good influence."

"Thanks Uncle J." Erik said.

"Dad?" Zoe asked. "There's one question I have to ask you. Who was born first?" Zac immediately sat up in anticipation.
Jacob smiled. "The person who was born first….is Zoe."

Zac's face turned to pure horror while Zoe did a victory dance. "Yes! I'm the big sister, you're the little brother."

"Please tell me you're joking." Zac said to his father.

"Nope." Jacob said, enjoying the scene.

"Welcome to the world of little brothers." Raiden said. "Once you enter, you can never leave."

"You're never gonna let him live this down are you?" Erik asked.

"Never!" Zoe exclaimed high fiving her cousin.

"Now everybody get to bed." They all heard Persephone. "I've been waiting to say that for a long time. Believe me, I've got years of smothering mothering to catch up on."

Erik and Raiden's jaws dropped in shock. "But mom!" They chorused. "I'm 15/18!"

"Doesn't excuse it young man." Persephone said. "Both of you."

Zac turned to the bed next to him and whispered, "Looks like I'm not the only one who's going to suffer."

Raiden, pink all over his face muttered, "Shut up."

"Goodnight kids." Jacob said.

"Good night." The quartet chorused except for Raiden.

"Raiden?" Persephone asked.

"I'm not tired!" He exclaimed.

"Sorry, but we've got school tomorrow." Zac groaned, flicking the light off.

"Not tired." Raiden said, flicking the switch off.

"Raiden come on." Erik said seriously. "It's time for bed."


"That's it!" Erik exclaimed. Raiden in impulsive reaction, accidentally gave Erik and electric wedgie.

"Oh boy. I suddenly got really tired." Raiden said to a fuming Erik who had singed shorts. "Goodnight!"

You can tell who said this.

"RAAAAAAIIIIIIIIIDEEEEEEEEEEEEENNNNNNN!"
It was a new day, a day for the newly reunited family. It was Monday, so school was not an option to miss out. Erik and Raiden were in the bathroom, while Zac was getting dressed. Zoe was with the adults, getting breakfast at the motel cafe. They wanted to surprise their friends at the cafe, after they were ready.

Raiden was taking a bath while Erik was shaving his face. Erik was thinking not of how he was gonna make up the schoolwork he missed out on, but how Ondina was going to react to seeing her friend as his cousin.

"Hey." Raiden's voice snapped him out before speaking in Italian. "Non guardare adesso, ma il dessert è esploso in faccia ed è mattina." (Don't look now but dessert exploded in your face, and it's morning.)

The elder of the family, save for the parents, only chuckled at his baby brother's antics. "Si chiama crema da barba, imbecille." (It's called shaving cream, nitwit.)

"Bella." Raiden muttered sarcastically, rubbing his blue fin with soap.

"Uno di questi giorni, si sta andando bisogno." (One of these days, you're gonna need it.) Erik warned, wiping his face. He couldn't use water...for obvious reasons.

"Nah." Raiden said. "Non sto crescendo del viso in qualsiasi momento capelli presto." (I'm not growing facial hair for a long time.)

Erik got an idea and smile one of his devil smiles. "Veramente? Che dire di quel piccolo ciuffo di peli sul naso?" (Really? What about that little patch on your nose?)

Raiden froze for a moment before screaming, "CHE COSA?! QUANDO? QUANDO?!" (WHAT?! WHERE? WHERE?) When he realized that he was duped, he looked at Erik with horror as Erik was rolling on the floor howling with laughter. "Erik Consorzio, quando esco dalla mia coda, si sta andando ottenere il wedgie elettrico della vostra vita!" (Erik Consorzio, when I get out of my tail, you're gonna get the electric wedgie of your life!)

Erik finished laughing, wiping away mock tears. "Buona fortuna essiccazione te stesso, perché mio fratello, ha solo poteri di fulmine, non il potere di ebollizione del liquido. O in questo modo, controllare qualsiasi liquido." (Good luck drying yourself, because you my brother, only have lightning powers, not the power to boil liquid. Or in that manner, control any liquid.)

Raiden growled in embarrassment, ducking his head underneath the water. One of the downsides of being an Omega, was that when you had an element, that was the only power you had. So when it came to drying his tail in accidents, all he could do was wait or have a towel. No lev

But still, he felt good being in the water. He never really complained about having legs, but it still felt awkward when being in a tail was a lot more natural.

Meanwhile Zac had finished putting on his clothes and was about to get ready when Zoe went in wearing her usual goth clothes.

"Back from brekkie?" Zac asked his sister.
"No." Zoe said to her twin brother. "I just forgot something, little brother." She smiled smugly at the last part.

Zac groaned. "Really? You're still gonna rub that part in my face?"

"Oh I've got years of doing it to catch up on." Zoe said.

Zac's eyes wandered to something that apparently belonged to him. "Zoe, is that my watch?"

"Nope." Zoe said. But Zac who could read her mind, focused on her mind. I only had to borrow it. He heard her thoughts. He used his powers to unclasp the watch and levitate it.

"Uh, it's got my initial on it." He pointed out to the black watch.

"Both of your names initialize as ZK guys." Persephone said, leaning against the door. "Zoe, your father's getting worried."

"Wait Aunt Persephone." Zac noticed a certain device in his sister's pocket as he levitated it out. "Is this my phone?"

"Yeah." Zoe blushed. "That one I was gonna give back."

"And do I see my towel which I brought from home?" Zac asked, looking at her bed.

"No that's mine." Zoe said, magically attracting the towel into her hands.

"Nice try." Zac used his powers to pull it back but it turned into a telekinetic tug of war.

"Give it back!" Zoe exclaimed.

"Really?" Zoe asked, using every ounce of power in her pull, her eyes glowing blue for a second.

"Zoe!" Zac exclaimed, his eyes also glowing blue. "You really need to do this? This is my stuff! You could at least ask!"

"Finally some entertainment." Raiden muttered to Erik. Raiden had finally gotten dry and was dressed for school. "Tu ne vas pas essayer de les arrêter?" (You're not gonna try to stop them?)

Erik who had heard his message, whispered back in French, "Je ne vais pas obtenir à leur manière. D'ailleurs, vous aviez raison. C'est un peu divertissant." (I'm not gonna get in their way. Besides, you were right. This is kind of entertaining.)

When Persephone was raising her hand to stop the scene but Jacob who had arrived at the scene, lowered her hand and shook his head.

"Are you kidding me?" She asked her brother-in-law. "These are our kids!"

"Persephone." Jacob whispered. "Trust me, this is how they learn. You let them fight until they get tired of it." Jacob's sister-in-law gave him a death glare with her one eye before he raised his hands in surrender. "What? It worked back in Thailand."

"Yes, but these are our children and my niece and nephew." Persephone argued giving him the infamous Motherly Death Stare.

"Fine." Jacob said stepping to the fighting twins and using his powers to attract the towel. "Guys! Knock it off!"
The twins quickly apologized before they all went to the cafe.

At the Ocean cafe…

All the teens were gathered at the Ocean Cafe, eating away silently. They all had came from a weekend of searching for Zac and Erik. Evie was most upset and was a little mad that Zac's relatives had chosen to go after them. She was getting worried that they had not come back and if they were not back today, the school district was going to have to call a search party. Trying to get her mind off it, she went to the shop and sorted some paper.

"Evie." Zac's voice said from behind her. Evie turned around and gasped at the sight of her boyfriend.

"Zac." She breathed before Zac gave her a quick peck on the cheek and hugged her which she returned.

"Evie?" Cam asked. "Zac mate is that you?"

"Hey Cam." Zac gave Cam a quick hug. "Oh there you guys are." He gestured to the Consorizo brothers and Zoe who was wearing black lipstick to go with her goth attire.

"You're all back." Cam said. "And not killing each other."

"Well Evie." Zoe said, wrapping her arm around Erik's. "Times have changed."

"And I'm still the oldest." Erik bragged.

"Just because you're 18." Zac complained. "Doesn't mean you get to rub it in our faces."

"Yes it does." He said.

"Oh guys." Raiden piped up. "After we reconnect with everyone, we're gonna go to school. But remember." We all leaned in while he was whispering. "No one can know about us being related.

After the group split up Erik grabbed Cam and whispered in his ear, "Don't think this changes the fact that you're gonna get it for losing my brother."

Cam gulped. "You're not still mad about that are ya?" He nervously laughed until Erik narrowed his threatening blue/green eyes. "Yeah."

Erik quickly changed his mood and smiled. 'See you at school."

Raiden stepped outside where he met the girls. Specifically, his girlfriend. Smirking a devil smile that he and Erik shared, he crept behind her.

When she noticed Rose, Helen, Xhiva, and Diablo smiling, Thalie asked, "What?"

"Buongiorno, mia perla." Raiden's sultry voice whispered in her ear, before giving her a small kiss on her cheek.

Thalie turned around and gasped at her smiling boyfriend. "Raiden!" She threw herself on him and he hugged her like she was the last girl on earth.

"Raiden!" The rest of the guys hugged him.
"We heard what happened!" Kimi exclaimed.

"We're just glad you made it out of Slade's place in one piece!" Helen exclaimed.

"Wait." Xhiva said. "Did you make it out of there in one piece?"

"Of course he did." Erik's voice said. "Because we all did." The teens all hugged each other.

"We were scared to death mi amigo!" Diablo exclaimed.

"We were trying to find you!" Rose agreed.

"Well we're all ok." Zac said chuckling.

"What was Slade's den like?" Rose asked, silencing everyone.

"Cold." Erik responded. "Let's get to school." Without another word, the teens all left to go to Suncoast High.

In the secret Sanctum...

Persephone's POV

I swam in the ocean to the underwater entrance of one of the bases for the Order of Prometheus. It had been a long time and frankly I didn't even know if my sons or my nephew or niece were ready to hear about the order and the travels we did all over the world.

Reaching the surface, I pulled myself out and used my powers to dry myself. When I took a good look around, it looked different, and much more modern. Someone else was using this. But I still knew what house was over this. Rita's house. I walked up the stairs to the catwalk. I smiled sadly, remembering the times me and Nerissa used to spend our sister moments in structures like these, some of them back in Cuba. I looked at the scene down and I took a peek at the lab. I remembered, Nerissa and Esmeralda used to argue about the difference between cooking and magical chemistry. I walked down the stairs to the dojo where I experienced quite a flashback.

Flashback…

23 years ago…

Teens Phoebus, Caesar, and Persephone, were all sparring in a similar base that they built in Portugal. Persephone was wielding a dagger, Caesar was using two while Phoebus was using a sword, though he used mostly a gun as his weapon. The battle was ferocious. But Persephone, despite being a pacifist, knocked Phoebus to the ground with a swipe of her dagger. But she didn't notice Caesar coming in to strike her but she turned around and still sparred with him. Noticing her legs were criss crossed, the Italian merman smirked and right-kicked her back, tripping her over.

"Looks like I win again for you two." He said.

"You kidding?" Phoebus asked. "It's hot here! And Europe is almost never hot!"

"Then let's cool you off!" An Australian voice sounded, and out of nowhere, water fell on them, each sprouting their tails, while the knives were moved by an invisible force as Caesar fell on his face. Phoebus moved his hand and uncloaked a smiling Jacob Khatha holding out his hand next to a bucket of water.
"Jacob!" Caesar yelled. "Are you kidding me?"

Jacob was just standing there, howling with laughter. Turning visible was Esmeralda who snapped a photo.

"Nerissa and Xiaohui are gonna love this!" Esme exclaimed running out of the room with Jacob.

"When I get out of this, you're gonna get it!" Caesar yelled, then rolling his eyes at their antics.

"I'm still not sure that Nerissa is gonna love that Jacob is dating Esme." Persephone groaned, using her powers to dry her copper tail.

"Oh please." Phoebus said, also drying his tail. "We both know that they're breaking up anyway."

"And besides." Caesar said, getting up. "We all know that Esme is dating your best friend just to make you jealous right?"

"Yeah." Phoebus Marino said before realizing what he heard. "Wait what?"

The other merteens groaned and facepalmed at the Greek nerd.

End of Flashback

Persephone sighed, reflecting on the good times of the Order. Shaking her head to get out of her thoughts, she went up the elevator, in which there used to be a secret stairway to meet an old friend of hers.


At School…

Xandou's POV

I had to admit. Erik and Zac being back was good news not for my dad, but for me. Don't get me wrong, I like being around the guys. They're more than my posse, they're kind of my family. But that unfortunately is something that my dad apparently doesn't get. But still we all have our roles to play.


Xhiva's POV

I walked down the halls, smiling proud with my girlfriend around my arm. Kimi was a girl that was truly one of a kind. We were both going to LA class. And then, I remembered my father and how he reacted about my choice.

"Xhiva?" I heard the sweet voice of Yukimi. "What's wrong?"

I smiled but Kimi knew that something was wrong. "It's just… I'm just remembering my father."

"Didn't he just give you a pep talk?" Kimi asked. "Xhiva, what did he do?" She walked up to my face and gave a peck on my lips. "Talk to me."

"The night…that we found out who Raiden's cousins are… he disowned me."

Flashback…
2 weeks ago...

Agni Tiraken and Xandou sat in front of Xhiva in the penthouse of the Q1 building. It was one of the perks of being a wealthy family.

Agni looked pissed because he had recieved word that Xhiva had left the mission for a girl. No one admitted it, but Xhiva looked more like his father than Xandou did. They had the same skin, the same hair, and the same cheekbones.

"yah ek chaal hona chaahie." (This must be a ploy.) Xandou spoke in his father's tongue, Hindi.

"aisa nahin hai." (It isn't.) Xhiva said. "vipareet aap xandou , main kuchh choorpairatai lapdog nahin hoon." (Unlike you Xandou, I'm not some cooperate lapdog.)

"Xhiva." Agni's steel voice spoke. "jab aap 5 saal ke the , main tumhen do aur ek sangrahaalay ke lie apanee bahan ko le liya. yah ek robotiks sangrahaalay tha. apanee bahan aur bhaee ke poore daure ke maadhyam se ise banaaya hai , lekin aap meree bahan mein so rahe, jyadaatar kyonki tumhen pata tha ki kya ho raha tha , kyonki aap apane saal kee umr mein ek bahut vikasit kee thee. main aasha vyakt kee dilachasp kuchh bhee nahin hone kee vajah se main aap ko jaagrt karane ke lie nahin jaana chaahate hai . koee phark nahin tha . aap so meree baahon mein poore samay ruke the." (When you were 5 years old, I took you two and your sister to a museum. It was a robotics museum. Your sister and brother made it through the whole tour, but you stayed asleep in my arms, mostly because you knew what was going on because you had developed a lot at your age. I hoped nothing interesting would happen because I didn't want you to wake up. Didn't matter. You stayed asleep in my arms the whole time.)

"Father." Xhiva said. "maan aap ke lie apnee doston ke lie chhod diya. jab aapako ehasaas hoga ki main aapako yakeen nahin hai , bhale hee ham ek hee tvacha ka hissa hai. isalie mujhe khed hai ki main ek vaastavik dil aur bhaavanaaon ko nahin hoon, lekin mujhe khed hai ki main nikala aisee niraasha ho raha hoon!" (Mom left her friends for you. When will you realize that I'm not you, even though we share the same skin. So I'm not sorry I have an actual heart and feelings, BUT I'M SORRY I TURNED OUT TO BE SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT!)

Agni stayed still, even after Xhiva's outburst and Xhiva was beginning to shed tears. "xandou , aap kuchh bhee is baare mein ... jhataka kahana hai?" (Xandou, do you have anything to say about this...setback?)

"usase poochh pareshaan mat karo." (Don't bother asking him.) Xhiva said getting up. "agar vah kuchh karana chaahata tha , vah jab vah pata chala ki main naukaree chhodane gaya tha hoga." (If he wanted to do something, he would have when he found out I was leaving the job.)

Xandou tried to look surprised, but the merman king of thieves saw through his son. "aap jaanate the? (You knew?)

Xandou tried to make an excuse in front of his father. "main nahin. unhonne kaha ki mujhe kuchh nahin bataaya." (I...no. He didn't tell me anything.)

"lekin tum jaanate the." (But you knew.) Xhiva said, pushing back tears. "aur main aap kee jaroorat hai. main apane bhaee kee jaroorat! aur tum itana dar rahe the! agar vah pata chala ki vah kya karana hoga kee aap sirph yah andar dhakel diya hai, jaise ham apane parivaar mein har bhaavana se karate hain. aap isake baare mein baat nahn karate hain, to yah maajood nahin hai." (And I needed you. I needed my brother! And you were so scared! Of what he would do if he found out you just pushed it inside, like we do every feeling in our family. If you don't talk about it, it doesn't exist.)
A furious Agni Tiraken got up and yelled, "ab hamen is par baaree nahin hai! aap apamaan yahaan hain!" (Now do not turn this on us! You are the disgrace here!)

"tumhaare aankhon mein main ek apamaan ho sakta hai, lekin main bhee apane bete hoon. jo mere jeevan mein ek baar ke lie tumhen pyaar karata hai aur mujhe pata hai ki yah aap ke lie vaastav mein niraasha hona chaahie, lekin main sirph apane pita kee jaroorat hai mere pitaajee ho .... " (In your eyes I may be a disgrace, but I'm also your son. Who loves you and I know this must be really frustrating for you, but I just need my father to be my dad... for once in my life.)

Agni looked at Xhiva, who looked at him desperately. No matter what Agni put him through, even forcing him to go to college when he wasn't even a teenager, putting him through all that training, even for Erik and Raiden, he still loved him because he was still his father.

"Krpaya." (Please.) Xhiva pleaded.

Agni Tiraken didn't even need to use his powers to hurt his child in the worst possible way. "You've thrown in your lot with them. You're not a real merman. You're not my son."

Xhiva stumbled back, falling on the floor for a bit. Without a last glance, Tiraken Senior left the room, leaving a stunned Xhiva.

Xandou glanced at him a look of guilt and regret before his father called him. Xhiva slowly walked out of the building, mind numb from the knife pain he was going through.

End of Flashback…

Xhiva blinked a few tears as Kimi looked at him in horror. "Xhiva."

"I'm ok." He said. "It's just…"

"Don't say anything." Kimi said. "If your brother or parents can't see what the amazing and adorable guy that you are...screw them!"

Xhiva smiled, grateful for his girlfriend.

Persephone's POV

I toured around the pristine and modern house. I had gone on land a few times so I wasn't falling down every 2 minutes. I glanced around, dearly missing the good times me and my friends had when we were in our teens. I was looking at a photo that said, "Teacher of the Year." Rita had always wanted to be a teacher. I was going to be a healer before Caesar proposed to me. I flopped down the sofa, and looked at a photo that consisted of Harry, Rita and baby Thalassa.

Jacob's POV

I walked through the streets of the Gold Coast City. I couldn't drop my kids off at school, otherwise things would have gotten suspicious. The last time I was there, it was a few years ago. Some things have changed, and some haven't. I noticed a nice restaurant so I figured it was time for lunch. I walked inside, got a table and a waitress came over. She was a tall woman with a deep tan, messy curly hair and blazing emerald green eyes. But there was no mistaking this woman.
"Would you like to drink anything?" Esmeralda asked.

"Oh nothing much." I said. "Just a water with a touch of a tearful reunion Esme."

Esmeralda dropped her pen in shock and looked at me. She took a few moments before realizing that it was me. "J-J-Jay-Jake?"

"I'm back." I said singsongy.

She didn't smile at all. In fact, she grabbed his ear and led him to the back door and went outside into the crisp Australian air.

"Hi?" He asked nervously.

Esmeralda's eyes were glowing with a fire. "You...complete..." She struck him on the face with a menu. "ASSHOLE JACOB! You show up here after nearly a decade! And all you say is 'hi'?"

Jacob's face darkened. "This is what I get as a welcome back? A slap in the face?"

"No." Esmeralda said. "You died Jake. You disappeared off the face of the earth, just like your wife, Nerissa did."

"What are you saying Esmeralda?" Jake asked. "That I turned my back on you guys?"

"No." Esmeralda said. "Unlike Xiaohui..."

"Hey leave her out of this!" Jake exclaimed. "She was the one who turned on us remember? Even after we saved her life?"

"That's not the point." said Esmeralda. "We looked for you, we were there for you when you got the news, and just like your son, you locked yourself away, and shut everyone out to the point of leaving us without even a goodbye! You didn't even know that your sister-in-law was pregnant with your brother-in-law's son!"

"You didn't know that your godchildren were alive this whole time either." Jake said. "None of us knew. I needed some time away, needed to figure out who I was."

The gypsy scoffed coldly. "Is that what you tell yourself to sleep at night?" She left without saying a word back into the restaurant, leaving the merman out in the open.

Evie's POV

I strolled from class to class with my school supplies in hand. Zac was by me, arms linked with mine. When Erik walked by, Zac gave him a curt nod, which he returned.

"So..." I trailed off. "You two are cool...about everything?"

"Well if by cool, you mean still getting used to each other's existence." My boyfriend said. "Then yeah."

"Well obviously you guys are still unsure of each other." I said. "Maybe you guys should have a get together."

"A get together?" Zac asked. "Like hanging out?"
"Not just hanging out." I suggested. "Since you fishboys love competition, you should have a chance to...settle the score."

"You mean we should race to Mako?" Zac asked.

"No." I said "That's kind of overdone. I was thinking of something more...manly. Like a rugby game."

"You want us to play soccer?" Zac asked.

"Well not just you and Erik of course." I said. "The other boys could join us."

"Hmm." Zac muttered. "I'll think on it." Just then, the bell rang. "Come on, we're late."

Phoebus' POV

"I'd like to ask you a review class." I said to my 8th grade math class. "In algebraic terms, what is the Pythagorean Theorem?"

The class looked a little slumped until 3 of the children raised their hands. Ann Charlotte, Rebecca, and Kevin.

I took a minute deciding which to pick. "Ann Charlotte."

"A squared plus B squared equals C squared, while C is the…"

"Hypotenuse." I said chuckling. "It's ok."

Just then, the bell rang, which got the kids jumping up and running out of the class for lunch.

"Don't forget guys." I said. "That review packet is due Wednesday, and that there's a quiz Friday."

I sorted my papers and the homework that some of the kids handed in. I then erased the boards when I got a call from my wife.

"Esmeralda?" I answered.

"Phoebus." She said breathlessly, like she had survived an accident. "I...need to tell you something."

"Esmeralda, eïsai entáxei? Ti synévi?" (Esmeralda, are you ok? What happened?) I asked, in Greek.

"Efnai ... Jacob." (It's...Jacob.)

I stopped in moment before continuing my pace. "Ti gínetai me aftón?"

"Epéstrepse." (He's...back.) She said shakily.

I dropped my phone in shock. But I quickly picked it up, thankful that it didn't break. "Pos xéreis?" (How do you know?)

"Plírose mia epískepsi mou sto estiátório." (He paid a visit to me at the restaurant.) Esme said.

"Kai eseís den ton tromáxei, í rápisma ton kánate?" (And you didn't scare him off, or slap him did you?) I asked fearfully. When she gave a nervous chuckle, I facepalmed. "Gynafka, échete na párete ton élenco tis psychraimía sas." (Woman, you have got to get control of your temper.)
My wife scoffed. "Eísai o énas na milísei merikés forés." (You're the one to talk sometimes.)

"Me synchoreíte?" (Excuse me?) I asked carefully.

"Den eínai aftó to théma." (That's not the point.) She said. "Jacob énai edó kai étsi eínai pithanós i Persefóni. Ennoó kánname ptósi tis makríá me tous gious tis, metá apó mikrí parákampsi mas." (Jacob is here and so is probably Persephone. I mean we did drop her off with her sons after our little detour.)

"Pistévete óti tha páei sto Ríta sto gymnásio?" (Do you think they'll go to Rita at the high school?) I asked.

"Jacob énai éna meathead, kai sí Moura, energeí chorís sképsi, ópos i dikí paidía tou. Den tha kánei aftó to éidos tis láthos. Persefóni, den tha xéroun poú na archísei na psáchnei kai xérei óti an emfanísete xafniká Erik kai Raiden tis mitéras, ópou kai an tha gnorízoun káti gia." (Jacob is a meathead, and sure, he acts without thinking, like his own kids. He wouldn't make that kind of mistake. Persephone, she wouldn't know where to start looking and she knows that if Erik and Raiden's mother suddenly appears, they're gonna know something's up.) Esme said.

"As kratísei móno ta mátia kai ta aftíá mas anoichtá." (Let's just keep our eyes and ears open.) I said, picking up my jacket. I had a lot on my mind to think about while I was enjoying my cod sandwich.

Lunchtime came around and all the students were chatting and eating away.

The members of the secret Sirens Creed all sat at the same table as Zac, Evie and the Blade Boys that had reformed. Xandou was invited to sit with them, but he politely declined.

"I still don't understand what the purpose of this...night out is supposed to bring." Zac said.

"Well it's a good way for you guys to get to know each other better." Evie said.

"Like I don't spend enough time with the dweeb as it is?" Raiden groaned.

"I'm sure they'll say the same thing about you." Xhiva sarcastically said.

"Hey guys." Erik said from behind them. "Mind if I sit here?"

"Be my guest." Diablo offered, and Erik sat down smiling.

"What's up?" He asked.

"My girlfriend thinks that we should get together tonight and have some sort of big rugby match.

"Really?" Erik asked interested.

"Yes." Thalie said. "And I for one think that it's a great idea. We've been too focused on our problematic differences and we haven't been astute enough for what we all have in common interest."

"Yeah pretty much what she said." Diablo said, prompting an eye roll from Evie.

"Hey Zac." Rose said. "Now that you're here, I think it's high time you have a nickname."
"Absolutely." Helen agreed.

"Damn you're right." Zac said. "Alright it's gotta be something that matches me, something that really sings...something like...."

"I got it!" Diablo said. "Vibe."

"Vibe." Kimi said. "Preemptive, courageous, simple, and yet fits. I like it."

"I like it too." Zac agreed. "But why Vibe?"

"Well I think it makes you even more cute." Evie said.

"Get a room you two." Raiden said.

"You're the one to talk." Erik backed.

"But on this soccer night." Diablo said. "Let's do things the voting way. All in favor for this night?" Pretty much everyone but the Sirens Creed raised their hands. "Alright."

"Can I come?" Evie asked. "And Mimmi? I showed her how to play soccer and she's got quite a kick, like a dancer."

"Sure." Zac said. "Of course, every team needs a girl." Evie and the rest of the girls gave him a death stare. "Or two."

"Nice save." Raiden muttered.

"How come you four aren't coming?" Erik asked the four 15 year old mermaids.

"Well we're spending the night at Helen's and it's movie night." Thalie lied. Raiden gave her a wink, smiling and proud at her lying skills.

Jacob's POV

Invisible, I went inside the Suncoast High School. I was going to meet an old friend of mine. Rita of course. I had to unfortunately, take small breaks because staying invisible and all that concentration, made me tired as hell. But I encountered worse circumstances than that. I walked around school, hoping to check on my kids and nephews. But when I couldn't find them, I saw this red headed teenager who looked a lot like Rita, carrying some papers. She was a fair skinned teenager with dark red curly hair with some blue streaks and deep piercing blue eyes. It had to be her daughter, but I presumed she was dead because of the news that one of my enemies, Veridia killed her off. She looked in my direction as if she could sense me and I stiffened in fear but at the same time, I wanted to know who this girl was.

She then walked into this storage closet, after apparently using her powers to unlock it. But once I got in, she locked the door so I couldn't leave. She then raised her arm but I panicked and I manipulated the water to splash her as a distraction but she redirected it to hit me.

"Show yourself Kanhoji." She said in an American accent.

I was about to say something when I lost control of my invisibility. And my ability to stand. Before I could even explain a word, I fell down on my face, with my blue fish tail to show to her.
When I looked up, I saw the apparent half blood stare at me in shock. "Oh my God!" She exclaimed, making her way to dry my tail. "I'm sorry. I am so sorry!"

I chuckled. "It's ok. I used to have the same thing happen to me when I was younger than you."

"I'm still so sorry." She said, making steam rise from my tail.

"Oh let me do that for you." I said, using my powers to dry my tail, returning my legs and then she helped me stand up.

"Wait." She said. "Tall, Asian features, friendly, and a merman. You must be Zac's real father."

Jacob chuckled. "Pleasure to meet you." I shook hands with her and she smiled.

"I'm Thalie Santos." She said and I stopped to look at her in amazement.

"You're...you're that half-blood?" I asked.

"I think so." She said.

"How do you know Zac?" I asked. "Were you friends growing up?"

Thalie chuckled. "I assume he didn't tell you. When we were growing up...I was a part of Zac's foster family. In fact he kind of raised me the same as Erik raised Raiden. I'm Zac and Zoe's step-sister."

"Well I guess it makes you my step-daughter." I said, smiling at her.

"So what brings you by?" She asked. "This isn't exactly the right time and place to see your kids."

"I'm not here to see them." I said. "I'm here to see your mother."

"You know her?" She asked. "How?"

"I guess it's the same reason as how you know Tiraken Senior." I said. "Yes I know him too. Me and your mom know a lot of people."

"I was supposed to deliver some file to her anyway." She said. "Come on. Oh and you might want to 'dissapear'. Someone might get a clue."

"Good idea."

I followed her out of the room and with her, went inside a studious hallway. She looked at me, with me still being invisible, and nodded in understanding.

She opened the door and I followed her in. "Here's a construction order. There's a problem with the plumbing in the classroom. It's stuck."

"Sure thing." Rita said, smiling and taking the order. Rita looked a lot older and much more mature. "You better get back to class."

Just as she was about to leave, she turned around and said, "There's someone here who wants to meet you. I've got some good news and I've got some ish news."

Rita looked at her confused. "What would be good and ish?"
"The person who wants to meet you…” Thalie took a breath. "It's Zac's father."

"Oh." Rita said. "Ok. When is Dr. Blakley going to be here?"

"Well that's the thing," Thalie said. "It's not Rob that's coming."

"But you just said that Zac's father is coming." Rita said, still not getting the picture.

The teenage half mermaid winced. "That's actually the ish news. He's also Zoe's father." I turned visible and a stunned Rita's jaw dropped at the sight of me. "Ok. That's my cue to go back to class."

With that, she left me and the principal in the office alone.

Xandou's POV

My history class was having a test. I was halfway there when I stopped because I had received a vision of a soccer game with all the mermen using their powers. I felt unbelievable amounts of joy because it looked like so much fun. Despite his decision, I still loved him and I could feel that he still loved Father and me. Still, whatever what that thing was, I wasn't going to let Xhiva get the fun without me. So I peered to Xhiva who was sitting across from me and concentrated on communicating with him. It was sometimes hard to get to his head with all that nerness in his head.

Hēi. (Hey.) I projected my thoughts in Chinese.

Xandou nǐ zài zuò shénme? (What are you doing?) Xhiva thought back to me. Wǒmen zài cèshì de zhōngjīān. (We're in the middle of a test.)

Fàngsōng nǐ de shùdāizi. (Relax you nerd.) I thought, rolling my eyes. Hē qǐtā shìfùwù yǐyǎng, wǒ huì ràng zhège kuài. Tīngzhe, duì shuāngtāi yǒu chuánwén shuò, nǐ yǒu qǐtā rén yì jiāng bùdé bùzài xuéxiào, bù shèjì shuì zài zhēlǐ bǐsài. Zúqiú bǐsài ma?" (Like everything else, I'll make this quick. Listen, word on the Twin street is that you're going with the other mermen to have a competition here at school that doesn't involve water. A soccer game right?)

Xhiva froze before our gazes met, red/brown eyes, made my green. Nǐ shì cóng nǎlǐ tīng lái de? (Where did you hear that?)

I rolled my eyes. Xhiva, nǐ shì rúcǐ mǐjì de shǐhòu. Wǒmen shì rényǔ, wǒmen shì shuāngbāotāi. Wǒmen liánxi. Zhè yìwèizhe, wǒmen zhídào fāshēngle shènme shìqí hé wǒmen zài yǐqǐ. (Xhiva, you're so dense sometimes. We're mermen and we're twins. We're linked. Which means we know what's going on with us.)

Xiànzài nǐ xiǎng jīn wǎn lái jiārǔ wǒmen de hāngliè. (And now you want to come join us tonight.) Xhiva concluded.

Xhiva qǐng. Wǒ zhídào wǒ fānle yīxiē cuòwù, dàn wǒ háishì nǐ de xiōngdí, wǒ hái méiyǒu zhènzhēng yǒu hěn zhāng yìduān shìjiān de lèqù. (Xhiva please. I know I've made some mistakes but I'm still your brother and I haven't really had any fun in a long time.)

Xandou. Dāngrán, wǒ ràng nǐ lái de. Dàn xiànzài, wǎnchéng cèshì. (Xandou. Of course I'll let you come. But for now, finish your test.)

I smiled, going back to my paper. When we were done, the bell rang and we were outside when Xhiva pulled me and shoved me to the wall and his glowing red eyes looked right through my soul.
"I'm warning you. One mistake, one slip up that blows up the school or anybody in the matter, I will personally take care of you, twin brother or not. Got it?"

"Got it."

"Good." Xhiva left me and I went to my locker to get my things.

Rita's POV

"Jacob." I said before embracing him in a hug. "It's so good to see you."

"It's good to see you too." He said.

"What happened to you?" I asked noticing the red mark blossoming on his cheek.

"4 words." He said. "A pissed Esmeralda Marino."

I winced. "Oh if you think you got it bad? You should have seen Esme's wrath on poor Phoebus!"

"Phoebus?" He asked. "Is he here? Is his daughter here as well and what's going on?"

"Have a seat." I directed him to the seat in front of mine and we began to explain each other's stories.

No one's POV

The final bell rang, and everyone poured into the hallways. Xhiva went to his "foster home" which was the Marino house. The family, save for Ondina, had agreed to take him in after what happened with his father. It had taken some time for Ondina to get used to the fact that there was a thief living under the roof.

The teen merman took out the keys and opened the door.

"Ondina?" He called out.

"I'm in the kitchen." She called out. Xhiva walked to the kitchen, or what was left of it. Ondina was trying to open a bag of flour.

"Do my eyes deceive me or is Ondina Marino trying to cook?" I asked.

Ondina sarcastically laughed. "Very funny. I'm trying to make crab pancakes."

"Why?" I asked. "You never cook."

"That's because I'm trying to prove a point to Dad."

"What point would that be?" I asked, setting my schoolbag down. "That whenever you cook, things go on fire?" I gestured to the frying pan that had a grease fire.

"Christa!" Ondina screamed. Before she could make a move, I used my powers to put the fire out. "Hey no fair!"

"My day was fine thank you very much." I sarcastically said. "Oh and by the way, The Consorzios and the Khathas are back."
Ondina looked at me, dropping everything, literally. "Where did you see them?"

"They're actually on their way to Rita's place." I said.

"Oh thank you!" She said hugging me and then leaving.

"Don't forget to lock the door." I said sarcastically, telekinetically attracting my laptop. I opened it and set it to home setting. Relaxing my arms and stretching my hand, I used my cyberkinetic powers to hack into the cellular line and connect it with my laptop. I then used my other hand to will a message to the people going to the event tonight. The message was this: "Saturday afternoon, 3 pm, football stadium. Bring whatever food you want as long as it's not alcohol and sneakers." Pushing my mind, I willed the message to go to the other mermen's cell phones.

Being a technopath was pretty cool.

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Rita's POV

"So you've been in Thailand this whole time?" I asked Jacob who was walking with me home. "Figures."

Jacob chuckled. "Yeah and you've been a principal who didn't even know her own child was alive. Rita how can you live in the same city and not see your own daughter?"

"Well it's a pretty big city and I spent time away figuring out myself." I answered. "And then I came back here and ended up a teacher for marine biology and then ended up being a principal. I never saw Blair until she came to school. My sister told me she was alive."

"Seems like we're not the lucky ones." Jacob said to me.

"Lucky?" I asked.

"Lucky to see our kids take their first steps and first words." I said, before a tear rolled down my face. "And you and Nerissa, you never got to see your nephew and Thalassa be born."

"Well at least they aren't dead." He said.

"The same can be said for you." I said.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Jacob asked me.

"You were gone Jacob." I said. "No, you died. Zoe grew up without a father."

"Are you saying that I just abandoned my children?!" Jacob growled.

"No." I said. "That is not what I'm saying. I understand why you left, but you spent 15 years with no contact with the people who stood by you. You could have at least called us or sent a letter or an email."

"To what address?" Jacob challenged.

"We still had no idea where you were." I said, approaching the house and getting out the keys. "Let's go in."

We went inside and we saw in the living room, Ondina, my daughter, the brothers and twins with….
"Persephone?"

"It's good to see you Rita." She said, hugging me.

"Come here." Zac said, all getting in a group hug.

"Oh I can't believe we're all here!" I exclaimed in pure motherly joy.

"So you must be Mimmi's father." Ondina said shaking Jacob's hand. "And...Erik's uncle."

"After all these years we're together." Thalassa said. "Could this get any better?"

Just then, a knock could be heard at the door.

"I'll get it." Jacob offered, going down the stairs.

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Phoebus' POV

I waited anxiously at the doorstep at Rita's house I knew my wife was in there and let me tell you, an angry wife was not something that showed mercy. I already once couldn't feel my face for a week from Esmeralda's slap once.

My thoughts were cut off by the door opening. I smiled looking up expecting to see Rita. But instead I saw a tall half Asian man, with messy hair, brown eyes and a tan. He was very muscular and was wearing a tropical t shirt and khaki shorts, along with flip flops.

"Who are you?" I asked. "You're not Rita."

The man scoffed. "You really don't remember?"

"I spent about a decade with amnesia from head trauma and I spent that time gathering it all back. But I'm still a little fuzzy on faces." I laid down.

"Oh." The man's face fell. "I guess I should just introduce myself. My name is Jacob."

"Jacob?" I asked, getting a familiar feeling as memories rushed through my head. "As in...Kata? Matha?"

Jacob chuckled. "Khatha. It's Khatha."

"Is it really you?" I asked. "JACOB!"

"Phoebus!" We threw ourselves on each other.

"I took you for dead!" I exclaimed. "Look at you, you've aged a few days."

"Well look at you." Jake said. "What are you now, a teacher?"

"Oh it's so good to see you." I said.

"Elsker?" Esmeralda's voice sounded coming down. "Hi." She kissed him on the cheek. "Jake, I am so sorry that I acted like that back at the resturaunt.

"It's ok." Jake said. "To be honest, I kind of deserved that."
"Deserved what?" A slight Canadian accent sounded. Walking down the stairs was a woman with a fair tan, a blue summer dress, and with one eye showing a bright sapphire blue and the other covered by an eye patch. "Phoebus?"

"I'm sorry?" I asked. "Are you...Persephone?"

"Yes." She said hugging me.

"If only Caesar were here to see this." Jake said.

"He's always with us." Esme said, placing a hand over her heart.

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**Zoe's POV**

We all had dinner at Rita's house. When I was asked to get some towels because Erik had accidentally spilled some water on him, I demonstrated my teleportation ability and got the towels. When it was time to go, I got the best thing that could have ever been given.

"Hey." Raiden said to me. "Shadowjumper, see you later!"

"Bye Shadowjumper!" Zac called out.

"Shadowjumper?" I repeated, turning to Erik. "I-I'm Shadowjumper?"

He merely shrugged. "It's better than Bass Boy." He leaned in and whispered, "Congratulations Zoe, you're the first mermaid to ever recieve this honor."

I walked back to the motel with my dad holding me, feeling more proud than ever. I finally had gotten a nickname and I wasn't even trying.

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5 days later…

Saturday afternoon..

The school was still illuminated with sunlight, Saturday sunlight. The goals and tables were set for the big game that was to take place. Diablo stood there, proud as ever as the big competition was to take place. He did however miss the cannon plans he drew out for the Tiraken Twins to make. Evie scolded him and Xandou repeatedly, for trying to do something so dangerous. Suddenly, the people required to come, all came, each bearing gifts. Erik brought towels, Zac brought his prawns, Raiden brought his clams, Mimmi brought her pizza, since she had gotten an obsession over it, Diablo of course, brought his meat, Xhiva brought the utensils, Evie which she insisted on, brought the first aid kit, and Xandou brought sound speaker for music. Ondina didn't come because she was busy getting some cooking lessons from her mother after her parents found out about her cooking catastrophe.

The Sirens Creed couldn't make it because they were solving a homicide.

"Alright everybody!" Diablo exclaimed, standing on the table and grabbing the microphone, getting everyone's attention. "Welcome to the first ever Sea-down!" Everyone cheered. "Who's ready to get wild?!" Everyone cheered and screamed again. "I can't hear you!" Everyone cheered louder.

"Alright. Settle down." Everyone got quiet."Now, the way this works is that Bass Boy and Voltage
will select their teams. There's only one rule of that. It has to be 3 people so we can make it even. But once you get to your team, there is no changing, no going to the other team, no recount. Now, once we get on the field, there's a special privilege for us merpeople playing soccer: We get to use our powers! That got everyone cheering. "And it can be any power you want, but there is a limit, no psychic powers allowed, and I'm not talking about just the twins. There is a boundary line." He pointed to the spray painted orange lines. "So that no one can take the game outfield. Network will set up a timer for 30 minutes so we can take breaks and have some food and go to the bathroom and all that. There are four quarters, four breaks. If a team member cannot play, or if a team commits a foul, the whole team is off the game, which brings us to the final four. It may be a soccer game but there will only be one winner. And the winner...will get...epic braggin rights!" Everyone looked at each other in confusion. "Oh I'm sorry, did I mention this? A 100 dollar coupon to the Ocean Cafe along with a movie theater gift card that will last a whole 3 months!" Everyone got excited and started cheering. "Alright! Now, let's get to the team selection."

The air was intensified as the rest sat down while the Consorizio brothers faced each other. "Now." Diablo said, still speaking into the microphone. "The way this choosing shall be done is through the traditional merman way; creating a storm. Bass Boy, you're up first."

Erik scowled at the nickname he was stuck with, while the Khatha Twins and Evie sniggered at it. Erik focused his energy, raised his hand and clouds above darkened, and wind blew. Erik put it back to normal while the team clapped.

"kunt hatta, al'akh al'asghar." (You're up, little brother.) Erik said to his brother in Arabic. "la tafaja 'iidha kunt tahsul ealaa tafuq. kunt dayimaan 'afdal mimma kunt." (Don't be surprised if you get bested. I was always better than you.)

Erik scoffed. "la taeraf?" (Don't you know?) He leaned down and whispered in his brother's ear. "wld alththaniat, almarkaz alththani." (Second born, second place.)

Raiden ignored him but he was still determined to prove himself. He focused his energy and raised his hand. He felt the familiar rush of his elemental power flow through him and bursting out of his arm, was a giant lightning bolt that attracted more dark clouds than what Erik did.

"Raiden is the winner!" Diablo exclaimed.

Raiden winked at Erik who in turn, stuck his tongue out at him. "Alright peoples listen up. When I call out your name, cross over the line to the rogue team. Wolfboy, Speed Demon, and Vibe."

Diablo stayed with the mic while the other two went up.

"Oh well." Erik said. "I guess I get Evie, Shadowjumper, and Network." The teams all met, and discussed their plans. Then they declared break and they all faced each other on the opposite sides of fields.

On Erik's team, Zoe and Evie were the offense, Erik was the defense, while Xhiva was the goalie.

On Raiden's team, Speed Demon and Raiden were the offense, Diablo was the defense, while Zac was the goalie.

The silence was deafening, until the girls and the boys charged at each other.
Esme's POV

We were in the grotto discussing the matter of the hand. It was the ancient prophecy.

"We have to tell the kids." I said. "It's the only way they will be prepared."

"We can't." Phoebus said. "Do you remember what happened with Zac?"

"I can't believe that you guys can't muster up the courage to tell the last descendants of the Bauman family something like that."

"It's not that simple Jacob." Rita said. "This isn't their destiny, this is probably their death sentence specially for Zoe!"

"I just got my sons back." Persephone said. "I'm not gonna lose them again."

"If you're not gonna tell them, I will." Jacob declared.

"You can't!" Rita exclaimed. "They're just not ready! We need to help them!"

"Just like we helped you." Phoebus muttered. "Remember we stopped you from having Veridia's blood on your hands?"

Rita stiffened. "No. Don't you ever bring my husband's sacrifice into this!"

"She's right." Jacob said. "We can't focus on that."

"Guys this isn't a small piece of news." Persephone said, worried.

"I know." Said Phoebus.

"No this is.. You're talking about the fight of our lives."

"We faced those people before." Rita said.

"Not like this." Persephone said. "I am so sorry, but this is crossing a line, these are our children!"

"Persephone," Esmeralda said. "You need to wake up and smell the menopause. Our kids are not really kids anymore. Erik is 18, an adult. The rest are 17, becoming adults."

"And what of Raiden?" Persephone challenged.

"Seph." Phoebus said. "You locked him away because you were scared. Scared that you would lose the last thing of Nerissa. But he's not Nerissa even though he's her nephew."

"Then it's settled." Jacob said. "We're telling them on the next full moon."

Suncoast High Field

No One's Pov

The game was intense with the second quarter coming in. It felt like the Trojan War but with magic. And no one would stop until the time was called. No injuries or fouls were made so far.

Evie kicked the ball to Zoe who teleported but was matched with Xandou's superspeed. Raiden was
blown away with Evie redirecting his lightning. Zac used his force fields to block out the ball but there were several times when goals were made in his own. The score was 21-15.

Soon, the quarter ended, and everyone went to the tables to get out the food.

The team discussed and conversed happily. Zac, Erik, Raiden, and Zoe, finally felt like a family. Xhiva and Xandou felt like brothers again. Diablo just felt like having fun while Evie felt like she had many friends to gain.

"What about you Diablo?" Evie asked. "What do you like?"

"I like animals." He answered.

"Well duh." Xandou said, in a mouthful of food.

"Don't talk with your mouth full." Evie scolded like a mother.

"You're already descended of werewolves." Erik pointed out.

"Man." Diablo said. "It's criminal the way that they keep them locked in cages."

"No Diablo." Raiden said. "What you did was criminal."

"Tell em Wolfboy." Xhiva said. "They wanted a thousand bucks for just one puppy."

"What?" Zoe asked.

"Yeah." said the Latino merboy. "I would have made it out, if my pocket didn't start barking."

Everybody laughed at this while continuing to talk.

In a matter of minutes, break time was over and everyone was back in position on the field. The game continued intensely, as each of the merpeople used their own magical abilities to the test.

"Here I go." Zoe said, teleporting to the goal only to get smacked back by a force field created by her brother.

"Oh I'm sorry sis!" Zac boasted. "Didn't see you there...oh wait, I did!"

Zoe scowled, getting up and fighting in the game.

"Come on!" Raiden said, kicking the ball. "Over here!"

Evie laughed at his attempts to kick the ball, but it turned out that he was terrible at soccer, even though he was a fast runner. Raiden tried to kick it to Xandou but Erik kicked it away from his brother to Xhiva who used his powers to push it back.

"You call that defense?" Raiden asked.

"Come on guys!" Xandou exclaimed once they were in starting position. "Give me something to hit!"

"Alright Xan." Evie said. "This is my heater kick. I dare you to hit it!"

"You'll be sorry." Xandou muttered.

"Oh you want the heater?" Evie asked. "I'll give it to you." Evie stepped back and kicked the ball
super hard and Xandou caught it and passed it to Raiden who lost the ball to Zoe kicking it. Diablo transformed into an ostrich and kicked the ball but it ended up going out of the field and crashing into the window of an abandoned auditorium that was not far from where they were.

"Oh man!" They all groaned except for Zoe."

"Uh whoops?" Diablo said, turning back into human form.

"You're dead Nagual!" Xandou exclaimed.

"Diablo you bonehead!" Zac exclaimed. "Now we can't play no more!"

"Great you idiot!" Xhiva yelled, throwing one of his sneakers at him.

Everyone sort of surrounded Diablo as he slowly ran avoiding everybody's hits.

"Stupid idiot!" Erik exclaimed, hitting him with his shoe.

"I'm gonna kill ya!" Raiden exclaimed, shocking him.

"Guys cut it out!" Evie exclaimed. "And they're right Diablo, what were you doing?"

Zoe, not seeing the problem, suggested happily, "What's the big deal? I'll just get it." She ran for the abandoned place.

Evie had already gotten the anger to stop and Xhiva turned around to see Zoe run to the abandoned theater. "NOOOOOOOO!" He screamed causing everyone to scream in a panic as they ran to try to save Zoe.

When Zoe was close to opening the door, because it was locked, she turned around and saw her running family in a state of panic. "Guys, I'm just getting it."

"MIMMI!"

"ZOE!"

"DUDES!"

Zoe still tried to pull the door open when she felt like she was being pulled back and she flew by force into Evie and Erik's arms. "GET OFF ME YOU BITCHES!"

"You're gonna get yourself killed!" Evie exclaimed.

"Killed cuz, Jesus!" Erik exclaimed.

They all set her down and faced her.

"Holy Crap, you could have been killed!" Raiden exclaimed.

"Si cierto." (Yes, true) Diablo said, out of breath. "What are you doing?"

"Well I was just getting it back.."

"Mimmi." Erik said. "If you were thinking, you wouldn't have thought that."

"You can't go in there," Evie said.
"So how do we get the ball back and resume playing the game?" Zoe asked confused.

"We don't." Xhiva said.

"We don't." Xandou echoed.

"It's history."

"It's history."

"Kiss it goodbye."

"Kiss it.."

"Shut up Xandou."

"It's gone Mimmi. Gone." Zac said. "The game's over. We'll just get another ball. We'll never see it again."

"Why not?" Zoe asked. "What is in there that makes you all so scared?"

They all stared at each other before Zac spoke. "It's not what sis. It's who. We don't say her name, so she just goes by..."

"The Actress." They all chorused.

"Who is the actress?" Zoe asked.

Zac crept up to her and said to her quietly, "Mimmi, listen to me. There's a reason why most people never dare to go inside that place. So go over there, real slow and be quiet."

"What do you mean?" She asked.

"Just go." They all said.

"Go Zoe."

Zoe nodding, teleported over there and peered through the window. It was a quiet theater, yet if she listened closely, she heard demonic whispers, an umbrella flew from the floor, gathering the ball to the ceiling and vanishing. Zoe jumped and teleported back to the others. "Something got the ball. Who is the Actress?"

Everyone else looked at each other and nodded. "Camp out."

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Zac's POV

The camp out took place at Mako out on the beaches. The girls would then sleep in the tents set up on the east side of the woods and the boys would sleep in tents on the west side of the woods. Right then, a campfire was being set and we were all gathering with some of the food we got from the boats some of the mermen and mermaids carried. We were all spread out and I was late.

"Hey Zac." Erik called out who was making some fire. "What took so long?"

"Sorry." I said. "My mom made me get some mosquito spray, and then she made me do the dishes."
Everyone laughed at that. "Oh no!" Raiden mock cried. "Your poor little mommy made you do the big bad dishes."

I ignored all of them and went to Diablo set up table of snacks. "Hey Zac." The Chinese merman said.

"Hey."

"You wanna seamore?" He asked me.

"I see more of what?" I asked confused.

"No, no, no." He said. "You want seamore?"

"I'm already at Mako." I said, still not getting the picture. "So how can I see more of nothing?"

"Oh sorry." Xhiva said. "He still doesn't know the merman customs. Erik taught us how to make this snack. It's a tribe food."

"You're still killing me newbie." Xandou said with us ignoring the other conversations in the background. "This is a merman's s'more. Now pay attention. First you take the seaweed bundle. You stick the baby octopus tentacles on the bundle. Then, you roast the prawn. When the prawn is flaming, you stick it on the tentacles and then you put another seaweed bundle on it. Then you stuff." Xandou handed me his completed snack.

"A little burnt." I said, casing the taste. "But not bad."

About half an hour later, we all gathered around the campfire, the flames illuminating the presence of the night itself.

"Alright." Evie said. "We all know why we're here."

"Yeah." Raiden said. "To scare the shit out of my cousin." This got the rest of his posse sniggering at this, even Erik and Zac.

"No." Evie said. "We're here to give Mimmi an education. Xhiva, take it away."

"Yes!" Xhiva exclaimed in victory. "Now everyone quiet." Zac and Erik lowered the fire and Xhiva shined a flashlight of red light under his face, giving him a demonic look while he concentrated on bringing out the red glow in his eyes. "The legend of the Actress goes back a long time...before any of us could even swim. Back in Suncoast High. It all started about...hmm, 50 years ago, when a production of Mary Poppins went as the year's musical. On opening night, the lead actress, who was cast as Mary Poppins, backed out at the last minute by calling in sick. So her understudy Pfeifer Grimile had to fill in at the last minute. It was a great production until the final scene, when Pfeifer flew as the character in the musical, raising her umbrella high in the air. But the tip of the umbrella got caught in a live and messed up wire and the actress was electrocuted and the wires holding her, snapped and she fell to the ground, dead. Now she may have died, but she never really left the theater. Soon, despite the tragedy, it because a site of interest in the Gold Coast. High school students even some adults began visiting it at night. But they never came out. After a while, the cops started getting phone calls from people reporting all the missing people. The ones that went into the theater. It added from 15-26 people including students. When the police went inside during school hours, they found the charred and rotting bodies of the people who dared to spend the night in there. They never found a single survivor. Not one. Some people say that they committed suicide. But we know what really happened. Pfeifer Grimile's ghost got em. Yep, you heard that right, Suncoast High School, is haunted. She got them, soul and all. The school board ruled the theater out as dangerous
so they built a new theater and the mayor ordered the school board to lock and board the windows, where no one else could ever get in. And that's where Pfeifer Grimile's spirit has been for 50 years, and that's where she will reside for the rest of her afterlife. Forever. And so The Actress still sits there in that dark cold theater, dreaming of the time when anyone dares to even open the door, dreaming of the time when she can finally kill again. He turned off the flashlight and the glow in his eyes, and started to rub them furiously as Zac and Erik started the campfire again.

"See?" Diablo asked her. "That's why you can't go in there. It's also why within the school, you can't even whisper her name. Nobody ever has, nobody ever will."

"One kid did." Zac said, taking a bite from his seamore. "But he never made it through the rest of freshman year and when he came back, he had to repeat it."

"That's not true." Raiden said.

"Yeah it is!" Evie defended. "When he said her name, the locker door closed by itself on his arm. He almost had to have it amputated."

"No." Zoe said getting up and brushing it off. "No, none of this ghost story bullshit is true. You guys are just making this up to scare me. Well I can tell you it's not gonna work."

"Oh really?" Xandou asked getting up and walking to her face. "Teleport all the way to that door and try to look in. But whatever you do, don't say the name."

Zoe nodded and in a flash of light, she teleported to the abandoned theater.


Zoe's POV

I landed safely in the school and looked in the windows. That night, I learned that more than 15 people and material possessions had gone in there and not one of them made it out alive. Even when some brave kid mustered up enough courage to utter her name. Because whenever they ticked her off, bad things happened.

At first I was skeptical, because I had never encountered the spirit of a dead person, so I peered through the window and found nothing in there. I turned around and said out loud, "Well, no ghost here."

That's when a black clawed demonic hand grabbed my throat and I was too terrified to move or use my magic. "Ah." A sickeningly sweet voice whispered in my ear. "But every school has it's spirit doll. Don't you know that?"

Praying to the moon to help me, I used my moon ring to transport me back to Mako where I dropped to the sandy floor, crying out hysterically. I instantly felt the warm and loving embrace of my brother and cousins and Evie as they held me. Erik allowed me to squeeze his hand.

"It's ok Zoe." Raiden said. "It's ok."

"I'm sorry." I choked out. "I didn't believe you. But she's in there."

"You bet she is." Raiden said.

"Whatever or whoever goes in that place…” Erik took a big breath. "Stays there."
"Becomes a part of the collection of The Actress." Evie said looking to the half moon where it seemed to glow eerily.

"Forever."
Ondina's POV

I swam for miles and miles in the reef. Lots of beautiful fish and coral passed me as I swam in my true form- a mermaid. I surfaced to look at the beautiful island of Mako. It was a good morning indeed.

But what I didn't realize was that a certain Canadian mermaid was swimming and noticed me. She smirked mischievously and teleported behind me, tapping my shoulder. Immediately, I reacted by turning around and splashing water at what I found was Mimmi.

"Hi." She said, grinning.

"Mimmi!" I exclaimed. "Please don't scare me like that!"

"Catch me if you can." She said playfully. Following her diving into the water, we topredo swam to the moon pool itself.

"I got ya." I said happily. I had to admit it was having fun being with my best friend...or at least one of them. "¿Dónde está Erik?" (Where's Erik?) I asked in Spanish.

"Él está rescatando a Diablo y Raiden." (He's bailing out Diablo and Raiden.) Mimmi said shaking her head.

I rolled my eyes. Those mermen were always trouble from the start. "¿Qué hacen este tiempo?" (What did they do this time?)

"Diablo, no sé, pero Raiden, Erik dijo algo, él ser atrapado por robo." (Diablo, I don't know, but Raiden, Erik said something about, him getting caught for shoplifting.) She said. (¿Por qué?)

When I wouldn't give an answer, I thought of an excuse. "Bien, el pozo." (Well.) I didn't know what to say. "Solo... quería... llegar... a oportunidad de volver a conectar con él." (I just...wanted to...get to a chance to...reconnect with him.)

"Mmm-Hm." Zoe said, smirking.

"¿Qué usted va mm-hm para?" (What are you going mm-hm for?) I asked.

"Usted todavía le gusta." (You still like him.) She said with a snap of her fingers.

I spluttered. "¿Qué? Él es mi amigo de la infancia!" (What? He's my childhood friend?)

"Bueno en ese caso." (Well in that case.) Zoe said. "Algunos consejos para usted a continuación, Ondina. Si todavía le quieres, y me refiero a, como él, como él, hacer un movimiento. Pues si no lo hace cualquiera." (Some advice for you then Ondina. If you still like him, and I mean, like him, like him, make a move. Because if you don’t, somebody will.)

"¿Hablas a ti mismo?" (Are you talking about yourself?) I challenged, only to get a disgusted and horrified look plastered on Mimmi's face.

"No, bruto!" (No gross!) Mimmi exclaimed. "Es mi primo!" (He's my cousin!)

"Zoe." A masculine voice said. A merman rose, a merman that was quite built, like a warrior. He had
pure muscle, a six pack, and a strong well built tail. He also had a bunch of scars but only few were visible. He also had very Asian features on him, but he was tanned with light brown eyes.

"Hi Dad." Mimmi said smiling.

"Zoe you ready?" He asked.

"Yes Daddy." Zoe said. "See you Ondina." Zoe ducked under the water and disappeared into the sea, her tail flapping against the water.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"My daughter and I are going to find some houses to rent and hopefully we can finish it with a father-daughter day." Jacob said.

"I love those." I said. "My dad and I spent them hunting for mussels...that he would eat later."

"Ah Phoebus." Jacob said, laughing. "Oh and by the way, she's right. You need to reconnect with Erik because you need to give him a chance."

I was perplexed at his knowledge. "How do you…"

"Ondina." He said. "We're creatures of the sea. We can hear anything that goes on in water, especially in the moon pool."

With that, he left me in the moon pool, his blue tail disappearing from view and me to gather my own thoughts.


Erik's POV

I drove back to the motel after I dropped off my brother and Diablo at school. I had forgotten to get my school bag myself.

"Erik?" I heard my mother's soothing voice and immediately, all my worries were washed away. My mother has that effect on other people, to make them calm whenever there was trouble. "Non dovresti essere a scuola?" (Shouldn't you be in school?)

"Ho dimenticato il mio zaino." (I forgot my schoolbag.) I said in Italian. That was the only language my mother ever spoke other than Canadian French. But speaking in Italian, helped us keep close to my late father.

"Dov'è Raiden?" (Where's Raiden?) My mother asked and I instantly froze. How was I going to explain to my own mother that her youngest had been caught committing a crime and that it wasn't the first time?

"E ' a scuola." (He's at school.) I said.

My mother didn't seem unfazed. In fact, she looked at me conspicuously. "C'è un'altra cosa, non è vero?" (There's something else, isn't there?)

I sighed and walked to her, holding her hand, taller than her. "Per quanto io voglio discutere di questo , non posso. Devo andare comunque . Ho un esame di chimica ed è super importante . Non posso permettermi di perdere più compiti." (As much as I want to discuss this, I can't. I have to go anyway. I've got a chemistry exam and it's super important. I can't afford to miss anymore
"Capisco." (I understand.) My mother said. "E solo ... Oltre ad essere sollevato da una tribù spietata ... solo che non so cosa sia successo a voi due." (It's just...aside from being raised by a ruthless tribe...I just don't know what happened to you two.)

"Un sacco Madre." (A lot Mother.) I said, kissing her cheek, grabbing my bag. "Un sacco."

Ondina's POV

I swam to look for Persephone and I had gotten dry already. I was at the motel where she and her family were staying when I ran into Erik.

"Erik..." I said, lost at what I was gonna say.

"Ondina I really can't talk right now." He said. "I'm late for school."

"It's ok." I said. "Just go."

"Meet me at Mako after school." He whispered in my ear and then left in his rented car.

"You ready to go?" I heard Persephone but I didn't really listen. I wanted to talk to Erik, I mean at the time I still kind of liked him, but I didn't know what to do. "Ondina?"

"What?" I asked. "Oh sorry."

"Let's go gather that seaweed." She said, taking my hand and we dove into the sea. We spent a good long couple of hours searching and searching for seaweed. Back in Europe, there was a whole forest of kelp located near Turkey on the West Island and a whole bushel of seaweed near Greece of the South Island that was good for trade. If my father wasn't the Royal Chief Architect or of my mother was not Foreign Cognitor, who was someone that basically the foreign affairs minister of the clan, we would have lived in the South Island and I probably would not have met Erik or Raiden. Well he made his way around the clan's territory, but the whole Mediterranean Sea to us merpeople was...in a way...a city.

My thoughts were interrupted by Persephone telling me that she had found seaweed. It wasn't fresh or much, but I couldn't complain. We swam with all the seaweed we gathered to the moon pool.

"Non c'è molto alghe intorno al momento." (There's not much seaweed around at the moment.) The Canadian mermaid said to me in Italian, poking the seaweed.

"I dugonghi devono aver monopolizzato tutto." (The dugongs must have hogged it all.) I said dissapointed. "Siamo quasi arrivati affatto. Ma ancora , penso che ci meritiamo un premio." (We hardly got any at all. But still, I think we deserve a reward.)

"Concordato!" (Agreed!) She said. "Dovremmo ottenere qualcosa da questo." (We should get something out of this.)

I caught her staring at the seaweed sadly. "Ca va?" I asked switching to French.

"Je suis bien." Persephone said. "Ce fut l'une des choses que César utilisé pour recueillir chaque fois qu'il voulait une collation." (I'm fine. This was one of the things Caesar used to gather whenever he wanted a snack.)
"Qu’aurait-il fait cela?" (What would he have made with that?) I asked. "Si cela ne vous dérange pas ma demande au sujet de votre défunt mari." (If you don't mind my asking about your late husband.)

"C'est d'accord." (It's Ok.) Persephone said, smiling and looking at me. "Il aurait fait avec cela et un tas de mollusques, mer mollusque soupe. Il était son favori collation passe-temps." (He would have made with this and a bunch of molluscs, sea-mollusc soup. It was his favorite pass time snack.)

It was then Sirena joined us. Or so I thought it was Sirena. She had this faraway look in her eyes. But I knew from when I caught her staring at David so I brushed it off as a hunch.

"Where were you?" Persephone asked. "You were supposed to help us gather seaweed for making ice cream remember?"

"Ice cream?" She asked with a distant tone.

"Yes." I said. "Your favorite."

"David had to leave." Sirena said.

"Oh." Persephone said. "You mean those exams? Erik and Zac had to go to those to."

"It must be so weird sitting in a building to do an exam." I said to her.

"I know." Persephone said, in understanding. "How do they even stand it? Mermaid exams, no matter what pod, are much more fun."

"I remember one time." I said, recalling the story. "Me and Zoe had a test for navigating ocean currents and a cranky old sea turtle tried to take a bite of her fin." I giggled.

"Oh you think Mimmi had it bad?" Seph asked me. "One time, Nerissa had a test and when she was tasked to going down the deepest part of the bay, a narwhal swam by and accidentally tore her bra top off and she was embarrassed beyond belief!"

"That must have been terrible!" I exclaimed, trying not to laugh.

"Oh it was worse one time." Seph said. "I once had a test where I was supposed to read the clouds, and after sitting outside trying to do it, it was only a matter of time before I felt a seagull go to the bathroom...on my hair."

"Ooh." I said wincing. "That must have been horrible!"

"Oh it was." She said. "You know that seagull excrement is one of the stickiest substances in the world especially when it comes to salt water. So it took me almost 2 weeks just to get it out and about 9 days to get the smell off of my hair."

"Well." I said. "Those were the days."

"In that case then, we should go and collect more seaweed." Persephone said.

"Sirena are you coming?" I asked as we left the moon pool. Maybe it was David, but something didn't seem right about her.
Jacob and Zoe toured around, marvelling the place that they found out of the hundreds of houses they looked up and some that were actually visited. It was a quaint but large enough house, enough to house at least 3 people. It had 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a dining room, a living room directly connected with the kitchen, an office, and a basement. It also had a nice backyard but it didn't have a pool so they would still go to Zac's.

"It's beautiful." Zoe said. "What about you?"

"Whatever you guys want is fine." Her father told her. "Just make sure first that nothing is either shiny or solid gold."

"Well it was a long search but it seems enough for a house filled with people with slapping tails." Zoe said.

"Come on." The merman said. "Let's go meet the realtor."

"Wait." She pulled her father back. "Where we sleep? I mean, I still haven't gotten used to sleeping in a bed. And when will we swim?"

"The beach is only a 5 block walk from here and we will work out where you guys will sleep. Zac of course, cannot sleep here, otherwise people are gonna know and you know what that will mean. He can come over sometime, but he can't live here. He already has a home and...parents." Jacob said. "Right now...let's just get those papers signed so we can get ready to settle into our new home."

"Oh they are gonna love it!" Mimmi said happily. "But Daddy, just know that you may have missed out on us, but now you have a bit of another chance." She hugged him and went outside.

Jacob could only smile at his daughter. She was his love's child and he wasn't going to let her go.

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Persephone's POV

We swam back into the moon pool with some more of the tough and bitter seaweed.

"Nice of Sirena to join us." Ondina complained.

"From what my niece told me." I said. "It's not really like her to let us to all the work. But other than that, did she seem a little...distant earlier?"

"No more than usual actually." She said.

I merely shrugged it off when Sirena surfaced. "Hey, we were just talking about you."

"Are you two going to be here long?" She asked.

"Well this is a sacred place for mermaids," I said. "So yeah."

"Let's get started on the ice cream." Ondina said.

"That old tough seaweed won't make good ice cream." Sirena said in a tone that was hauntingly familiar, a tone that brought back memories of a woman with red glowing demonic eyes. Tons of flashbacks circled in my mind as I saw destruction light up wherever she went.

"Persephone!" Ondina shook me. "Come on, we're going to find fresh seaweed. You ok?"
"Yeah." I said, let's go.

Raiden and Thalie's POV

We walked to the Ocean Cafe, hand in hand, smiling in joy. We had finished our tests for the day and it felt real good to be out of school. We were on the boardwalk to the Cafe and we had already dropped at Thalie's place. It felt good to not have annoying bitchy teachers breathe down our necks every 30 seconds.

Only you would say that Raiden.

Oh you know I'm only joking Thals.

Raiden…

"I'd never thought that someone would actually get me to study something that wasn't related to the sea." Raiden said.

"I can't believe all I had to do was just scare you with a few birds!" Thalie said, laughing as she felt Raiden nuzzle his nose into her dark red curly hair before he started freaking out.

"BIRDS?! WHERE?!!" He stopped freaking out in order to see his girlfriend trying to stifle her laughter. "Come here you!" He ran to her but she ran to the cafe, but Raiden grabbed her arms and hugged her from behind. Raiden then snuck a good kiss on her neck and Thalie kissed him on the cheek.

"Come on." She said, grabbing his hand. "We have an audience."

Once they entered the cafe, they got a table to themselves and sat down.

"Hey guys." Erik said, coming to them as their waiter. "What can I get you today?"

"The usual." Thalie said.

"Same." Raiden said before getting a glare from his girlfriend. "Actually I'll just have a burger."

As Erik left, Raiden whispered to his girlfriend, "I will never understand your aversion to the natural meal of our kind."

"That's because I am not really a part of your kind." Thalie said. "I'm also human."

"I'm human too and do you see me complaining?" Raiden asked, gesturing to his legs. "I mean I've got parts I'm not really supposed to have; legs!"

"Technically that's a spell." Thalie clarified, still keeping her voice low. "Which means it's just an enchantment so you could walk on land, Mr. Merman."

Raiden opened his mouth to say something but he closed it when he realized his girlfriend had a point. "Fine, but I will still never understand how a fish girl can hate seafood."

"I will never understand why you're scared of birds." Thalie countered.

Just then, Erik arrived with Thalie's salad and Raiden's burger.
"Hey Erik?" Thalie asked. "Can I talk to you?"

"Did I do something wrong?" Raiden asked.

If that was about that shoplifting incident that morning…

No Raiden, I was just asking your brother a question.

"Sure." Smiling at her boyfriend, Thalie left to go with Erik to the cool room.

Erik's POV

I walked the girl who was being courted by my brother to the cool room, wondering what she had to ask of me. Don't get me wrong, she's a great girl, but still she's kind of my cousin.

"First Thalie," I said, stopping her from speaking. "I want to get your side of this dish. Raiden, he's not pressuring you at all, is he? He's not doing anything, serious is he?"

"No!" Thalie exclaimed. "No, he's a cool guy that I like. He's a gentleman. We're still dating, nothing serious."

Instantly, I was relieved. "Now what did you want to ask me?"

"What is it with Raiden and birds?" She asked. "How long has he been a guppy about them?"

I chuckled, remembering all the times Raiden would get overworked about his phobia. "As long as I can remember."

"So since he was born he's been afraid of birds?" She asked.

"Well it's the same thing of you having a phobia for anything from the sea that's cooked." I reminded her.

"That's a developed phobia." She said. "There is a difference." She left the cool room to go back to my brother. As I went to work, I couldn't help but feel really happy for not just Raiden but for Thalie.

Phoebus' POV

Another day of school had gone by. I needed to head to the cafe for some java because I had a long day grading papers and I taught 5 classes. Don't mind me, I'm perfectly fine teaching. It just sometimes can be tiring and long.

When I looked over the railing of the boardwalk, I saw what appeared to be Sirena in a pink dress...using her powers in public?! I ran to the railing of the part closest to her.

"Sirena!" I exclaimed. "What are you doing?" It was as if she couldn't hear me, like she was in a trance. "Sirena!" Resorting to my last choice, I used my powers to fight hers until I turned the boat off.

"David is MINE!" Sirena screamed, running away.
"Did you see that?" David yelled/asked. "It's like my boat's possessed!"

"It's the wind here." I said, loud enough for the teenager to hear. "It gets wild."

"You can say that again!" David exclaimed.

Quickly I got out my phone and dialed my wife's number.

"Hello?" She said.

"Esme." I said, before speaking in Portuguese. "Você precisa chegar ao Oceano Café agora." (You need to get to the Ocean Cafe right now.)

"Meu turno acaba de terminar." (My shift just ended.) She said on the phone. "O que aconteceu?" (What happened?)

"É Sirena." (It's Sirena.) I said. "Ela usou seus poderes para fora no aberto." (She used her powers out in the open.)

"Você tem certeza que foi Sirena?" (Are you sure it was Sirena?) My wife asked. "Isso não soa como ela." (That doesn't sound like her.)

"Esmeralda." I said. "Foi ela. Mas ela não estava agindo como ela mesma." (It was her. But she wasn't acting like herself.)

"Bem." (Alright.) She said. "Apenas me dé um segundo." (Just give me a second.)

She hung up and I went inside wondering, was that about her feelings for David? Was that was that was about?


Ondina's POV

In the grotto...

To say I was pissed, was an understatement. Me and Persephone worked so hard to get that fresh seaweed.

"Unbelievable." I said. "We swam for miles and she didn't even turn up to help."

"I am disappointed in her." Persephone said. "But why does she keep disappearing on us?"

"I think we should find her." I said.

"Where will she be?" Persephone asked.

"Probably at the cafe." I said. "Let's go."


Esme's POV

"David is mine?" I asked. "What does that even mean?"

"I don't know." I said, as we were getting our tea. "She was in another world like she couldn't even hear me."
"Well the next full moon is not for a week." I said. "Why would she be like that?"

"Why would she be like what?" Thalie's voice asked. We didn't notice we were passing by her table where she was eating with Raiden.

"Have you guys seen Sirena?" My husband asked.

"Well word on the street is that she showed up uninvited on campus with a bag of dead fish for David." Raiden said.

"Yeah and she's clingy on him." Thalie added on. "And yeah she's clingy on him, but not that serious!"

"Well something is definitely is wrong with her." Persephone said, arriving with Ondina.

"Oh that's not even the half of it." Phoebus said. "She used her powers in the open and is obsessed with David."

Ondina looked unimpressed. "So what's new?"

"Yeah exactly!" Raiden said, highfiving her.

"This is serious!" Persephone hissed.

"Hey guys!" Carly came bursting through the door. "Get this: Someone's filmed a real live mermaid!" That got our attention as all of us, even Erik caught on and went to Carly who was in front of her computer. "I'm sure it's a hoax but you've got to hand it to this guy. Really looks authentic." But when she typed in the video, it said that it was no longer available.

"Like you said Carly." Thalie said. "It's just a hoax."

"Oh wait!" Carly exclaimed. "I saved it on my phone!"

Thinking quick, Persephone used her powers to heat up the phone, which got Carly to drop it, but Erik caught it in time.

"I've heard about this model." He said. "It always overheats, I'll get it fixed."

With that, we left the cafe, with Erik getting the story on the way to my house.

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Thalie's POV

In the Marino house…

We rushed back to Ondina's rental house where we all gathered in the living room.

"Let me see it." Esme said. "Does anyone have those ear thingies?" I gave her a pair of my pocketable headphones and she plugged them in and played the video. She seemed to be focusing on something, when she pulled them out.

"Well?" Phoebus asked.

"It's a European Enchantment Song." She said. "It's been banned in all the waters of Europe for centuries."
"Why?" I asked. "Was it like the Enchantment Song here where like with my voice, you could enchant them to make you bend to their will?"

"No, not exactly." Ondina said. "It lures sailors and make them forget. So I'm guessing that Sirena must have seen the video and been enchanted."

"But why would she be enchanted and not Carly?" Phoebus asked.

"The song's effective on men and only when sung by a real mermaid." Erik clarified.

"So why would she get enchanted?" I asked. "I've tried to use my Siren voice on mermaids and it doesn't work."

"That's because European mermaids are immune to it." Esme said. "So it must be because she's of Aussie descent."

"What will happen if Sirena sings this song to David?" Phoebus asked.

"He'll forget who he is." Raiden answered. "His life, his family, everything. He will only want to be with her, nothing else will matter."

"That's right." A quiet yet menacing voice spoke. "David and I will be very happy." It was Sirena who looked like a pink Glinda with the threat of the Wicked Witch of the West.

"Sirena." Persephone said, trying to soothe things over. "Can we just talk about this?"

"There's nothing to talk about!" Sirena exclaimed. "All that's left on my quest is to sing David to me. Do...NOT...interfere."

"Sirena please." I said in a last ditch effort. "I know that the real you is in there, if you can hear me, just know that you can fight this."

"Oh there won't be any fighting." She said. "As long as no one getting in my way, no one will get hurt."

Raiden's palm closed and opened, with lightning dancing on his fingertips as he stepped closer to her. "Ok Sirena. Do not make me do this. I really don't want to do this."

"No." Sirena smiled evilly. "You don't want me to do this." She used her powers to send him flying back, but Ondina and I caught him in time. "The moon pool is ours. Stay away!" She raised her hands and a storm rolled inside.

"GET BEHIND ME!" I screamed as I concentrated on the water around me. I created a shield out of water molecules and I used it to transport us to the ocean. Not the best choice, I know, but I panicked and with Sirena under a spell, I had to do something.

"Really Santos?" Ondina asked. "The sea?"

"I had to get us out of there." I said, before dipping my glowing ring in the seawater. "We're not far from the cafe."

"Wait Thalie." Erik stopped me. "Use your moon ring and transport me to the beach. I need to get dry and get to the Cafe. That should give us a head start at least."

"Genius." I said, focusing on my ring.
"Erik?" Ondina swam to Erik and looked him in the eye and did the most unexpected thing: She kissed him on the cheek. "Good luck."

"Thanks."

"Alright." I said. "You ready? Just remember, she can use her voice, do not listen to it." Once he was ready I used my moon ring to transport him to the beach where he was probably drying himself.

"We've still got to stop David from hearing that song." Raiden said.

Without another word, we swam to the beach, hoping to stop the song.

Erik's POV

I had already gotten dry and night was falling fast. I offered to help out extra longer just to keep an eye on David and anyone else who might get affected.

"It was bizarre." David said, wiping the counter, and he was telling us about his little adventure. "The boat was totally out of my control. It must need a tune up."

"Either that or an exorcism." I joked to lighten up the mood.

"I think that's everything." David said.

"You sure?" I asked.

"Erik, you've done your fair share." David said. "I just need to lock up."

"Well in that case." I said. "Have a good night."

"You too." David said.

I left the cafe, but I leaned against the wall and turned invisible, hoping to stop Sirena when she got there.

And speak of the she-devil, she arrived, looking possessive. I raised my hand to try to stop her, not kill her though. I caused a wind that got her stumbling back and when I tried to get her wet she made me visible and countered the water to wet me. I couldn't risk David seeing me in my true form and I couldn't risk anyone else seeing me. I ran as fast as I could, and dived in the water, feeling my legs fuse together into my blue tail. I was a coward.

Thalie's POV

We ran inside the cafe as fast as we could but it was entirely empty.

"He's gone." Raiden said.

"Maybe he left work already?" Ondina asked.

"If there's one thing I know about David." I said. "Is that he would never leave the cafe unlocked."

So we ran outside to the canal where Erik was getting up. "Sirena's taken David to the moon pool."
He reported.

"Let's go then." Phoebus said.

"No!" Esme exclaimed. "I'm the only one who is immune to the enchantment."

"Mom." Ondina protested. "You're not doing this on your own! I'm coming with you!"

"Ondina." Esme said. "There's a difference between hearing about it in school and actually hearing it."

"Mom." Ondina continued to protest. "The song comes from gypsies. We come from gypsies. So what better way to end an enchantment from them then by them?"

"Alright." Esme said. "Let's go."

And the two Portuguese women dived in and headed straight for Mako Island


Esmeralda's POV

We swam as fast as we could to Mako, with my daughter by my side. Sometimes I wished that Ondina's brother was born so that she could have something to focus on other than this whole mess….if it wasn't for my miscarriage. I still remember when Ondina was so devastated.

In just no time, we reached the moon pool, where we found Sirena and David together.

"Go away!" Sirena shouted. "He's mine!"

"Sirena." I said. "Listen very carefully. You are under the spell of the Enchantment Song of Europe. I know some part of you is in there so you know I won't hurt you."

"I warned you not to interfere." Sirena spoke in a dark tone that brought back haunting memories of a woman who spoke in the exact same tone. She turned around and started singing the song. When we were ready, we started vocalizing and singing the counter-song in French.

Reste loin de moi

Libere moi

Du sort

Retorne a la terre de vile

Eterner aller ete

Delivree

You could feel the enchantment lift. Sirena looked like she had woken from a coma. "Where am I?"

"Sirena." Ondina said. "Are you alright?"

"I think so." She said. "What happened?"

"It's…" I said. "Quite a funny tale."
"Have you come to take me away too?" David asked like a puppy.

"Dans votre reves marin." (In your dreams sailor) Ondina said, using her moon ring to lift the spell and knocking him out.

Zac's POV

Me, Erik, Raiden, Thalie, and my aunt were all blindfolded as we were led by my dad. We didn't know where the hell we were but we knew it was something special.

"Are we there yet?" Erik asked.

"We get there when we get there." I said.

"Is there an ice cream party?" Thalie asked.

"Am I getting a new car?" Raiden asked.

"You don't even have a license." Zac said.

"Especially since I don't trust you, Diablo or Xandou with even a scooter." Erik piped up.

"Don't worry guys." We all heard Jacob. "It'll be something much better."

A light switch could be heard being turned on and as if by magic, which it probably was, our blindfolds were lifted off and Zoe and Dad yelled, "SURPRISE!"

"What is this?" I asked.

"Isn't it obvious Zac?" Erik asked, overjoyed. "It's our home!"

"This is amazing guys!" Thalie exclaimed. "Your own house!"

"Come on!" I exclaimed with the rest of the family, laughing along the way and just had some sibling bickering moments.

"Who gets this room?" Jacob asked.

"I do." I said.

"No me." Raiden said, which sparked a fight between us.

"Enough!" Persephone said, immediately stopping the fight. Eventually Erik got the room and Raiden got another room. Zoe got a room that she shared with Persephone since my dad couldn't sleep with her...for obvious reasons.

Raiden's POV

While the adults and sort of adults were talking, I leaned against the wall next to the window. I couldn't help but feel overwhelming amounts of joy. I swore I was going to break out in tears.

"Raiden?" I heard my girlfriend's soothing voice.

"Hey Thals." I said.
"They said I could come over when I wanted." She said. "What's the matter? Wait, are you crying?"

I quickly wiped away tears. "Che cosa? No!"

"Raiden…" She warned, before she started ruffling my hair.

"No!" I screamed. "Not the hair!"

"It's already messy anyway." She said. "Listen, I want to be with you, Zac and your family, But I want to give you guys space. I don't want to get in your way. Now why are you sad?"

"Thalassa." I said. "First, I'm crying because I'm just happy that I finally have a family again. And I want you to be a part of it. I love you and only you. Nothing is going to change that."

We landed lips on each other, and I got the taste of the sweet lips of mia amore.


No one's POV

At the Marino House…

"So let me get this straight," Diablo said. "While we were out being tested the stuffing out of us, you guys got to lift Sirena from an enchantment that made her a lovestruck fish even more than she already was? I wanna do that!"

Xhiva rolled his eyes. "Diablo, when will you ever learn to respect the gift that is education?"

"I shall never yield!" Diablo exclaimed, falling down from his chair, prompting laughter from the Marino family.

"So what's the story with the song?" Xhiva asked. "What do you mean that the song comes from gypsies?"

"Well it's quite a story." Esmeralda said. "The song...was actually a dane once."

Diablo snorted. "A dance?"

"A dance of seduction used by gypsy prostitutes to vex men," Esme said. "It was invented by gypsies in France and it was passed around even to Portugal. It was made illegal by my great grandmother's grandmother, Agnes who was a gypsy living in Paris. She was actually the inspiration for Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame."

"I see," Ondina said. "That's why you're named Esmeralda."

"Exactly." Phoebus said, kissing his wife.

"How does a dance get turned into a song?" Ondina asked.

"Some Danish mermaid named Ariel stole it and turned it into a song," Ondina said.

All the mermen sniggered. "Wait." Phobeus said, trying to not laugh. "As in Little Mermaid Ariel?"

"I'm sorry?" Ondina asked confused.

"You have a lot to learn," Diablo said.
Thalie's POV

School turned out to be quite pleasurable as the day went by soothingly. At lunch, I caught up with a snippet of our conversation.

"It was weird." Xandou said. "Esmeralda said that Sirena acted exactly like Xiaohui."

"Who is that?" Rosalina asked.

"Our mother." The twins said in unison.

I remembered suddenly, all the whispers of Xhiva and Xandou's mother by the parents, especially Jacob in the grotto.

"I gotta go." I said, leaving the table. "I'll be back." Turning head, I ran to my mother's office.

"Come in." She said, once I knocked on it. "Hello Thalassa."

"Hi Mom." I said, to Rita Santos. "Can I ask you something...something personal?"

Mom froze a bit before saying, "Well it depends on what your question is but fire away."

"I..." I said slowly. "Couldn't help but notice some tension every time Xhiva and Xandou's mother is mentioned. Do, you, mind if I ask what happened with you guys?"

Mom looked at me for a second and looked worried before calming herself. "I ask myself that same question all the time. Xiaohui and I, we were thick as thieves, she was the one who taught me and the rest everything about land. Then everything changed after she almost died. I understand how a traumatic event can change a person but this was deeper. After that night, Xiaohui became a completely different person."

"So she's alive?" I asked.

"Yes." Mom/Rita said. "Xiaohui is alive."

As I walked out to class, I swore I heard her whisper, "But Weilan is gone."

I stopped after I closed the door and sat down on the floor, asking a question that would not be answered for another year.

"Weilan? Who the hell is Weilan?"
Diablo's POV

Morning came by and it was not just any morning. It was Evie's birthday. She was officially a birthday girl and I was trying to beg Raiden's family to help me help Zac with the party because although we didn't have many parties back in the day, when I lived in Australia opportunities to plan parties didn't happen every day.

"So what are you guys getting for Evie?" Raiden asked, finishing his seafood breakfast. Erik had already eaten and gone to work. He was also helping set up the surprise party for Evie.

"Nothing yet." Raiden said in a mouthful of seaweed. "But I'm thinking either a nightlight or one of those sewing machines so she can fashion clothe herself to death."

"I know what to get her." I said.

"Is it gonna involve meat?" Raiden asked, rolling his purple eyes.

"That's offensive!" I mock exclaimed. "Although that wouldn't be a bad idea."

"Well then think of something knucklehead." Raiden said. "It's kind of weird though."

"What's weird about getting someone presents?" I asked.

"No not that." The Italian merman said. "It's kind of weird. Me and Erik...never really had the time to celebrate our birthdays much. For several years, our birthdays were just another day."

I nearly fainted at the sound of that, my fork clattering on the floor. "W-wh-what?! Raiden Antonio Bauman Consorzio, do you mean to tell me that you had never celebrated your birthday?"

"We did." Raiden said. "When we got the chance. But you should talk, I'm pretty sure your birthdays were pretty lousy, starting from the day of your actual birth."

"Actually when I got the chance like you said." I countered. "I celebrated my birthday and Halloween."

"Why would you celebrate those two things on the same day?" Raiden asked confused.

I smiled smugly and with beaming pride. "Because my birthday happens to be Halloween. And coincidentally under a full moon."

"Well why am I not surprised?" Raiden asked sarcastically.

"Well considering I've got werewolf genes in me, you shouldn't be." I said. "Now by my estimate, you and Erik have missed out on your b-days and when your next birthday comes I will do whatever it takes to make sure that you and the rest of my buddies have the bestest birthdays ever!"

"Thanks." Raiden said obviously trying not to smile. "So, where's my cousin?"
I swam for miles in the beautiful Gold Coast reef, enjoying my life as a merman. Don't get me wrong, just because I'm a big time nerd, doesn't mean I won't like the ocean. I was born in it anyway.

My merman senses picked up a prescence and I surfaced to see what it was. To my delight I found Cam in a tinny and Zac swimming near.

"Hey Xi." Zac said.

"Hey Zac." I said. "Shouldn't you be getting ready to plan a certain party for a certain someone?"

"That's what I just asked him." Cam said.

"Well I can't really do anything while Evie is home." Zac said smiling. "But...the millisecond she goes to work, my master plan springs into action."

"Considering of how you plan things like parties," I said. "I still think you should have left this to Diablo. Or us twinsies."

"And I said." Zac said swimming towards me. "My girlfriend, my way to plan the party. She will have literally zero idea."

My senses tingled as I felt Cam's phone vibrate. "Really? Then why is Evie calling?" Cam got his phone out and I used my powers to answer the phone and put it on speaker and nodding to Cam. Zac shot me a "For real?" Look while I shot him a victory glare.

"Hi Evie." Cam said, answering the phone. "Yes he is here." He put the phone down for Zac to speak loud enough.

"Hey your phone's off." Evie said through the phone. "Where are you?"

"Uh fishing with Cam." Zac said with ease.

"Fishing?" She asked.

"Yeah he got a new rod." Zac said. "We wanted to try it out."

"So when am I gonna see you?" Evie asked.

"Oh I don't know." Zac said. "It's pretty nice out here."

"You're not gonna be out there all day are you?" Evie asked.

"Sorry. Got a bite, can't talk." Zac said. "Bye." He nudged me and I turned off the phone.

"Oh you're good." Cam seethed.

"And thank God that your cousins and sister have been giving you and Mimmi lying lessons." I said.

Zac just rolled his eyes before saying, "I'm gonna make this the biggest surprise of her life!"

-Kimi's POV

I finished my work on creating Evie's present. It was her birthday so I had to do my best to make her
feel awesome. She took me and Haru in and it was easy adjusting with our parents. Of course I didn't tell them about my triple life. Haru, my 10 year old little brother was overjoyed when he reunited with my okasan and otosan. Things had gotten back to work, of course most of the workers in Kuroda Industries were still missing so things were kind of rough when it came to work. But luckily we were a wealthy family that had backup funds.

But that didn’t matter at the moment. The present I made for Evie was a potion I had gotten from online on a blog about Western Pods in America. It was a hair oil that could change your hair magically to correspond with whatever outfit they wore on land. The ingredients I scavenged on my swim trips to America were really hard to get by so I laid on the small bottle instructions to use sparingly. One drop should be enough.

"Sis?" I heard the squeaky voice of Haru. I turned around to see the 10 year old Japanese boy with his usual messy hair and holding something behind his back.

"Hi Haru." I said. "Watcha got there?"

"Well I wanna know what you're making for Evie." He said. "And I need your opinion on the present I made for her."

"I'm making special hair oil for Evie." I said. "How about you?"

"I made something for her." He said. "Well technically I grew it for her. I wanted to say thank you and happy birthday." He pulled out a pink flower pot with a single white large lily with a card that said, "Happy Birthday Evie. Thank you for being so nice in letting us stay."

No words could describe my joy for Haru. So I just picked him up while he was just laughing his head off and hugged him.

"Oh Haru." I said. "You are such a sweetheart! Evie will love this, and she still loves you!"

"Really?" Haru asked, once I settled him down.

"Absolutely." I said, ruffling his hair. "Now go on and get some breakfast."


Thalie's POV

I added some drops of Flame Angelfish blood to the small bottle of white nail polish, to add some magic. To mix it well, I shone my moon ring on it.

"Nice work." Zoe complimented, her black lipstick gleaming. She was still dressing in Goth clothes, with just simple black dresses and sneakers. So not much of an emo look for her. She was working over a boiling kettle, chopping flowers.

"What is that?" I heard Ondina asked. "And that's a nice smell."

"It's a special nail polish I'm making for Evie." I said.

"Making for her?" Ondina asked puzzled.

"I'm making her water lily perfume." Mimmi said.

"Yeah and I'm giving Evie a shell bracelet." Sirena agreed.
"Wait." Ondina said. "Why are you giving Evie presents?"

"Why are you asking about that?" I asked. "Surely you guys get presents on your birthdays."

"Thalie, mermaids do the opposite of what you do." Sirena explained. "Instead of getting presents on their birthday, they give them."

"That's a set of education for kids." I said in curiosity.

"It is." Ondina agreed. "It gives mermaids and mermen a sense of morale."

"But while we're here on land." Mimmi said, capping the bottle of the finished perfume. "We still have to give her a present-each."

I smiled down on the nail polish. Evie was gonna love it. Provided that Zac didn't accidentally slip up.

Helen's POV

I carefully hid the nice dress inside the rack of clothes with a very big tag wishing her a happy birthday. It was a short purple silk off the shoulder dress that had purple diamonds studded in it. I had managed to get from my aunt who worked as a fashion designer in London.

"Phew!" I heard my best friend, Rosalina pant. She was covered in dirt and looked tired. "I made it!"

"What the bloody hell happened to you?" I asked.

"Mud." She said running in and getting her clothes from the bag she brought. "Mud and splashed. And ocean. Did you take my rose dress?"

"Aye." I said. "That one is still recovering from the last time you wore it."

"Wait." said Rose. "I need your opinion on what I'm gonna wear for the party." I sighed, feeling grateful for Rose's super hearing. "What about this?" She came out with a strapless pink dress that showed off her legs.

"Uh nuh." I said instantly. "You're not wearing that to the party."

"Ok ok." She said running back in but stopping to see the dress I got for Helen. "What is this?" She held it in front of her. "Ooh lala!" She said in a fake British accent. "My hips are here, my hips are there. Oh pardon me young man didn't mean to knock you down."

"It's a gift for Evie silly." I said, laughing. "Now stop goofing around, get changed into something more appropriate." She did so and came out with her regular clothes and an apron

"But I can barely fit through the doorway!" She still said in a cheesy British accent,

"Oh and for the record." I said. "I do not sound like that!"

Rose's POV

Not much time had passed and I had already worked in my shift.
"Is everything set?" Cam asked me and Carly as I collected an empty dish.

"Yep." I said. "Party platters are good to go."

"Have you guys texted Evie a happy birthday yet?" Carly asked.

"Yes." Me and Helen said in unison while Cam said "No."

We looked at Cam in confusion and he explained. "Zac said we should just make it like it's any other day."

"Something tells me that she won't be psyched out when no one remembers her birthday." Helen said.

"Yeah that would seem a bit strange." Cam said when Evie came in.

"Happy Birthday!" We all said.

"Thanks!" She said. "Really nice you guys remembered."

"Of course!" Cam said. "I was just texting you."

"Hey Evie." Erik said, running in. "Happy Birthday!"

"Glad to see you're here." Carly snapped.

"See this?" Erik asked, grabbing a tablet. "This is me going to do my job. So there." Cam sniggered and highfived him while Carly gave him a big death stare.

Carly's POV

"Still a pity you have to work." Helen said when Rose went back to the kitchens.

"Not much to do at the moment." Evie sighed.

"Nothing except…" I said smiling at Helen when she pulled out her dress for Evie.

Evie turned around and glowed in joy when she saw it. "Happy Birthday girl."

"Oh Helen!" She hugged the Black British teenager. "It's gorgeous. Thank you." She left, with Evie and me alone. Cam was busy sneaking out food.

"Well Carly." She said. "Work is the only thing I can do today. And Zac doesn't even remember it's my birthday."

"I'm sure he does!" I exclaimed.

"Well he hasn't called." Evie said despondently. "Either way it doesn't mean much to him."

"I'm sure it does." I said. "You and Zac are such a hit couple. I wish I had what you guys had."

Zoe's POV

I walked in the cafe, thankful for my hair pulled in a side ponytail because it was a bit windy.

"Hey Evie." I said smiling at her. "It's your special day!" I said in singsong.
"You wouldn't know it." Evie muttered, grabbing her bag.

"You're packing up already?" Erik asked. "You just got here."

"I'm gonna do something for my birthday even if I have to do it by myself." She declared.

"Like what sort of things?" My cousin asked.

"Oh I don't know." Evie said. "I might go out. I might go home. The world is my oyster."

Fear rushed through me as Evie got her things and my cousin led me aside. He knew I could speak French and he did too so we used in in secret talk. But for me it was Canadian French.

"La pensée de Evie de rentrer chez eux." (Evie's thinking of going home.) Erik said to me. "Vous devez faire quelque chose." (You have to do something.)

"Moi?" I asked.

"C'est ne pas possible." (I can't.) He said. "Je travaille." (I'm working.)

"Donc, je dois juste lui tenir occupé pendant combien de temps?" (So I just need to keep her busy for how long?) I asked.

"3 heures." He said. "Aller." (Go.)

"So…" I said going back to Evie. "Do you want to do something?"

"Like what?" She asked.

"Your present." I said easily. "I can give you your present. It's at Rita's. I think you'll really like it."

"Sure." She said. "I guess." I turned around to see Erik give me a thumbs up before I left with her to go to my step mother's house.

Thalie's POV

I stepped out of the Secret Sanctum, making sure that no one was in there. Thankfully, there was no one. My phone rang and I saw it was Xandou and Raiden on party line.

"Hey guys." I said.

"Hey Thals." My boyfriend said.

"Sup Santos?" Xandou's rouge voice asked.

"What did you get for Evie?" I asked. "I made her special nail polish."

I swear I could hear Xandou roll his eyes. "Of course you did. Hold up, Techno Geek Twin wants in."

"Hey you rhymed!" Raiden said.

"Dudes remember." Xhiva said. "We cannot let Evie onto it."
"Yeah yeah we know Xhiva." Raiden said. "So whatcha get her?"

"I got her an underwater Ipod." Xhiva said.

"I got her a pair of motor rollerblades." Xandou said which made all of in a pregnant pause. "Don't worry, helmet and pads included."

"Motor rollerblades?" I asked. "Are you trying to get her in the hospital?"

"Thalie's right." Xhiva said. "Can I please object on this most strenuous attempted suicide?"

"Yeah I'm trying to get her killed." Xandou said sarcastically. "No dumbass, it's a good present. It only goes at 16 miles an hour. Plus it's Mr. McLaren approved. I had to go through it 5 times just to get her dad to say yes."

"I'm thinking of getting her sea slugs." Raiden said.

"Really?" I asked. "That's not much of a present."

"No I'm thinking a whole bucket of sea slugs." My boyfriend said. "Yum!"

"Just because Evie's got a tail doesn't mean she likes mermaid food." Xhiva said.

"Yeah." Xandou agreed. "She'll think that's legit."

"Even after years of living on land I still think that land people's birthdays are legit." Raiden muttered.

Just then, the doorbell rang and I hung up. I ran to the door and opened it to see my brother with a box in his arms.

"Hey Thals." He said. "I just wanted to see if you were coming to the party."

"Is that even a question?" I asked. "Of course I'm going! What's that in your arms?"

"It's my present for Evie." He said smiling. "Do you want to see?"

The grotto…

Ondina, Sirena, me and my brother gathered around the table where Zac revealed his present, which turned out to be a goldfish in a large bowl.

"It's not even big enough for a snack." Ondina said, sounding disappointed.

I almost gagged at that statement. "Um Ondina? Mermaid Vegetarian in the grotto."

"Eh." Ondina brushed off.

"It's for looking at not eating." Zac clarified. "Evie's gonna love it."

"It's a little bare." Sirena noted. "Even goldfish appreciate a bit of interior decoration."

"How about I decorate it?" Ondina suggested. "As my present to Evie?"

"Sure I guess." Zac said.

"We'll bring it over when it's done." Sirena said.
"As long as Evie doesn't see it before the party." Zac reminded us. I led them to a room behind a curtain and after a few minutes, Ondina was done.

"How's it going guys?" I asked, opening the curtain. "Oh that looks beautiful!"

"I still say Ondina should have used the pink coral." Sirena argued.

"Not with a gold fish." Ondina countered.

"I'll leave you guys to it." I said, before seeing my step sister step in the grotto with Evie.

"Happy Birthday!" I exclaimed, hugging Evie.

"Oh thanks Thalie!" Evie said.

"Come on!" I said, dragging them to the table. "My sister and I have awesome presents! First, some special nail polish I created. It's kind of like a liquid version of a mood ring and it changes color depending on your emotion." Evie tried some on and it turned blue green for wonder.

"Thalie this is amazing!" Evie said.

"Now it's my turn." Mimmi said. "Water lily perfume." She gave it to Evie who looked a little scared. "And no, just because it has the word water in it, doesn't mean it's made of water. It's made of oils. So it's good."

"Mimmi?" Ondina asked. "Can we see you outside? By the way Happy Birthday Evie."

"You two." Sirena noted as Mimmi left with them.

"Evie that nail polish looks so good on you." I said.

"I doubt Zac would notice." Evie said sadly, her nail polish turning blue to go with it. "He hasn't even remembered it's my birthday. He doesn't even know today's special. Maybe I'm not anything special."

"Evie." I said. "Don't you ever say that. You're special in lots of ways. It takes a true girl to stay true to a guy like Zac. You're so mature sometimes I forget that you're a teenager. Not only that, you're smart, funny, outgoing, and caring. Despite being nosy last year, he still loves you."

"Really?" Evie asked.

"Definitely." I said. "And I can already see you getting a moon ring. In fact, I reckon that you should try one for size." I slipped on the ring when Mimmi called me over.

"Thalie you need to get Evie out of here." She told me. "She'll know we're hiding something in here."

"Where am I supposed to take her?" I asked.

"The moon pool." Zoe said. "I don't know."

Shrugging, I walked back into the grotto where apparently Evie was gone.

"Evie?" Mimmi asked.

"Not like her to just leave." Sirena noted.
"Maybe she's gone for a swim." Ondina suggested.

"If she did, we would have heard a splash or seen her walk past us." Mimmi said.

"Either way I gotta find her." I said.

"I'll help." Mimmi piped up.

"And I'll get ready for the party." Ondina said.

Mimmi and I left, not knowing that Evie was there the whole time. She just wasn't in the right size.

Zac's POV

At the Cafe…

I walked in the cafe, noticing my cousin who was serving some food.

"If you ask, Evie's left." Erik spoke to me.

"Why?" I asked.

"Hmm. Let me think." Erik mock wondered. "Maybe a certain someone didn't wish his girl a happy birthday."

"But that would have ruined the surprise." I said.

Erik gave me a for real look. "I think you might have given her one by not saying anything."

I immediately panicked, pulling out my phone. "I better call her. Make sure she's ok."

"Oh no it's fine." Erik said. "I sent Mimmi with her."

"Mimmi?" I asked, now really panicking.

"Zac don't sweat it." Erik said. "I gave her specific instructions not to give Evie any leads about the party until the time came."

"Still I need to be sure." I got my phone out and left Evie a message. It was then I heard a distinct argument from Kimi near the clothe store.

"This is not up for discussion Diablo." I heard her say as I walked over. "We are not getting Evie something that drools a lot!"

"Oh come on!" Diablo exclaimed.

"What exactly are we debating about here?" I quipped.

"Diablo here wants to get Evie a dog." Kimi quipped.

"It's a puppy!" Diablo exclaimed. "And they make good companions."

"Diablo." I said. "I gotta agree with Kims here. As cute as they are, dogs slobber and drool and you know our...allergic reaction to wetness."
"Please?" Diablo asked pulling out the puppy eyes.

"No." I said firmly but trying hard not to crack at Diablo's adorable face he was putting on.

Diablo's POV

At Evie's house…

"Alright." Zac said to me and Cam. "Music."

"Check." I said.

"Disco ball and lights."

"Check."

"Food."

"Check." Cam said.

"Drinks."

"Check."

"Cake."

"Wait, I had to get cake?" Cam asked.

"Cam…." Zac warned, his eyes starting to glow blue.

"Calm down bro." Cam said. "Check."

"Decorations?"

"Done and done." Doug said coming down from a ladder.

"Zac bit of advice." I said. "Part of planning a party is to not worry too much about the details. That's where the term, "Party Guy" comes from."

"I just hope Mimmi's looking after Evie." I said.

Thalie's POV

Looking after? More like I was looking for her! I was in the moon pool, my tail resting against the rock slab. I looked around and I groaned to find no one.

"Come on Evie. Where are you?"

As I left the moon pool, I knew I had to keep looking. Mimmi went after Zac to warn him. Normally they could have used their twin telepathy, but they still needed practice and they couldn't read each other's minds unless they were within 3 feet of each other so far.
I had to find Evie and fast because if I didn't bring Evie back, Zac was going to flip.

No one's POV

At the party…

The music was blasting, the floor was filled with dancing and there was lively chatter. Everyone conversing and dropping off presents.

"I never understand the need to dress formal to every special thing," Xandou said, looking at the girls.

"To be honest Xan, neither do I." Helen agreed.

"You're wearing a nice shirt." Xandou countered.

"That's only cause it's party time." Helen said to him. "Take off that sweatshirt you have."

"Why?" Xandou asked.

"Because I want you too." Helen said, flashing her golden eyes at his green ones. Xandou, shrugging, took off his yellow sweatshirt, to reveal a blue short sleeved t shirt that showed off his lean arms to the world.

"Happy?" He asked, getting a drink and noticing the black girl continuing to smile at him a little.

"What?"

"Nothing." She said. "It's just fun seeing you like this."

"Like what?" Xandou asked.

Helen just shrugged. "Like a normal person."

Xandou mock gasped. "I am a normal person!"

Helen just laughed. "I can't believe you said that, you featherhead!"

Meanwhile, Ondina set up the fishbowl, that unbeknownst to everyone, was where the shrunken Evie was.

"I hope Evie likes what I've done." Ondina said.

"What is it?" Erik asked.

"My present to Evie." Zac said.

Ondina lifted the black blanket to reveal the colorful fishbowl.

"I did the decorating!" Ondina exclaimed.

"The coral is a nice touch." Carly said.

"Although pink would be better." Rose said. She had left Haru who was talking with Xhiva.
"With you, pink would be better with everything." Ondina said only to get the Latina sticking her tongue at her.

"Zac!" A Canadian voice shouted and Mimmi came up running.

"Whoa Mimmi." Raiden said, getting her. Erik, Zac, Raiden, and Mimmi went aside to talk. "What happened?"

"You're ok?" Erik asked.

"I'm fine." Mimmi said. "I've got good news and I've got bad news."

"What's the bad news?" Zac groaned, panicking about Evie.

"Evie's missing." Mimmi said.

"You lost her?" Erik asked.

"We were trying to not get Evie suspicious about anything and when I came back with Thalie in the grotto, she disappeared." Mimmi explained.

"Well if Thalie's looking for her maybe Evie will come on her own." Raiden suggested. "So there may not be a need to call a search party, it could get people in a panic."

"And that will lead straight back to us." Mimmi said, agreeing with her cousin.

"Alright." Zac said. "Evie by estimate should be here in about 2 minutes."

"If she doesn't come, call Thalie." Erik agreed.

Meanwhile Rose and Diablo were conversing.

"Dance?" The South American merman asked.

"No sorry, not my thing." Rose answered. "Although that's more of Thalie's motif. I'm more of a track and field person."

"Then you should play soccer for a bit." Diablo said. "You sure you don't wanna dance?"

"No I'm good thanks." She said.

"Not even for a slow dance?" Diablo wiggled his eyebrows which got Rosalina to push him back. "Down boy." Which only got them laughing.

Zac then got the entire party to hide and when they yelled surprise, they found Thalie who told them that Evie was gonna be late so they went back to partying. Zac tried to call Evie but she didn't pick up.

Zac was at the jetty, trying to reach Evie but no luck prevailed.

"Nothing huh?" Cam asked.

"She's not at the cafe and no one else has seen her." Zac said grimly. "I messed up big time."

"Yep." Erik agreed. "You screwed up. And less than I did and that's saying something considering Ondina actually talks to me. But today's not about that."
"I'm sure she'll understand." Mimmi said.

"Yeah." Raiden agreed, motioning his arms pulling back. "Give her some slack, then reel her in, then
giver her some slack, then reel her in."

"Knock it off blockhead." Mimmi said, slapping Raiden's head. "You of all people should know that
she's a girl, not a mackerel."

"Are you sure?" Raiden asked, smiling a devil smile. "Cause lately, I really can't tell the difference."

Cam had a mixed reaction of a cough and a snigger. "What? It's true."

Zac smiled and rolled his eyes as he headed back to the party. "I can't believe we're related to that."

He muttered to Erik.

"I know." Mimmi agreed. "How do you put up with him?"

"Guys." Erik told his cousins. "Raiden's a handful, but he'll grow up someday...I hope."

"Thanks for the vote of confidence big brother!" Raiden said sarcastically. "Really helpful to child
development."

"You sure?" Thalie asked, walking by. "You look like you're still in it."

"Nice one!" Erik, Mimmi, and Zac high fived her walking by.

"Did you just insult your own boyfriend?" Raiden asked.

"Yes I did." Thalie said. "Now shut up and dance with me."

Before she could take another step, Raiden grabbed her and snaked his arms around her waist while
he kissed her hard. When he let go he grinned like the Cheshire Cat at her.

"What?" Thalie asked.

"I love you." Raiden said, taking her to the dancefloor.

Line break…

Some time had passed and Evie, in their side of the story had not arrived. Cam was trying out party
food. Xhiva and Kimi were having quite a good of a time.

"Xhiva." Kimi said. "You look like you're having fun."

"I am." He said to his girlfriend. "In fact, I haven't been to a party in a really long time."

"Really?" Kimi asked.

"Yeah." Xhiva said. "Last party I went to was a graduation party at MIT. Didn't go very well."

"What happened?" Kimi asked.

"I got drunk." Xhiva asked.

"Given your background, why am I not surprised?" Kimi asked, getting a pouty face from Xhiva. "I
still love you!" She kissed him and he returned it.
"She's still not answering." Zac said to Thalie, whose boyfriend left to talk to some friends. "Thals, I blew it! I wanted this party to be awesome. I wanted Evie to know how special she makes me feel."

"I know how much you care about her." Thalie said. "And I know just as much how Evie care about you."

"We have known each other since we were 6," Zac said to his sister. "Even back then I couldn't wait to go to school to see her. Just as I couldn't wait to get home to see you. She's the girl for me. I can feel it. She makes me smile. And now she probably hates me. I can't imagine my life without her."

"Zac this is not your fault." Thalie told her brother. "She'll come here. I know it."

When Thalie left, Evie had managed to finally get a jet of water to hit Zac who warned the others before he transformed. Mimmi and Thalie managed to turn her back into her normal size.

"I'm so sorry Evie." Zac said. "It was so stupid of me not to tell you about the party, I really wanted to surprise you and give you the best present ever."

"I heard what you said to Thalie." Evie cut him off. "And that was the best present ever. I can't imagine my life without you either."

The rest of the party went smoothly and Evie could not have been more happy. Rosalian got her new sneakers, and to quote from her, "In case she needed to dry herself faster." Raiden got her a headpiece for her phone, and Evie teared up at Haru's present. Erik got her a Polaroid camera. Carly got her a lot of girly things.


At the Khatha house…

Jacob's POV

It was dinner so things could not have gone more smoothly. My son, daughter and nephews told me all about the party and the mishap. Persephone was away with Rita working on something.

"So overall the lesson is…" I trailed off to give them a chance to speak.

"Don't try to hard to surprise your girlfriend?" Erik asked.

"Exactly." I said. I had to admit, Erik looks like his father, but he's got his mother in him.

"No." Raiden said.

"No?" Zoe asked, in a mouthful of her food. "Then what is the lesson?"

"Listen to the werewolf," Raiden said. "Listen to Diablo, he is the party guy."

"Yes yes." Zac said. "You wouldn't believe how many I told you so's I got from him."

"Well I can agree that overall, this was a success." Zoe said.

"Wait." Raiden said. "Can I ask something? Something...personal?"

There was an awkward silence before I answered, "Sure."
"How did you and Aunt Nerissa meet?"

"Yeah." Zoe said. "Was it love at first sight like Erik and Ondina?"

Everyone looked a little weirded out while Erik blushed a little and I smiled sadly. "It's actually a funny story."

Flashback…

26 years ago..

Moon Island, Near Madagascar….

A young mermaid about 12 years old was swimming near a moon pool, where she was supposed to meet a teacher on her international journey. She had long black hair with indigo highlights and deep blue eyes. She took in the beautiful island with great observation but then with her magical senses, could feel a presence behind her.

It was a merman, about 13, with light Asian skin, brown eyes, and some bronze armor. He had shaggy unkempt hair and he treaded behind her, considering that they were above water.

The mermaid, already ready for anything, grabbed the long thing behind her and threw the merman in front of her

"You." Her Canadian voice rang with venom.

"Easy." The merman said swimming slowly away from her. "Easy, I just shaved this morning."

"Oh really?" The mermaid asked. "You missed a spot."

"Alright, alright!" The merman said putting his hand in surrender. "Just give me a chance to apologize."

"Apologize for what?" The mermaid asked.

Without warning, the merman raised his arm and a water tentacle whipped her back, allowing him to grab his spear. "That maybe?"

The mermaid glared at him, eyes glowing. "You..sneaky son of a narwhal!"

"Wow." The mermaid said sarcastically. "That's a mouthful coming from a mermaid."

The mermaid conjured up a staff made of Greek fire which didn't hurt her at all. "Are you always this charming, or am I just having a lucky night?"

The two sparred, each of the weapons hitting each other. "Moonlight, privacy, nighttime." The merman said. "Can't think of a better place for hand to hand combat." The mermaid made a move which he blocked. "You fight almost as well as a merman."

"Oh that's funny." The mermaid said. "I was gonna say the same thing about you!"

"That's hitting to the core dontcha think?" The merman asked.

"No." The mermaid said. "This is." She swung her staff along with a wave of water and slapped him hard.
"Touche." The merman said. "Didn't know you could actually fight."

"I'm not some damsel in distress." The mermaid challenged.

"I noticed." Said the merman. "Allow me, my name's Jacob. It means...I'm awesome." The mermaid stared at him, with a look of "Yeah right." "And you are..."

"Is this an interrogation?" The mermaid asked, dissolving her magic.

"I believe it's called an introduction." Jacob said, sheathing away his weapon.

"You're not gonna take me?" The mermaid asked. "After what I did to your supply line?"

"Not as long as you're near a moon pool, I can't." Jacob said with kindness.

"You're not at all like the other soldiers." The mermaid said. "You respect honor and customs."

"Thank you." Jacob said.

"So." The mermaid said swimming towards him. "If you're not going to arrest me, then what do you want?"

"I'd settle for your name." Jacob said.

The mermaid looked at him slyly before answering, "Nerissa."

"Beautiful." Jacob admired. "Much better than Jacob anyway."

Nerissa chuckled before they stared into each other.

"Good work Captain!" They heard the menacing voice of Slade. "Now capture her!"

Jacob looked at Nerissa who narrowed her eyes at her. "Claim Sanctuary." He whispered to her. "Say it."

"You tricked me." She hissed at him.

"I'm waiting Jacob." Slade said.

"I'm sorry sir, she claimed sanctuary." Jacob lied. "There's nothing I can do."

"Then drag her or..."

"Slade!" A merman swam by. "You will not touch her! Don't worry. Chief Slade here learned years ago, to respect the sanctity of the tribes."

As Jacob was led out he looked back at Nerissa who continued to reek of hate, he mouthed, "I'm sorry."

End of Flashback...

"It wasn't until I saw her again at Carnvial 2 years later. Do you wanna know what happened the minute she saw me?" They all nodded yes. "I got punched in the face."

"That's funny." Raiden said. "That happened to me too."

"You met Thalie and she punched you?" Zoe asked. "How did you meet?"
"I found her in the reef." My nephew said. "She was...shot down and wounded."

"Really?" Erik asked. "Then why did she punch you?"

"Oh well." He laughed nervously. "Because the crazy thing is...I'm actually the one who shot her down. Hey it's ok. She got even with me. And it hurt because, that girl can throw a punch." I could feel my son's anger on my nephew and it didn't take Raiden two minutes to know that Zac was plotting to kill him for this. "So Uncle Jacob you were born in the Ares Tribe?"

"Yes I was." I said. "My grandfather joined. I ran away from them 5 months after I met Nerissa. I'm what you call the black shark of the family."

"Speaking of family, why didn't you say your last name when you said your name to Nerissa?" Zac asked. "I mean...my mother?"

"Funny thing about last names when it comes to mermaids." I explained. "Ever since the war, last names have been kind of a touchy subject among merpeople. Only married couples and actual families can have last names. If two merpeople who come from a pod and a tribe, they can create last names. Pods and tribes, don't have last names, just clans and families in the clans. It's why the ruling family's name is included in the clan name, to signify who rules it. The only two places you can get married is in a clan or land. And not only a mermaid has to take on the spouse's last name when they are married, a merman can also take on a mermaid's last name."

"You sea creatures have strange customs." Zac said amazed, causing us to laugh.

"This is our heritage Zac." Erik said. "Get used to it."

After dinner ended, my son left to go to his girlfriend's. I was already proud of him even after missing so much.

Evie's POV

At the beach…

We were on a moonlight walk on the beach, to celebrate my birthday.

"The whole time I was in that bowl, I was terrified I would never get out." I said. "But I was terrified of not seeing you as well."

"And I'm sorry for not telling you about the party." Zac said, squeezing my hand. "Evie, I love you."

"I love you too." We placed on each other's lips a small kiss. "You should have told me about the party."

"I wanted it to be a surprise." My handsome boyfriend said. "But yeah, I should have told you."

"Better still." I said. "Drop some hints."

"Oh you got it!" Zac exclaimed. "Come here!" He grabbed me and lifted me and spun me around.

"Zac!" I laughed.

He picked me up bridal style and we dived in the ocean. We swam for miles and miles, enjoying the
nightlife. I admired Zac as a merman, he was more happy, more free, and more of himself. And not literally, emotionally. And me being a mermaid made me feel more connected to him in more ways than I could comprehend.

Wanting to breathe in the nighttime air, I took Zac's hand and surfaced.

"Beautiful night isn't it?" I asked.

Zac smiled, cupping my cheek. "Not as gorgeous as you."

"Oh you charmer." I said kissing him. Zac pulled in closer for a more passionate kiss and it was quite intense. We broke off and he whispered two words I wanted his voice to say all day.

"Happy Birthday Evie."
The Return of an Old Friend

No one's POV

Out in the South Pacific

It seemed like an ordinary day for the Easter Tribe. Or what was left of it. The mermaids were chatting and swimming away. Suddenly, zooming by, was a merperson with a silver helmet and silver chest armor with some arm bracers. Behind the person, was a giant sea monster which rose to the surface, causing a panic among the mermaids as the mysterious person quickly stole their valuables. Just as the two came, they left.


Thalie's POV

The bell rang loud and clear, the hallway filling with swarming students. I took out my phone which I silenced in LA class and I saw a text from my mom, saying I had to come to her office. Seeing as my mom was the principal, I kind of had an obligation to go. So I pushed my way through the crowds to my mom's office to find when I got there, all of the Mako gang.

"What are all of you doing here?" I asked.

"Well we all got a text from your mom to meet here." Evie said.

"I have a reason to." My mom said, coming in and sitting down in her desk. "My sister, Nerida runs the Mako Pod."

"How is she?" I asked. "How's Aunt Nerida?" I had not heard much from my aunt in the last few months, mostly because she was busy running the pod.

"She's fine Thalassa." My mom said. "But that's not why we're here."

"Did we do something wrong?" Zac asked.

"No." She said. "At least I don't think so."

"What do you mean?" Erik asked.

"According to my sister and one of the mermaids in the mermaid council, someone's been raiding and looting pods all over the world. And not just pods, a few tribes too." My mom said. "Chiefs and Pod Leaders are starting to pin the blame on each other."

"And what's this got to do with us?" Helen asked.

"Yeah cause I've got shop class in 5." Xandou said.

"You're not going anywhere until we get to the bottom of this." My mom said sternly. "Nerida suspects that it was one of you mermen or at least one of you mermaids. Now I'm not gonna punish anyone nor will they. Thalassa's aunt just wants to know who it is."

"Boys?" Evie asked.

"Nope wasn't me." Xhiva and Xandou said in unison.
"Consorzios?" Kimi asked.

"I didn't do it." Erik said.

"Negatory." Raiden said.

"No estas." Diablo said.

"Same." Zac agreed.

"And I swear Mom." I said. "It wasn't any of us mermaids."

"Was it the Ares Tribe?" Evie asked.

"Evie." Diablo said. "Mermaids raid us, we don't raid them."

"Well the latest raid took place this morning, right before school time." Mom said.

"Aunt Rita." Raiden said, prompting weird looks from everyone. "If I can call you that, I swear to you, we haven't done anything other than go to school."

"If it wasn't any of us then we have a serious problem on our hands." Rose said.

"We have a rogue in our situation then." My mom said.

"A rogue?" Evie and Zac asked.

"A lone merperson without a pod or tribe." I explained.

"And contrary to belief." Raiden said. "They're actually survive on their own, which makes them rare and dangerous."

"How is a loner dangerous?" Xandou asked.

"Because to pods or tribes, they're extremely unpredictable." Erik said. "And if there's one thing mermaids love, it's predictability." This got him a combination of a death stare from all mermaids and Zac in the room. "No offense."

"Aside from that." I said. 'We've got a mysterious rogue who's become a thief. And we're gonna get to the bottom of it!"

**Diablo's POV**

After school, we met up and agreed to split into teams and each team had a mermaid who had a conch shell so we could signal to them what we've found. My team consisted of Diablo, Thalie and Raiden.

We searched the far northern edge of the reef for any clue of what to find about this rogue mermaid or merman. I had encountered a few back in my day before I joined the Ares and some were pretty much isolated but one was nice enough to heal my wounds for a bit before she had to leave.

I felt a tapping on my shoulder and I turned to see Raiden point to Thalie stopping a dolphin.

Hello. I heard Raiden speak in dolphin talk.
You speak dolphin? Me and Thalie asked.

Of course. He said.

I'm Delphin. I helped Blair here with the prophecy last year. The dolphin said

Blair? Raiden asked

Seriously? I asked.

It's a long story. Thalie said. But Delphin may have some information regarding this rogue.

Oh that rogue is not alone. Delphin warned.

What do you mean? I asked.

Yeah rogues are always alone. Raiden argued.

Not this one. This one's got a creature with her. And a dangerous one.

How big and dangerous? Thalie asked.

It's like a sea dragon but it doesn't breathe fire. Delphin explained.

If this rogue is raiding pods and tribes with a sea monster.. I trailed off, knowing where this was going.

Then we have a much more serious problem on our hands. Raiden finished.

We better head back. Thanks Delphin. Thalie said to Delphin.

Anytime.

Thalie sounded the conch shell when the dolphin swam off. But before we could swim away Raiden grabbed her arm and surfaced.

"Blair?" Raiden asked his girlfriend. "That used to be your name? Blair?" He spat the name like it was venom.

"What's wrong with that?" She asked, crossing her arms.

"Blair." He said. "It's just...mundane."

"I spent most of my life being mundane." She argued.

"Ish." I piped up. "Come on guys."

Taking my word, we all swam to our meeting place; Mako Island. After all of us got dry, we sat in a circle to discuss our plans after my team and I discussed it.

"Considering we don't know what this is, how do we even stop it?" Zac asked.

"Fortunately." Raiden said. "We have an animal expert who knows that in order to be the animal, you have to understand it."

"Right." I said. "I've been going over what I know, and I think that we're not dealing with a dragon.."
"Wait." Evie said. "Dragons exist?"

"Duh." Xandou said. "That's where the last name Tiraken comes from."

"How?" Zac asked.

I rolled my eyes. Sometimes Zac could be so oblivious. "Tiraken means dragon, dumbass."

Zac glared at him while Sirena asked, "How can you speak 9 languages and sound like an asshole in every one of them?"

"Ignoring that." Thalie said, nodding me to go on.

"It's a sea serpent." I said. "It's got a long tail, venomous claws that can paralyze you for a short time and it's tail it's so strong that it can literally squeeze the life out of you."

"Punch me because I might be dreaming." Helen muttered, prompting a punch from Raiden.

"How do we find it?" Rose asked.

"Same as any animal." Kimi said. "Food. Diablo what does a sea serpent eat?"

"Starfish and crabs." I said. "There's a part of the north side of the Great Barrier reef that's crawling with those two things."

And so we left to find this sea serpent.


Erik's POV

We all speed swam to the South part of the island, thankfully it was Friday so the people on land wouldn't be suspicious.

I'm feeling good about this island. Rose's thoughts echoed.

That's what you said about the last couple of islands we looked, Rosie. Xandou said.

So I think positive. Rose argued. Is that a crime?

Ignore him Rose I heard Evie.

Hey big bro. I heard Raiden. Once we catch this sea serpent what are we gonna do?

Simple. I thought. We catch the trainer and see what we can get out of him.

Or her. Kimi defended.

Hey once we catch this sea serpent, can I keep it? Helen asked.

And logically, there's no equation in your house that's gonna factor a giant sea monster. Xhiva said.

I'm just saying, he'd make a good pet.

Can we please be reminded why we have a demolitions expert in our team? Zoe asked.

The answer lies in your question. Xhiva said.
FYI Diablo said. I own that line, it's my thing.

Now your thing is sucking it up. Thalie said.

Hey! That's my thing! Zac exclaimed.

Guys! Helen exclaimed. I sense fire...on the island.

So we all swam to the island and when we got dry, we followed Helen's fire senses to this camp site with a fireplace that still had smoke coming out of it.

"All this stuff here." Evie observed some chests laid beside a tree. "It must be some of the stuff stolen from the mermaids."

"And mermen!" Diablo piped up.

"Guys!" Sirena panted running towards us.

"We got your message." Ondina said.

"Alright." Thalie said, getting our attention. "It's pretty obvious someone's here, so our best guess is the rogue. So we'll split in teams. Raiden, you get Xandou, Helen, and Ondina. Evie, take Sirena, Rosalina, Diablo, and Zac. Erik, you get Mimmi, Xhiva, and Kimi. I'll go on my own just to see if we get a surprise view. Mimmi's team, you stay here around this area in case the rogue shows up. If the rogue shows up, signal us."

We all nodded and split up, not knowing that from behind some rocks, the rogue, accompanied by a large snake head was listening.


Kimi's POV

We searched the whole place trying to figure out what this rogue was doing. So far, we discovered that the rogue has been stealing just potion ingredients and a few treasures. Nothing really major, but if this was a series of robberies, then it was a cause for concern.

"I found something!" Mimmi exclaimed. We ran to Mimmi who was trying to unsheath a dagger of some sort.

"Do you need help?" Erik asked.

"Nah I got it." Mimmi said.

"Must be the rogue's weapon." Xhiva observed. 'But Erik, why do you think that this rogue would leave behind the tools?" We turned around to find that Erik had vanished!

"Erik!" Xhiva called. "Erik!"

"Erik Consorzio where are you?" I cried out.

I heard a yelp and I saw Xhiva get dragged away to my horror. "XHIVA!" I screamed trying to get to him and found myself being pulled by a long green tail, like a lizard's into a tree. I looked around and I saw the others stuck in the tree. Including Mimmi.

"Looks like the rogue found us." I said.
"You think?" Mimmi snipped. "I'm gonna try to call them." But when she pressed her hands around her leather jacket pockets, she looked at us in a panic. "The rogue stole my conch shell."

"Great." Erik muttered. "Just hope the others are doing a less of a crap job than what we're doing."

Xandou's POV

Me and my team swam for any sign but I had this feeling that someone was watching me. I checked behind me many times but I couldn't find anyone. Ondina said I was being paranoid, but years of being a criminal taught me that you always have to be on your feet, no matter what.

"I don't think we're gonna find anyone here." Helen said. "I can't even sense any heat."

"But I do sense a bit of electricity." Raiden said.

"That's because it's coming from us." Ondina snapped.

"Wait." Helen's eyes glowed gold. "I sense heat." And just as the words left her mouth, steam began rising quickly out of the water.

We all tried to find each other but a shadow moved in the water and in the mist. It charged faster than the speed of light (and that's saying something coming from a speedster), and used its venomous claws to scratch all of us. I barely escaped before I felt a nick and I felt my entire body go numb as I sank to the ocean floor of the reef.

Rosalina's POV

We swam on the west side of the island, trying to find this rogue but we couldn't find him or her. I wasn't going to call this rogue an it. This rogue was a person...one we had no idea who at the time. We were in a small cave.

"Guys I found something!" Sirena exclaimed. We all swam to her to find a beautiful shell with intricate carving.

"Is that a shell?" Evie asked.

"This is one of my shells." Sirena said. "I used to make one for Aquata every year. I wonder how this rogue came across one of them. It looks like the one I made Aquata last year, when Nixie met that little boy."

"Whoever, it is." Evie said. "We better find this person."

"Wait, does it seem a bit...compressed to you?" Diablo asked.

Zac came up, panicked. "The rogue must have figured we're here. The entry's sealed off. We can get out but it'll probably take some time."

"How long?" Sirena asked.

"20 minutes give or take." He said.

"Let's get to work then." Evie said. We all swam down and got to work on moving the rocks away
Thalie's POV

I walked on the hills, looking far and wide for this rogue and sea serpent. I knew that this rogue wasn't stupid. Most mermen in the Ares Tribe, from what my boyfriend told me, get their resources and operate sometimes on land. I turned invisible, after checking if anyone was watching and I used some water from a river nearby to lift me in the air. I knew it was a risk because anyone who was in tune with the news in the Gold Coast would recognize it as a trick when I was Ocean Girl.

I flew down close enough to the ocean, but far away not to get wet. It was a good thing I was wearing sneakers, or I would have a bit of a problem. I tried to see, but I wasn't going to find what I was gonna see.

"Wait." I said. "I don't need to see." I closed my eyes and focused my energy around me. I felt a presence a few yards from me and I flew towards it. I noticed a large figure with a mermaid with the signature bronze tail disappear in the depths.

"It's gotta be the rogue." I said, diving in, losing my water board. After the transformation took place, I used my superspeed swimming to chase after the rogue. The rogue was fast, but I pushed to go faster after her. The rogue used her moon ring to send energy blasts to try to throw me off and I managed to dodge one, except for one that knocked me back.

But I wasn't giving up easily. The rogue, apparently riding the sea serpent swam back and I got a good look at her. She was a Caucasian mermaid who looked to be in her late teens and I saw pale green eyes behind a silver Viking helmet that covered her whole face except for the eyes. She also wore a silver breastplate and had a few daggers concealed in her brown leather arm bracers.

I realized I took a few seconds too late because I almost got him by the giant tail of the sea serpent before the rogue and the serpent broke on the run. I zoomed after them, using the water to throw them off before I made a clear shot and separated the two.

I grinned in victory as I swam to the mermaid. She wasn't knocked down so that was good news. When she made a move to try to use her powers, I used the ocean around me to stop her from using her hand.

I wouldn't do that if I were you. I mentally warned her.

The mermaid paused and she looked at me with a look of analyzing as if she was studying me. I wouldn't do that either. By the way, long time no see. I let control loose, allowing her to remove her helmet. It was a girl with pale thin skin, thick eyebrows short blond hair that was now bobcut length and a devious cunning smile. But I knew this mermaid. Because the rogue who had been causing the Mermaid Council so much trouble, was none other than...

Lyla?

Lyla's POV

Out in the sea….

I was in front of a crowd of people I knew and didn't. It was mostly Diablo I was most anxious to
talk to. My best friend, my childhood friend had gone from a precious little boy to an adorable teenager. He still retained the dark past he had behind that mask of happiness he always wore. His black hair had gotten pretty messy and it looked like a wild animal slept in it.

Zac and the rest of the team I knew from nearly two years ago had also changed.

"You paralyzed us!" Helen exclaimed, her fire literally rising a little.

"You trapped us in a cave!" Rose exclaimed with some wind rushing. "Not cool."

"Not to mention you left us dangling from a tree!" Kimi exclaimed, the air getting cold.

"Though I have to admit." Said Sirena. "The shell move, that brought back some memories."

"Guys." Thalie said, while i was feeling guilty for what I did. "I'm sure Lyla has a really good reason for doing what she did right?"

I sighed. "Look I've been living on my own these past months and I've made more than a few enemies. I didn't want you guys to be involved. I had to send you back to Mako."

"You really couldn't have just said that instead of causing me a series of itches I couldn't scratch?" Ondina snipped. "And I mean literally."

"Would you have listened?" I challenged.

"She's got a point." Mimmi said. "Some of us, including the Baumans are a pretty stubborn bunch."

"Frankly I don't listen to anyone." Xandou said.

"What about Dad?" Xhiva quipped.

"Lyla." Diablo said. "You're not alone, you got us."

"Yeah, you can stay if you want." Sirena agreed.

"Sirena." I said. "Please, just let this go."

"We still have the grotto." Erik said swimming forward. I had to admit, we kind of looked alike. We had the same tan but my tan was mostly acquired from all that time in Mako. "Nothing permanent, we'll get you some provisions and catch up."

"Wow." Kimi whispered swimming to my sea serpent. "This is fascinating. Rita and I are gonna have fun analyzing it."

"Kimi it's a pet not a science experiemnt." Helen said.

"Well frankly I know that Helen." Kimi said. "But still, not every day you get to see one."

"I think it's kind of cute!" Rose exclaimed.

"Guys, give the serpent space." Thalie said swimming to them.

I chuckled a little. "I see some things haven't changed."

"Yep." Evie said. "It gets pretty hectic sometimes. Come on, let's head back."

"You're not gonna give up are ya?" I asked.
"Hmm not likely." Evie said. I had to admit she had grown a lot.

"Alright." I said. "I'll go with you."

"You're gonna love the place!" Zac exclaimed with excitement.

Xhiva's POV

At the grotto…

Lyla apparently had gotten legs from the time she spent. She looked like she was dressed for the army. She wore a camouflage bandana on her hair, green tanktop, jean shorts, a dog tag, and military boots.

"How did you get a sea serpent?" I asked.

"Where did you get one cause I want one!" My twin brother asked.

"You want anything that has to do with speed." Zac pointed out.

"And that's what makes it awesome!" Xandou countered.

"Never mind that." Rita said. "Lyla how did you train a sea serpent? It's incredible? No one's ever trained one."

"Actually I owe a lot to you guys." She said. "Especially you Diablo." The sea serpent was in the grotto, head still in the water. "When I found Stormchaser…"

"Wait." Diablo said giving Lyla a hug. "You are officially forgiven for any mistake you have ever made."

"Why?" Evie asked.

"Because she made a good name." He said. "And I am a pro at naming things!"

"Oh God." Xandou muttered rolling his eyes at the Latino.

"Anyway." Lyla continued. "When I found him, he had been hurt bad in fight with a Korean water dragon. He held on sure, but he needed to be nursed back to health. When he recovered, I used the training Diablo taught me. Together we have made the perfect team. We're unstoppable. No one can take us down. And if they tried, they'll be sorry for it!"

Lyla's tone became threatening which kind of gave me chills. However Raiden didn't think so.

"Excuse me?" He asked. "Can you do this?" He stepped back and took a breath before his whole body became illuminated with electricity and the lights started flickering. It was one of the hardest techniques in the world, La Anastasia.

Lyla just laughed. "How cute." And brought a tube to her mouth and fired a poison dart at his thigh.

Raiden removed it and smirked at it. "What's that supposed to…” He didn't move because he fell down, landing on his face. "Ow."

"What was that?" Sirena asked.
"Stormchaser's paralyzing venom." Lyla said. "We'll call it a draw then.

Erik's POV

A few hours later, I served Lyla her drink. David and Carly seemed to know her too because she was welcomed back with open arms.

"Say Lyla." I said. "What else can your pet do?"

"First of all, Stormchaser is not a pet." She said. "He is my companion. And second, he can smell anything with blood 100,00 miles away. One single tooth from him can gnaw through even bone like it's butter."

Raiden's POV

Me, my cousins, my girlfriend sat, observing Lyla. "I like this Lyla." I said.

"She does look like you." Thalie observed. "Same skin tone."

"For your information, we had a tiny bit of natural tan that deepened once we lived in Arabia." I said.

"Lyla's much more different now." Evie said. "Wonder how Nixie's doing."

"Who's Nixie?" I asked.

"Another friend we met last year." Cam said, sitting down. "I gotta agree, Lyla's more mature and serious."

"She's definitely grown up since the last time we saw her." Zac noted.

"Zac it's been almost 2 years." Evie said. "We were just kids then. We've all grown up."

"Yeah but Lyla back then was so sweet..." Zac said. "Now she's so... I don't know."

"Edgy?" Cam asked. "What's wrong with that?"

"I agree." Thalie said. "I like her new strong attitude."

"Guys there's attitude and raiding pods." Zac said.

"Which we still need to ask her about." Thalie finished.

"Can you guys do me a favor and wait until I ask her about the sea serpent?" Cam asked. "I gotta see it for myself."

Diablo's POV

Me, Thalie, and Zac went to Mako to check on Lyla, who was taking care of Stormchaser. I had to admit, having a sea serpent was pretty cool. I talked to her and he told me that she was trained by a few mermaids and mermen who fought in Afghanistan and that she was on tour there. On the last part, I couldn't tell if Lyla was kidding except for when I saw a bunch of scars somewhat similar to
Erik's. It had been a long time since I saw her. She did have some walls built up but when I was
discovered, I was pulled away by my mother and put in a cage and shipped away until Slade found
me.

"Eat up boy." Lyla said, feeding him a large pile of crabs. "You're gonna need the strength for what
we've got coming."

"Lyla?" Thalie asked. "Can we talk?"

"Sure." She said. "About what?"

"Lyla what the hell are you doing?" Zac asked.

"Just taking care of business." Lyla said, dismissing it. "Nothing you need to worry about."

"But I do worry." Thalie said. "When there are mermaids attacking my pod, I worry."

"Lyla why are you doing this?" I asked my best friend.

"Diablo." Lyla turned around. "A lot has happened in the past 5 years. We're not kids anymore.
Everything's changed."

"This isn't the Lyla I know." Zac said. "It can't be."

"I am who I am now." Lyla said. "The last time you saw me, I... never mind. If you want me to
leave.."

"I didn't say that." Zac said.

"Lyla, you're still my friend." Thalie said.

"Oh thanks guys." Lyla said, hugging us and then giving Diablo an affectionate hug. "You've
always been a true friend to me."

Later that night...

Lyla's POV

I walked to each of the houses of the girls and boys. How I got their address is a skill the army taught
me. I used my powers to put padlocks on the doors so no one could get in or out. Mostly I didn't
want them to get out.

"I'm sorry guys." I whispered as I padlocked Zac's garage. "Nothing personal." I ran to the jetty and
in a leap of faith dived off into the water, not knowing that I was being watched.

Thalie's POV

Me and Zac turned ourselves and Diablo visible as we watched Lyla leave. I had the suspicion that
Lyla was gonna try something like this tonight so we teamed up to go after to find out what she was
doing.

"Diablo." I said. "How come you asked me to hold your hand when I cloaked myself? You never
really explained why."
"Well it's because I'm a morpher." The Latino merman said. "And the only magic that morphers have is the power of shapeshifting and getting legs. I can't levitate things or bend water like any of you. And most sucking of all, I can't heat water."

Zac winced, patting his back. "Jesus. That must be rough."

Diablo chuckled. "Oh it does. It's another one of the reasons why my mother hates me."

"Come on guys." I said. "Lyla shouldn't be that far ahead."

"Can you get a scent?" Zac asked.

"You got something of Lyla's?" He asked.

"You can smell Lyla in the water?" I asked.

"Of course." Diablo said. "I'm not just a werewolf." I reached in my pocket and pulled out the camouflage bandana she dropped unknowingly. I laid it in front of Diablo while he began to change into a bloodhound. His nose became elongated, fur sprouted and he got on fours. He took a minute to sniff out the scent before he changed back into a human being. "I've got a trail. She must have surfaced to get some air."

"Nice!" Zac said highfiving him.

"Alright guys." I said. "Let's see what our old friend is up to."

We all jumped out of the water and superswam, following Diablo who took the form of a tiger shark.

We followed her to the vast ocean where we saw Lyla conversing with an unknown merperson. Diablo and Zac held shoulders and we all turned invisible.

"Diablo, what are they saying?" Zac asked.

"Something about her and finding the right location." He said.

"Ok this is getting strange." I said.

Marissa's POV

"Thanks Marissa." Lyla spoke to me through her helmet. "As always, it's a pleasure doing business with you."

"The feeling's mutual." I said. "I enjoy our little talks."

Lyla nodded and dove under the water, disappearing from my sight.

Diablo's POV

The feeling of being invisible, was not something I experienced every day. I felt all tingly all over the place and I couldn't even see my blue merman tail.

When I couldn't smell Lyla anymore, I whispered to the others, "She's left."

"Alright Marissa." Thalie said. "Let's see what we can get out of you."

Line Break…
"I'm sorry guys." The mermaid Marissa said, once we found her. "But I've been sworn to secrecy. Even the chief of the Asmat Tribe couldn't part these lips."

"Really?" I asked, my voice taking a threatening tone and my eyes glowing their werewolf orange. "How about the illegitimate Son of Veridia?"

"Hold up hold up here." Marissa said, her teal eyes sparking with confusion. "I need to breathe for a minute. Veridia is your mom? Are you pulling my fin?"

"No as a matter of fact I am not." I said matter of factly. "Ironic isn't it? That the merman who is talking to you, is Veridia's accident."

"Look Marissa." Thalie said. "I know I've asked of your knowledge before, and I need your help one more time. We're not gonna force you to talk but we do need to know what exactly Lyla has been doing all this time. We just want to help her."

The merman expert pressed her lips before saying, "Oh alright. I guess you got a point. What do you wanna know?"

Zac swam in front of her and asked, "Can we start with why Lyla is out robbing pods and tribes all by herself?"

"I guess it would have something to do with her group of rebel mermaids and and few of them mermen, all being captured and the mermen sold as slaves." Marissa explained. "The Mermaid Council is responsible for this of course, although Veridia wanted Lyla especially, who by the way was the only one who managed to escape captivity while the others were shipped off to the Boiling Bay the very next day...and executed the following night. Lyla's made it her personal mission to avenge her team of rebels who were planning to stop the Mermaid Council."

"By raiding and looting pods and tribes including her own?" Zac asked.

"Oh no you don't get it." Marissa said trying to explain. "She's actually not looting. She's freeing slaves and redistributing back to the families/pods/tribes of the rebel team she was part of. You see, after the Trident was destroyed, Lyla and her friend Nixie moved on to start new lives. Lyla was attacked by the Ares Tribe and left to die. One of the mermaids of the rebel team found her and brought her to a human warship, containing the rebel team. They trained her how to fight and Lyla to this day, blames herself for what happened to them. So every tribe and pod she raids means some people and families will get back some of what they've lost. But unfortunately, some things just can't be replaced."

"But why cause the Mermaid Council?" Thalie asked. "What does Veridia want from Lyla and why now? Why her?"

"That's a whole lot of why's in one breath girl." Marissa said. "All of which can't be addressed."

"Marissa, we're trying to find Lyla." Zac said.

Marissa groaned and rolled her eyes. "What part of I've been sworn to secrecy don't you understand?" Without a further warning, she dived back and swam away before any of us could catch her.

Zac's POV

"That went well." I said sarcastically.
"Now what are we gonna do?" Thalie asked.

"Your moon ring." Diablo asked.

"You want to use it?" I asked.

"No that's not what I meant." Diablo said. "You can use your moon ring to find her. Sense her energy. And since you're the Omega of Water, I'd say you might be able to pull it off."

Thalie shrugged and raised her fist, her moon ring bringing it's eerie supernatural blue glow. For a moment, I swear she was turning into water but she solidified as soon as she was done and when she was, I had to catch her just to keep her from fainting.

"Sis you ok?" I asked worried.

"Yeah." She said panting. "That was the first time I've ever done that. But we have to after Lyla now. I know where she is but that's not important."

"What do you mean?" Diablo asked.

"It's not where she's going." She said. "It's who she's going after."

It didn't take us a 2 minutes to figure it out.

"We need to go."

Lyla's POV

The time has come, I thought as I swam with my companion, Stormchaser. It has finally come to avenge my family, my team. Every moment of my training has come to this.

I surfaced behind some rocks on a shore near a Tasmanian rock island with Stormchaser behind me, seeing Veridia talk with some mermaids. "This is it Stormchaser." I said. "Remember, we're doing this for Santana, Finn, Rachel, and Noah. For the whole team. For what the Freedom Army stands for. I want my face to be the last thing Veridia ever sees."

But suddenly water came attacking me, but I blocked it and soon I was surrounded by mermaids. But I wasn't going down. Not without a blaze of glory. So I got on Stormchaser but what I didn't realize was that there was a mermaid within the council who could control animals. And that happened to be Veridia. She had a whole bunch of giant squids and sharks at her command and they kept attacking Stormchaser while a mermaid used water to drag me away and I was engaged in a fight with the Mermaid Council. Yes, they are the best of the best mermaids in the world combined as one power but I still took my chances.

"Bring the girl to me!" Veridia commanded. "She can be useful to us! Very useful."

I sliced off water before glowing rope bound my wrists and I knew to my horror, that this rope is designed to block off a mermaid's power and there was another, trying to choke me. I gasped for a breath of fresh air and tried to spit out sea water. I may have been hallucinating from being choked but I swear I heard Zac scream,

"LYLA!"

Zac's POV
My heart raced as I watched my old friend get roped down. She was Diablo's best friend and she may have made some mistakes, but she saved my life and I owe her one.

"Zac." Thalie said. "Get Lyla out of there. Me and Diablo will distract them." They both dived under the water but for a split second, I saw Diablo change into a shark.

Thalie rose out and raised her arms and dropped them, a stormy wave crashing down, sending some mermaids away. Diablo had changed into a Great White and started biting some of the council. But for some reason, he stopped Thalie from going near Veridia nor would he attack her. Like he wanted to protect her.

But that didn't matter, I thought as I swam to Lyla as fast as I could, untying the ropes.

"Lyla." I told her. "You cannot take on the Mermaid Council all by yourself."

"I'm not by myself." Lyla argued. "I have Stormchaser." She swam off to attack some mermaids but I grabbed her arm and the sea serpent who had apparently won his fight with the other sea monsters tried to attack me, but Lyla raised my hand and said, "It's ok. He's a friend. He's here to help me."

"Yeah." Thalie said, surfacing. "Help you get out of here!"

"But I'm too close!" She exclaimed. "I might not get this shot again!"

"But this is suicide!" Diablo yelled. "Do you know what that means? Getting yourself killed!"

"I'm willing to do whatever it takes." Lyla said dangerously.

"Are you willing to sacrifice Stromchaser as well?" I asked, prompting a concerned face from her.

"There isn't much time." Thalie said pointing to the sea storm that was dying down.

"You will have another chance." Zac said. "I promise."

"Lyla let's go!" Diablo said.

Lyla gave out a growl of frustration before diving down into the water with us.

Veridia's POV

I was seething rage, but unlike Slade, I kept my lid on and controlled myself.

"They got away Veridia." Kiara told me.

"I can see that Kiara." I growled.

"What should we do?" Another one of the council asked.

"Wait and see." I said. "Lyla will come to me on her own. I know it."


Lyla's POV

I was in the Mako Island moon pool, being healed by Thalie. I had not been in that pool for some time and boy did I miss it. It didn't really hold much memories but the most prominent one was when I spent the day with Zac. Alright I'll admit it, I had a crush on Zac. How could I not? That strong
built up tail, those warm brown hazel eyes, that messy curly hair, that adorable smile, his adorable dense head, what's not to like? But in all the time spent away, I realized that I had almost stolen away a boy from his girlfriend, his nosy girlfriend and I'm a mermaid of my honor. If there's one thing the Army has taught me, there are some lines you don't cross.

"Using the Water Omega and the shapeshifter to distract them." I said, as Thalie healed a rope burn. "Pretty tactical."

"Thanks." Zac said. "We talked to Marissa. She told us about your rebel team...and what happened to them. I'm so sorry." Hearing my past year made me almost tear up.

"Come here." Diablo said, giving me a hug which I returned.

"Then you all know why she needs to pay." I said.

"Lyla." Zac said. "Killing isn't always the answer. There might be another way."

"What Zac means to say is that we understand why you're doing this." Thalie began. "But you don't have to do this on your own."

"I don't know." I said with contempt. "It seems like I'm destined to be alone. It starts when I'm little, when I get abandoned by my birth pod."

"Wait." Diablo said. "You never said you were adopted."

"That's because there was nothing to talk about." I said.

"Still, your birth pod?" Thalie asked.

"Well technically my birth mother." I said. "But I don't remember much. It was so long ago, over a decade. I just remember a few moments in my mind. I remember my mother's hands. They wanted to give me the love I needed, but she would pull back like something would be holding her back. And I remember having a little brother. He was only a baby and that's all I know. And this." I reached for my necklace. It was a piece of a narwhal's tusk and it had some sort of carving into it. "My mother gave me this when I was a baby and I shared it once with my little brother. I don't know if it's supposed to mean something but whenever I look at it, I think of him. I just wish I knew who he was."

Evie's POV

Lyla had gotten back from her 'mission' and we were all gathered in the grotto. By 'we' I meant, Sirena, Evie, Helen, Kimi, Rose, Zac, Diablo, Thalie, and Rita.

"Look I'm so sorry I locked in your homes." Lyla said. "I just didn't trust that you wouldn't trust me."

"Right." Rita said. "Trust does need to be earned, with animals and people."

"Thanks for understanding." Lyla said. "And with the trust that you're now showing I guess I could stay here for a couple more days."

"Awesome!" Rose exclaimed. "We're gonna have so much fun!"

"The point is." Thalie said. "We have your back. You're one of us, rogue or not."
"Even though you were the rogue mermaid, tried to hide what you have been doing and you padlocked in our own houses!" Helen exclaimed. "So why do we even like you?"

"I'm truly sorry Helen." Lyla said sincerely.

"It's alright mate." She said, with Kimi nodding.

"Hey Lyla." I said finally having a voice. "How about we have some girl time?"

"Sure." She said.


Helen's POV

At Mako Island….

Me, Evie, Mimmi, and Ondina were at Mako Island, showing off our weapons. Evie however just stayed on the sidelines and watched. Mimmi brought with her some sort of package.

"Two weapons are better than one." I said, twirling my flaming tonfa.

"True." Lyla said. "Unless you have one of these." I got out my double bladed naginata and twirled it around before I threw it at a tree, hitting it directly.

"You have to show me how you use a….what do you call it again?" Ondina asked.

"A gun?" I asked.

"Yes." She said. "Show me how you do it."

"Uh Ondina." Evie said. "A gun is not something to be taken lightly."

"Sure I'll show ya." Lyla said, taking out and loading her Glock.

"Lyla!" Mimmi exclaimed. "I may not know human weaponry but I know that whatever a gun does, it's pretty serious."

"Girls." Lyla said. "This is how they learn. You show the best or the worst something can do to someone." Evie, me, Ondina and Mimmi looked at her in horror. "It's how I was taught in Afghanistan." In just a split second, she fired her gun with a loud bang at a tree. "What? I wasn't gonna shoot it at someone."

"Wait I wanna do something." I said running to the nearby trees and burning in target signs.

"Wanna see something cool?" Mimmi asked unsheathing her bag, which turned out to be a bow and arrows. She put on her gear and fired three perfect deadly shots at some trees, all hitting the bulls eye perfectly.

"How did you?" Ondina asked.

"When I was young, Tia Esma took me to Hawaii to get some archery lessons for 4 years." Mimmi explained.

"So that's why you and her went those years!" Lyla exclaimed.
"Maybe she didn't want me freaking out that my best friend was being trained to be a warrior." Ondina said.

"You trained in a weapon?" Evie asked.

"Yeah. Twin daggers." Ondina said. "I prefer close combat so I can look my enemy in the eye."

"Not a bad tactic." Lyla said.

"But I prefer this." I said blasting a nearby bush into flames.

"The element of surprise." Mimmi said. "I like it. Until a few months ago, I had never been in a real battle nor used another weapon."

"Personally I blame the father's genes." Evie said.

"You want to learn how to fight?" Lyla asked.

"No I'm good thanks." Evie said quickly.

"So Ondina." Lyla said. "I hear that you and Erik are a thing right?"

"Wait what?" Ondina asked spluttering. "I...I mean we're just friends. For now."

"Uh huh." Me and Mimmi wigged eyebrows at her.

"Seriously." Ondina said drawing a line with her fingers for emphasis. "Friends."

"That's what they all say." Evie said. "Now Helen and Xandou. That's a match made in the Fields of Elysium." We all laughed at that. "Hey Lyla, met any boys you like?"

"No not really." She said, tugging her camouflage colored bandana. "I swim solo. Mimmi, er Zoe. Met any boys? Some muscled idiots?"

"Well to be honest." Zoe said, unscrewing one of her arrows. "I'm not too much into the macho merman or land boy type. I like a little smarts. Like Chris from a week ago."

"Who's Chris?" Lyla asked.

"Oh just some bloke who worked in the Marine Park and kissed Mimmi." I said absentmindedly.

"He kissed you?" Evie asked. "Seriously?"

"What?" Mimmi asked. "He's kind of cute."

"So just to be clear." Ondina began. "We don't have to worry about how really overprotective and furious your brother, dad, and cousins are gonna be? Because I'm pretty sure that we know what happens when a boy's sister meets another guy."

"I'll tell him...eventually."

"Come on, enough boy talk." Ondina said. "You wanna do something fun?"

Lyla's POV

Mimmi apparently had the power to teleport via shadows. So we went into forest to get some shade and Mimmi did her magic while we held each other. Before I knew it, we were all 6 feet above the
water and all fell in, each of us doing our own stunt. I did a cannonball, falling in and when I felt myself transform, I felt a tail wrap around my arm and I looked up to see my sea serpent flash me a toothy grin.

"Hey Stormchaser." I said.

"Wanna go two out of three?" Helen challenged. "Your sidekick here can be the referee."

"No." I said. "I wanna show you something. Let's go." Without further hesitation, they all followed me down back to my campsite.

Raiden's POV

In the grotto…

Me, my brother and my cousin were hanging out. The adults were all having a meeting in the moon pool. We then spotted Erik rummaging through Lyla's bag.

"Erik will you knock it off?" I asked. "Snooping will not gain her trust."

"To be honest Zac she kinda hasn't gained mine." Erik said.

"Don't try to stop my big bro, cuz." I said, grabbing his arm. "Whenever Erik becomes curious about something, not even a nuclear explosion can stop him."

"Yikes." He said.

I shrugged walking over to where I found this horn on a necklace. "Cool." I examined it and noticed a carving on it. It was sea waves surrounding a large C. "This looks familiar. I just don't know where."

"Let me see that." Zac said looking at it. "Oh, a little mark from when her mother gave her that horn."

"Let me see." Erik said, taking it and examining it. His eyes grew to the size of saucers and his breathing became ragged. I thought he was either gonna throw up or pass out.

"Erik!" I exclaimed trying to get him to snap out of it.

"ERIK!" Zac shouted, his eyes glowing blue and Erik snapped out of it.

"Sorry guys." My brother said. "It's about this symbol on the horn. Zac, did you say that her mother gave her this?"

"Yeah so?" Zac asked.

"What's going on?" I asked. "Have you seen that symbol?"

Erik scoffed. "Seen it? I know it and you should too. This.." He pointed to the symbol. "This is the Royal Seal of the Consorzio Family. My dad's seal."

Both me and Zac were caught in our breaths. If this meant what it meant, it meant that Erik and I...have a sister.
We swam back to the island south of Tasmania where Lyla had set up her private camp. When we got legs, we started following Lyla all around her campsite near a cliff.

"It must be here." Lyla muttered.

"You wanna clue us in on what's going on?" Ondina asked.

Lyla ignored us and continued to search.

"Lyla?" Helen asked.

"I'm looking for something." Lyla said.

I heard a rustling in the water and I said smirking, "Something like this?" I used my powers and my strength to levitate the mermaid out of the water and pointed my arrow, aimed at the ready at...Marissa?

"Marissa." Evie said.

"Nice to see you too." Marissa spat out. "I have to tell you something...and get in the water. But it's gonna be a little hard to do that with that arrow 6 inches from my throat." Evie shrugged and pushed the merman expert back in the water. "Oh that feels good. Thanks."

"What are you doing here Marissa?" Ondina asked. "Helen, this is Marissa the merman expert of the Mako Pod."

"Well you see, I don't just deal with mermen." Marissa said. "I also happen to be quite a communicator for the Mermaid Council. I'm what you call a messenger for the Council. Every Pod has one. But there are some perks that come with being a messenger. Perks that include new jewelry, rare potions and not to mention secret and extremely hard to get information detailing the exact whereabouts of a certain mermaid leader."

"What?" Mimmi asked.

"And when someone needs a warrior to deal with that mermaid leader." Lyla took out her Glock and spun it. "I'm your girl."

"Veridia is set to get a new array of moon rings for the mermaids in the West African Pod of Bahari not far in the East Pacific when the sun is in midsky. But there is a catch. Once the deal is done, I won't be able to get in contact with them for a long time. So you won't get another chance."

"Got it." Lyla said. "Thanks Marissa."

When we all dived in, Evie stayed behind for a bit. "You're not coming Marissa?"

"What part of 'I can whip your tail' is stated in my resume?" Marissa asked incredulously.
via telepathy. He imagined his mind connecting with his twin's, like the visions he had but instead of it being a vision, random and out of control, it was like a radio line playing a song. And he was broadcasting the tune to Zoe.

Zoe. Can you hear me?

Yeah Zac I can hear you. She thought back. Thank the moon for all those lying lessons eh?

Yeah. Listen you need to get to the grotto, now.

I don't need to.

Why?

Because I'm already here.

Zoe's POV

I walked into the grotto to find my brother and cousins there. "What's going on?" I asked.

"Zoe sit down." Raiden said, leading me to the couch. "This is gonna come as a shock."

"Zoe…" Erik trailed off. "This horn that Lyla has...her mother gave it to her."

"So?" I asked.

"And this symbol on it." My brother said. "This is our uncle's seal. The Consorzio Family seal."

I turned pale as a sheet as the gears whirred in my head but I couldn't accept the truth. "Does this mean?"

"Lyla could be my…my sister." Erik choked in shock.

"But why would our uncle, a humble king, abandon his own daughter?" I asked. "It makes no sense."

"But I don't think that our parents would lie to us about something like that." Erik said. "Sure they were gonna tell us one day that our relatives were dead, but they wouldn't hide that kind of information."

"How can we even know for sure?" Zac asked.

"That's what we're gonna find out." Raiden said walking up the stairs. "That's why we're going to Mako. If our parents are there, we'll find out what they've been hiding from us."

Erik's POV

Mako Island shore…

We swam to Mako to try to find our parents and instead at the reef came across a dolphin. I nodded to Mimmi who was gonna translate for Zac who, sadly was the only one of the team who didn't speak any of the dolphin languages. I called this dolphin Slimy, therefore getting a lecture of how I was terrible at naming things from Diablo
Oh hey fellow sea dwellers. Slimy said. I could use your help. I've been dealing with a bunch of pesky whales that have been driving me out of my fin! Some whales crooned in anger. Yeah you heard me!

No time for that Slimy. I said. Do you know anyone who's in the moon pool?

Oh there are some mermaids and mermen in there. Slimy said. About in their late 30's. Your parents maybe?

Yeah thanks. Raiden said.

When we dived, I heard a last sentence going like, But there's a serious meeting going on in there so there might be a bit of a wait.

In the moon pool

Persephone's POV

We were in a meeting discussing the ways to keep us all dry. More merperople on land meant a lot more ways to get exposed.

"I'm just saying." Jacob said. "Carrying towels to school wouldn't be a bad idea."

"It would look a little conspicuous don't you think?" Rita challenged. Suddenly my sons and niece/nephew surface, each of them carrying a worried expression.

"What's the problem?" Phoebus asked.

"We really need to talk." Erik said, holding up a horn with my late husband's symbol on it.

"Hmm." I muttered.

Diablo's POV

In the grotto…

After Lyla told us what information she gathered, me, Kimi, Rose, Thalie, Sirena, and Xhiva gathered with Lyla's posse in the grotto to lay out our plan.

"Guys we have to go now." Lyla insisted. "There's no other day."

"Wait, you want us to go into battle without the Baumans?" Xhiva asked.

"It does seem highly incongruous." Kimi said.

"Guys I wish that Erik, Raiden, Zoe, and Zac were here." Lyla said. "I do but there's no time. Now, Veridia's set to get a new set of moon rings. We know where she's gonna be and when. Which means we could set a trap for her."

"Lyla does have a point." Helen said. "This could be our only chance to catch her."

"And finish her then." Lyla said.

"Wait." Helen said. "That's not what we do."
"Maybe my boyfriend's father did that back in the Ares Tribe." Evie said. "But that doesn't mean we have to play dirty."

"Trust me, Helen and I know from experience." Ondina said.

"Is this even a discussion right now?" Lyla shrieked. "We have to get justice! And this is our last chance."

"It's not even a discussion." Thalie said, finally speaking. "We need the others. We all work as one, as a team."

Lyla turned to me and I saw longing glittering in her hazel eyes. "Diablo, say something."

"Well they have a point." I said. "In people who have more of my...otherkin identity, they're literally stronger when joined with a pack. Alone, we don't make it. You need to work with us we all of us together. But we can't kill Veridia."

Lyla spluttered. "Not you too! All that stuff about having my back, I guess that was just talk." Lyla stormed out, the waves crashing and increasing the impact of her leaving.

"Awkward!" Rose sang.

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Erik's POV

In the moon pool...

"Where did you get this?" My mother asked, holding the horn. The other adults left to give us space. We were on opposite sides of the pool to give ourselves space.

"It's Lyla's." My mermaid cousin said. "She's used to be part of the Mako Pod a year back."

"Hmm." My mother mused.

"Persephone." Zac said. "That horn has my dead uncle's symbol carved in it."

"It does." My mother said, taking notice.

"So is there something you need to tell us?" Raiden asked.

My mother sighed looking at us. "See, ever since the war ended, there are some yet few things leaders of tribes, pods, or clans can agree on. Such as the one of the peace treaties we all agree on. One of them is, when one of those leaders has a child, that child receives gifts from all over. When you were born Raiden, it took one present to not be electrocuted or singed." All of us laughed at this while my brother blushed in embarrassment. "Erik, when you were born, your father asked to make the smallest axe he ever imagined. Your father wanted to start training you the moment you opened your eyes. But I wouldn't allow it. I swear your father nearly passed out when I threatened him not to. He said he thought I was gonna feed him to the fishing net."

"I remember that axe." I mused, remembering the faint memory.

"Yeah." Raiden said. "You tried to impress Ondina by trying to show off and you almost cut off your fin instead."

"What?" Zac burst out laughing.
"Look." I said, cutting them off. "About the horn, Lyla told me her mother gave it to her, but it had our family's royal seal on it."

Raiden swam up to Mom and looked at her dead straight in the eye. I could tell that he was either about to pass out from shock or he was about tear up. "Madre, è Lyla mia sorella?" (Mother, is Lyla my sister?)


Lyla's POV

At Mako Island beach…

I was taking care of my sea serpent, brushing the scales. "Looks like it's just you and me, Stormchaser." My sea serpent crooned. "As usual."

"Hey." I heard Thalie and turned around to find Thalie, Evie, Ondina, Diablo, Sirena, Mimmi, Kimi, Helen and Rose. "We're gonna help you. But if we're gonna do this, it has to be a capture mission. Not a kill mission."

I smiled, agreeing...at the moment. "Agreed. When it's done, I'll ship Veridia to the Boiling Bay, let her rot there."

"I'm gonna leave behind a map with a message outlining the plan." Kimi said, pinning a piece of paper to a tree with an ice knife.

"Now they'll know where we are." Rose said cheerfully.

"Alright." I said. "Let's go."


At the North Pacific…

Veridia's POV

"It's a good day to strengthen the purity of mermaids." I said, seeing my fellow councilwomen. "Then again, it's always a good day to strengthen the purity of mermaids."

"The rings are ready for transfer." Atinna, one of the mermaids who made the moonrings. "Do you want them to be distributed via 3 mermaids?"

"No." I said. "Let's stay here and talk a little more." Attina nodded and swam off. "So I can finally have a little chat with Lyla."


Zac's POV

We were all shaking from the shocking news we heard from when we arrived at Mako. Raiden and I were searching the beach while my sister and my other cousin was in the sea.

"Zac." Raiden said, waving me over to a tree with a note pinned to it.

We both read it and I muttered to my horror, "Lyla's going after Veridia."
"We have to stop her." Raiden said.

Ondina's POV

We swam about 30 kilometers from Veridia and the council. Personally I was always against them but that was just because I was born in the clan.

"So Lyla?" I asked Ondina. "How do you want to go? Full frontal assault?"

"Nope." Lyla smiled. "Element of surprise."

Helen's POV

All of us except for Evie, Diablo, Sirena, and Lyla went to distract the Mermaid Council. Kimi made the air cold and Rose made some minor storms. I just burned some mermaids here and there. Not too serious though. Thalie though made some waves and was fighting some mermaids.

"What are you doing Rose?" I asked.

"Me?" She answered. "I'm trying not to get anybody hurt."

"Well the same can sort of be said for me." I said, blocking a mermaid. "I sure hope Lyla's posse is doing ok."

Lyla's POV

We were doing more than ok actually. My team and I were in the waters, swimming more carefully than a shark hunting it's prey. We soon approached Veridia and, all the mermaids used our powers to pull Veridia down and Diablo put some seaweed binding on her hands and arms.

You? Veridia asked incredulously. We were still underwater.

A team of five is better than one. Evie said confidently.

And a whole mermaid council triumphs a team of amateurs. Veridia snipped, looking at me in most concern. Lyla, how about we skip all of this nonsense and finally have that talk I've been wanting to have for a long time?

There won't be any time for any kind of talk Veridia. I snarled. Because your business is finished! Stormcutter, finish her!

Lyla, no! Evie cried. You promised us a no kill mission!

I'm sorry Evie. I said. I changed my mind. Veridia didn't 'capture' the Freedom Army. So this ends here.

Veridia laughed coldly. Are you really going to kill me? If you do you'll never…

Save it for Hades. I gagged in her mouth a seaweed gag.

Lyla please...don't! Sirena cried.

Shut up Sirena.
Lyla please. Diablo grabbed my arm, his bright orange amber eyes threatening to spill tears. Just spare her. I know she's done terrible things but she's still my mother and I can't watch her die.

Then don't watch at all. I snarled at him. Stormcutter, hold her!

My sea serpent obeyed me and I raised my hand, ready to deliver the final blow, ready to finally avenge my team. Veridia would finally be brought to justice. I grinned at the sight of her terrified face.

But suddenly, a wave of electrified water went right through us, causing all of us to surface.

"STOP!" We all heard Raiden. "Lyla, stop!" Raiden, Zac, Zoe, and Erik all swam quickly to us, Zac grabbed my arm.

"Move, Zac!" I shouted at him.

"You don't understand!" He exclaimed.

"You promised me another time to take justice and this is it!" I shouted, not noticing Veridia starting to untie her ropes.

Zoe took out my horn, which I must have left behind, and said to me, "Look you told Zac that your mother gave you this."

"She did but what are you doing?" I asked confused.

"This." She pointed to the symbol on it. "Is my uncle's seal! The Royal Seal of the Consorzio Family!"

That caught me off guard. I never had been to a clan so I never knew what the seals were. "A Clan Seal is carved in my horn? What are you saying?"

"I'm saying years ago." Erik launched his story. "Queen Persephone of that Clan gave this horn, to one of the mermaids of the Mermaid Council, as part of a peace treaty, but also as a gift for her newborn daughter."

"But."

"You were that newborn Lyla!" Erik cut me off. "One of the Mermaid Council officials, is your mother. But she is also Diablo Nagual's mother." He pointed to said merman whose eyes widened and looked at Veridia. I put the pieces together and I realized to my horror that I...am Veridia's daughter. The daughter of a monster.

"No." I breathed out. We did have similar appearances. Very, very similar. Same bronze hair, though mine was lighter, almost same eyes, and the same face.

"Lyla." Zac said. "Veridia is your birth mother. You can't kill her!"

"You wouldn't kill your own mother would you?" Raiden asked.

"You..." Diablo said, visibly shaking. "You've been my sister this whole time?"

"Sirena?" I asked said mermaid who was gaping at me like a fish. But suddenly, a beam of moonlight nearly pulverized us. But I couldn't care less. I was overcome with too much shock.

"It's the mermaids who make the moon rings!" Mimmi shouted, noticing some of them swimming
"Lyla." Raiden said to me. "We have to go." But I couldn't move. I was just overwhelmed with horror and shock.

"I have to admit." Veridia said, apparently, broken of her chains. "You never disappoint Baumans. Must be a family trait along with stubbornness and stupidity."

"Lyla come on!" Evie shouted at me.

"Lyla." Veridia said soothingly. "I'm the only family you've got left!" Diablo must have heard this because his eyes started glowing bright orange and he seemed ticked at her. "This is what I wanted to talk about. Don't fight destiny Lyla. I know you feel the blood of a true mermaid flowing through your veins."

I lifted my head up and looked at her in the eye. I then used my powers to create a wave to leap me over her and Stormchaser was there to break the fall. I glared daggers at her before I left.

Thalie's POV

Seeing that the situation was getting out of hand, I called out to the others, "Alright guys! Let's head back!"

"Under the circumstances, I wholeheartedly agree with that plan." Kimi agreed, before we all swam back.

The Santos Household kitchen…

"So the woman who gave Lyla the horn was really Veridia, not you Persephone." Jacob said to his sister-in-law.

"I guess so." She said.

"Lyla and Diablo may share not only the same mother but the same father as well." Rita said, taking a sip of her tea. "But we may never know the truth now."

"Still." Phoebus said. "Abandoning her own daughter. I never realized she was willing to go that far. And poor Diablo. I still can't believe it though. Veridia is Lyla's mother and Diablo is her brother?"

"Phoebus." Esmeralda said. "Who really knows? I mean that is one seriously disturbed lady. Maybe she's just messing with us."

"But there is a certain resemblance." He pointed out.

"True." She said.

There was a heavy pause before Rita asked, "So when are we gonna tell the kids about the prophecy?"

"I'm not sure they're ready to know." Jacob said. "At least not yet. Some of this stuff could be pretty damaging."
Lyla's POV

I was in the grotto, having said goodbye to everyone, taking care of my sea serpent. I couldn’t stay in Australia. Not with this many memories...and lies.

"Guess you're leaving." Evie said. "Again. I thought you were tired of being alone."

I sighed sadly. "I am."

"Then don't be." Said Sirena. "It's safer here, you have support. And I'm here."

"I know." I said. "I just...have a lot I need to figure out." There was a pregnant pause generated as Sirena gave me back the horn and I dived into the water, my tail forming. "Thanks guys. It was nice having a friend again."

"Hey Lyla." Zac said. "Say hi to Nixie for me will you?"

"I will." Just as I tried to leave, I heard my brother or half brother call my name.

"Don't go, please." He whispered, tears threatening to spill.

I swam up to him and said, "I have to. I want to but I can't stay here. Just...give me time. And I promise, I will come back to you." Diablo nodded and pulled back.

"Let's go boy."

Stormchaser and I dived in the water, not to be seen for a long time.

Diablo's POV

Lyla, my own sister or half sister, whatever works, was leaving and I understand why. But she left me out of the decision.

"Hey man." Raiden said, with Xhiva, Zac, Evie, and Erik. "I know you two were getting close again. I'm sorry you're losing a friend."

I stood up and hugged them all in a group hug.

"But, I still have you guys."

Here is the after credits scene…

Veridia's POV

The silence in the moon pool was deafening. My daughter was sitting across from me and not daring to look at me in the eye.

"Did you ever regret it?" She asked me.

"Yes." I answered immediately. "Then no, then so much. I just wanted to give you a real childhood instead of one spent worrying about my political career."

"When did you realize it was the right time for me to find you?" She asked me.

"I saw you out there fighting." I said. "You were extraordinary. You were me."
"No." Lyla said. "No I will never be you. I don't wanna be you!"

"Like it or not Lyla, we are blood." I said firmly.

"No." She said. "See, you may have created me, you may have laid me down when I was in the egg...but you were never my mother."

"Lyla!" I screamed as she left.

"Didn't react as you thought?" I heard Nerida's voice as she turned visible.

"To be honest I'm not sure." I said.

"Judge Veridia." She said. "I don't mean to disrespect you, but you need to understand something: You're Lyla's mother. It takes more than a claim to be that, and you were too late because Lyla chose the Freedom Army. You need to accept that and move on with your work. Because you have no business tailing into that girl's life anymore than you already have."

"Oh?" I challenged. "And what do you reckon I should do?"

"You need to give her time to figure out who she really is now. You owe her at least that much."
In the Mako Island reef...

The ocean was silent, the waves lapping on one another, then disappearing, rinse, repeat. But not all was still and asleep. Four shadows, four shadows with tails swam in the waters. One was a merman who still had the soul of a warrior in him, Erik Consorzio. Another was a mermaid who still had shadows lingering in her heart, but she used it to her advantage as she used the shadows revolving around her to transport herself to some parts of the reef. Another merman, was a well built teenage boy who was blossoming into adulthood. The last, smallest, and youngest of the quartet was a teenage boy, about 14 or 15, with electricity sparking on his tail as he used his super speed swimming to get across the ocean.

But when the full moon was close to reaching over the moon pool, the four merpeople surfaced..at the same time and just then, the water swallowed them and spat them out in the merman chamber.

The four all groaned, still in their pajamas. The boys were luckily all in a tanktop and shorts, while Zoe was in a black nightdress.

"What's going on?" Zac asked.

"I'm having the weirdest dream." Zoe/Mimmi said.

"You can't be dreaming." Erik said annoyed. "I'm here."

"That's because I'm dreaming you!" Zoe said exasperated.

"Maybe I'm dreaming you, but you're not dreaming me!" Erik said, still a little confused.

"Raiden, how come you're not saying anything?" Zac asked.

"Guys." He said. "I think we're all in the same dream and we're sharing it."

"Raiden that's not possible." Erik said.

"Nothing is impossible." A silky voice sounded, once the moon started to pass overhead in the chamber. "Especially when it comes to you four." A woman with bright red hair and mysterious green eyes, wearing a long white dress.

"Who are you?" Zac asked.

The woman seemed to analyze them with her ever knowing green eyes. Then she frowned. "I'm surprised you know so little. But you were all so little when your parents decided to take action to protect you."

"I'm gonna ask one more time." Raiden said, stepping up but Zoe ran in front of her cousin.

"Guys." She said. "This is Sybil, the current Oracle."

"Oracle?" Zac asked. "As in...someone who can see the future?"

"Correct Zacharai Blakely." Sybil said. "Yes, I know your name. I was the one who aided along
with Nerida, Thalassa when her journey came."

"And now you're here because you're starting us on our journey." Erik said, coming to a realization. "Our destinies."

"Not yet Prince Erik." Sybil said. "I'm here to give you a little warning. I know that you're all planning to go in this chamber and activate it."

"Well…." Erik tried

"So what is our destiny?" Raiden asked.

"I can see why lightning struck you, Prince Raiden." Sybil said chuckling a little. "Always cutting to the chase, always looking for your questions to be answered. Patience is all you need for now. A trait I can see that is somewhat common in the family."

"Then why are we here?" Zoe asked. "To learn patience?"

"As I said Zoe." Sybil said sternly. "I'm here to give you all a little warning before you make a mistake. This chamber which we all stand in, was built near the end of the Merman Wars as a last hop for the Army of Triton. And no Erik, I don't know what it does. Artifix, the merman who built and put his power in this chamber, decided at the last minute that he would not activate it, despite many who wanted him too. He fell in love with a mermaid, and because of her, he changed his views and stopped the operation which in turn started the fall of Triton. Together, they created the oldest of all clans and ruled a section of the sea, to ensure peace, not war."

"And what's that got to do with us?" Raiden asked, gesturing to the four of them.

"The reason you all share the same family is because both of your mothers Nerissa and Persephone, are descended from Artifix." Sybil said. "Your ancestors started the downfall of the greatest evil on Earth by not activating the chamber. Do you four really think you know better?" Just then, the moon's light passed over, the dome no longer in view. "My time has ended."

"Wait!" Zoe said. "What about our destinies? What aren't you telling us?"

Sybil, who was almost out of sight, looked back and said, "I may have been the first to know about how your destinies unravel, but I'm not the last."

End of dream….


Erik's POV

I woke up shaking in cold sweat, feeling like I ran a marathon. I'm pretty sure that I levitated things in my sleep, again. The door burst open to show a shaking Raiden.

"Che cosa ci fai in piedi?" (What are you doing up?) I tiredly asked in Italian.

"Erik non giocare muto." (Erik, don't play dumb.) My little brother snapped at me, walking to my bed. "Hai avuto quel sogno, non è vero?" (You had that dream, didn't you?)

"Si." I said, nodding. "Si, l'ho fatto." (Yeah, I did.)

"Qualcuno può dirmi che cosa diavolo è successo?" (Can someone please tell me what the hell just happened?) Raiden asked.
"Primos, tranquillo." (Cousins, quiet.) Zoe's voice sounded in a whisper. She was speaking Portuguese. "Dormir do meu pai. Você quer acordá-lo?" (My dad's sleeping. Do you want to wake him up?) She sat on my bed as Raiden used his powers to turn on the lamp. At first I had to shut my eyes because it was too bright, but Raiden used his lightning powers to set the lamp's electricity to a dim setting, kind of a like a sunset.

"Como é possível todos nós tínhamos o mesmo sonho?" (How is it possible we all had the same dream?)

"Talvez nós estamos ligados de alguma forma?" (Maybe we're connected in some way?) I suggested, prompting a scoff from my brother.

"Isso é impossível." (It's impossible.) He said. "Sei, por ter um outro par de gêmeos como meus melhores amigos, que só o referido conjunto de irmãos podem compartilhar e estar no mesmo sonho." (I know from having another set of twins as my best friends, that only said set of siblings can share and be in the same dream.)

"Bem como podemos explicar isso?" (Well how can we explain this?) Zoe asked. "Eu nunca ouvi falar de alguém sonhos que partilham e os gêmeos são raros, mesmo no Norte." (I've never heard of anyone sharing dreams and twins are rare, even in the North.)

"E se não podemos encontrar qualquer coisa que explica isso?" (What if we can't find anything that explains this?) I asked.

"Bem, uma vez que não consigo encontrar nada para explicar isso, será que podemos voltar a dormir?" (Well since we can't find anything to explain this, can we please go back to sleep?)

I sighed sadly. As much as I wanted so badly to find out what we were dealing with here, Raiden was right. Even us warriors needed a good night's sleep. "Você está certo Raiden." (You're right Raiden.)

Zoe looked outraged at this while Raiden pumped his fist in the air and proceeded to yawn but I had to cover his mouth to prevent anyone hearing monstrous yawn.

"Mas Erik.." Zoe tried to whine but I put my hand, cutting her off.

"Zoe, nao." I said. "Tanto quanto nós queremos discutir teorias, eu e Raiden tem escola amanhã e você tem que praticar a sua energia primária. Eu ainda tenho esse incidente queima em minha mente." (As much as we want to discuss theories, me and Raiden have school tomorrow and you have to practice your powers. I still have that incident burning in my mind.)

My cousin rolled her silver eyes. "Erik, foi um deslize!" (It was one slip up!)

"Escorregar?" (Slip up?) I asked sarcastically. "Um teletransporte acidental em que você acidentalmente acabam nesta casa de banho, o banheiro que eu e minha parte irmão, enquanto eu estava escovando meus dentes. Por que você estava em apenas sua calcinha e sutiã de novo?" (An accidental teleportation in which you accidentally end up in this bathroom, the bathroom that me and my brother share, while I was brushing my teeth. Why were you in just your bra and panties again?)

Zoe scowled in embarresment, saying, "Primeiro de tudo, eu estava tentando me para o banheiro para que eu pudesse bater, e segundo eu esqueci a minha unha polonês." (First of all, I was trying to get myself to the bathroom so I could knock, and second I forgot my nail polish.)

"Ainda assim, por que o meu banheiro?" (Still why my bathroom?) I groaned out.
"Porque tanto a tia Seph e papai estavam usando seu quarto e eu sempre tenho a minha unha polonês lá."  
(Because both Aunt Seph and Dad were using their room and I always have my nail polish in there.)

"Tanto faz."  
(Whatever.) I said, turning off the lamp and pulling the covers on my head. "Boa noite."  
(Goodnight.) Even though it was 3 in the morning.

The next morning

At the cafe…

Zac's POV

We were all still a little shaken from the dream we all apparently shared. This was the only moment in the morning that my twin could talk with us. After the run in with Ms. Trumble at school and the encounter with the Actress, Mimmi had zero intention of stepping foot in that place again.

"Again."  
Raiden said. "Can someone please tell me, what the hell is going on here?"

"Well Zoe and I haven't shared any dreams yet."  
I said.

"According to Xhiva, twins don't start sharing dreams until after a long time."  
Erik said.

"Then what was Sybil talking about?"  
I asked. "About our destinies?"

"Honestly I have no idea."  
Raiden said.

"My destiny was stripped from me the moment I was forced to live on the streets with Raiden."  
Erik mumbled.

"Is there anyone else who has had dreams like this before?"  
Zoe asked.

That caught my ear. About 8 months ago, my younger sister told me about her dreams and how she found clues as to who her mother may be. "As a matter of fact… I think I may know someone."

Erik's POV

I drove them all to school, but we didn't talk at all. In fact, barely a word was spoken. I drove Zoe back home first because I needed to be sure she had her powers under control. I figured whatever this dream we all had meant that Raiden and Zac, as usual mostly Raiden, wouldn't listen to anyone and still go in the chamber. My other, sensible cousin was kind of neutral about it but I was sure as Hell not going near that place again. After I broke off my ties with the Ares Tribe, which I barely escaped from, I swore that I would never have anything from my past with Slade influence my life ever again. My family's safety came first, my family always came first. If Raiden hadn't been there, I would have committed seppuku right then and there.

Diablo's POV

I swam to the shores of Mako, hoping to get some alone time. Yeah I know, I should have been heading for school. But I just needed some down time with my oceanic side. I didn't even know that
I was in the moon pool until I surfaced...only to see her.

"What are you doing here?" I asked in an accusing tone.

Veridia made a smile that seemed somewhat inviting. "Is it a crime for mermen when a mother checks up on her own son?"

I scoffed. "Since when do you consider me a son?"

"I always have Diablo." She said. "I just have a very...robust way of showing it."

"If you've come here to give me or any of us a threat about coming to destroy us, you can leave." I said, not wanting anything to do with her.

"Oh please." Veridia said. "I'm going to win anyway. I'm here to give you a little inspiration."

"What inspiration?" I asked.

"The mermaid council have been contemplating the events on Mako." She said in very authoritative tone.

"You mean you have." I muttered before she made her famous clearing of the throat sound that got my attention. "Well I'll make it short and sweet. We've come close to discovering what the chamber does."

"And has the boy come close to activating it?" Veridia asked.

"Yes." I said. "Zac has activated it and yes, he's gonna go tonight, even though some mermaids and one merman who don't want him going. Me? I'm neutral. I think that it's too dangerous but if he wants to go, then it's worth it if we can find out what it does. But no one's going except him and Raiden."

"Diablo." She said. "Let me give you some advice, let him go there, and follow him."

"The first part I got but you lost me at follow him." I said.

"We believe there may be a way to destroy the chamber from within." She said. "Once it's activated, use your power to turn it's energy back on itself."

"If I could I would." I said. "But I can't."

Veridia looked confused then laughed it off. "What do you mean you can't son? You're a merman."

"Veridia, if you knew the first thing about me, you would know that I have no magic other than shapeshifting." I growled. "Everything else, I can't do zilch."

Veridia's face seemed to falter and I saw disgust build up but then she replaced it with a sigh. "Well Diablo, that's one of the reasons we don't see eye to eye. But every time we meet, you become more like me."

My eyes glowed a bright amber as I nearly snarled, my wolf side threatening to come out. "I...am...nothing...like you." I said slowly. Veridia seemed to be fazed and threatened by my wolf side but she let it slide. I figured that either she knew about this or she just had seen weirder things.

"Diablo." She said. "How did you join the Ares Tribe?"
"Because I kind of talked him into it." I said. "And what does Slade have to do with this?"

"Oh it's not Slade that pleases me." She said. "It's you son. You find that we both can be rather persuasive. It's one of many traits we both share. So use that resourcefulness I've seen you in all the years I kept you, find someone with great power and use them to use their power to turn it's energy back on itself."

I sat on the ledge in disbelief. It was one thing having friends but manipulating them? That was a big no no. "You've got to be kidding me."

"Oh I am not joking on this matter." said Veridia.

"No." I said. "There is no way I will ever use my friends like that. My friends are people, not tools to be used."

"In politics." My mother said. "Sometimes the people closest to you are your greatest weapons."

"Mom I'm not going to use my friends and I am not going with your little plan." I said before I realized what I had started the sentence with.

"See?" She asked, smiling. "There's another trait we share. We both respect family."

"If you respected family, you wouldn't have abandoned your own daughter." I snarled at her.

"Diablo." She said, getting my full attention. "I know you. You're different from other mermen because you believe that strength comes in numbers and numbers mean a pod or whatever you call it. The mermaids connections to the land are strong, and the mermen are stuck in decision to either go for their urges for power or not go at all. You said you were neutral. And tonight, you can finally earn that place in that family of yours you built. How? By going tonight and destroying the threat that stands in their way of happiness. In fact, I've seen you around that Latina land girl. You want to protect her? Then use a mermaid with great power to destroy the chamber." I swam away from her and she followed, and when I turned my head around to see her cup my cheek. "Diablo Nagual, you're my son. You can do anything."

Tears started to form in my eyes as I took her hand. A mother's touch of warmth was exactly what I needed most and I never realized it. I didn't know then that Veridia actually loved me. At least I hoped she did at the time.

"Alright Mom." I said. "I'll do it. But one one condition."

Veridia pulled back, her stoic cold mask taking form on her face. "This is not a negotiation, Diablo."

"You want me to go or not?" I challenged.

Veridia pondered before she asked, "What is this condition?"

"You help us fight Slade and his forces." I said. "And after that, you leave everyone alone. Especially Lyla."

"I will not leave my daughter." She said. "But when it is safe on Mako, I will aid you. But only when the chamber is destroyed."

At school…

The bell rang a few minutes ago and already we were doing a test on Mitosis in our Biology class. And yes, I studied. But with everything going on, my superhero life, Slade, it became hard to keep my grades in check. I had gotten a lecture from my mom and Zac about it but I understood.

The door burst open and Mr. Patel, the teacher scowled to see Diablo looking like he had run a marathon. Though I suspect that he either might have changed into something that could run on land or that he just went for it and almost killed himself running.

"Mr. Nagual." Mr. Patel said. "Happy to have you here. Not happy though, that you're late."

"Sorry Mr. Patel." Diablo brushed it off.

"Now are you ready to take your test or did you not study...again?" Mr. Patel asked.

"Nope." The South American merman said, smiling his goofy smile. "I think I've got this in the bag!"

Mr. Patel rolled his eyes as he handed Diablo his test and the merboy sat behind me and tapped my shoulder and handed me a note which I slipped under my lap and continued taking my test.

After I finished it and there was still about 10 minutes left in my class and opened the note, on it it said, "Talk with me after class."

When the bell rang, we all went out and I pulled Diablo to the side.

"What did you want to talk to me about?" I asked him.

"Well Thalie." He said to me. "This is gonna sound nuts, but I need your help to start the chamber."

I stumbled back, surprised. "Why would I do that?"

"Because we both want one thing." He said. "To make Mako safe. As long as the merman chamber is active, no mermaid is safe. And I know you want to keep it safe."

"The only way we can keep it safe is if we stay away from it." I said. "The more we poke the hornet's nest, the more riled up we'll get it."

"You can't know that for certain." Diablo persisted.

"Diablo." I said, putting my hand up. "I'm not going and that is final."

"What about Raiden?" Diablo asked me. "Word on the current is that he's going with Zac."

"Well I've tried to talk him out of it." I said. "But he says that it's important that he faces it's force since he's a merman and obviously I'm not. Besides, despite my differences about it, I believe that Raiden's a tough guy and can handle it but he'll still need some help. And that's why Zac's going. But I'm not. End of story."

I walked away, confused at his behavior. It wasn't like Diablo to try to get serious. So what was going on?

Raiden's POV
At lunch, as usual, the gang joined together. But when I gave my brother and cousin the cue, we took Thalie aside away from the others.

"Thalie." Zac said to my girlfriend. "This is gonna sound insane. Like absolutely crazy. But Erik, Zoe, Raiden and I, we all had a big dream."

"That we all shared." Raiden said.

There was a spark of recognizing in her azure eyes and she nodded and said, "Go on."

Erik launched in a full explanation of what happened in the dream. And I mean, every last detail.

"What does this mean sis?" Zac asked. "You're the only person I know who has had crazy dreams."

Thalie took a moment to think this through before her face told us that she had come to a conclusion. And it looked like a half glass full kind of answer. "I know this." She said.

"Know what?" I asked.

"You're right Zac." She said. "I've had dreams similar to this, but before it started."

"What?" Erik asked. "What started?"

"A prophecy." She said. "And because you all shared it, you're all in it. And from the way you described your dream, I'd say there's it's a pretty big one."

"What does it include?" Zac asked.

"I don't know." Thalie said. "But this dream...isn't the last one."


Helen's POV

I was at my locker getting my things, when someone slammed my locker shut and I was ready to murder the person who disturbed me when I saw it was that featherhead, Diablo.

"You know, my senses tell me that you're the hottest mermaid in our little group." He said.

"Oh really?" I asked sarcastically. "Thanks. Not."

"Hey I'm trying to make conversation with you!" He said as he followed me.

"By flirting with me, considering Rosalina is your girlfriend?" I snipped.

"Well you'll be happy to know that what I want to talk to you about has nothing to do with her." He said, stopping me in the hallway. "It's about the merman chamber. Word on the tide is that Zac's not going but Raiden is."

"So?" I asked. "I agree with Raiden. We have to know what it is. I mean it's not like there's a whole website on the damn chamber."

"That's why I need your help." He said. "I need you to help me destroy it."

"Hold up, hold up here." I said. "Oh my God hold up. You want to destroy the chamber? When we know nothing about it? Are you pulling my leg?"
"No I'm serious." He said. "This chamber was built for mermen, not mermaids."

"Thanks for the piece of information I already know." I snapped.

"My point is." He continued. "That Raiden is going there, but he can't activate it. He thinks that his Omega status will protect him. But who's to say that he won't screw it up and the chamber goes kaflooey, jeopardizing the lives of mermaids, even yours?"

"Well I don't have a problem risking my own life." I said.

"What about the risk of your friends?" He asked. "Isn't that what you've always wanted?"

He got me at a nerve. I wanted nothing more than to protect my friends. "What do you have in mind for tonight?"

Diablo's smile turned into a devilish one.

Rita's POV

In her office….

The day so far, was going pretty smoothly. I sure hoped that nothing would go wrong, even with Raiden going to the chamber. He gave us all a text that morning declaring his move to stay out.

After I got up to answer a knock at the door, I found myself letting in Erik, Raiden and Zac.

"Hello boys." I greeted.

"Hey Principal Santos." Erik said, sitting down.

"Sup Rites?" Raiden asked, prompting a glare from me and the rest. "Jeez, tough crowd."

"How are you doing?" I asked them.

"Good." Zac said to me. "We wanted to ask you something."

"Of course." I said. "What's on your mind?"

"Well…" Erik trailed off. "Look this is gonna sound really really crazy but…"

"Oh for God's sake, spit it out!" Raiden cried. "We all had a freaky dream which we were all in and we shared."

"Well I don't think that Erik was gonna put it that way." Zac said.

"It doesn't matter." I said dismissively. "What was the dream about?" Zac put in a good explanation about Sybil, the history of the chamber, and how they were related at all. I tried my best not to look worried because if they knew I knew something they wouldn't stop until they knew about the prophecy.

"That is quite a dream." I said.

"Do you know why we shared it?" Erik asked. "Because I know for a fact that either only twins share dreams or if you're in a prophecy, You wouldn't happen to know anything about that would
There was a pregnant pause before I answered, "That is not the question I should be answering, boys. If I know something, you four will be the first to know."

The bell rang, and the boys bid me goodbye but Erik gave me a glare that meant, "I'm watching you."

"Oh this can't be happening now." I said quietly.

Erik's POV

Out in the hallway…

"That went well." Zac said sarcastically.

"But she knows something." I said.

"You're the one to talk." Raiden said.

"I'm serious guys." I said quietly. "Rita's got something hidden that she doesn't want us to know. But I got a feeling she's not the only one."

Helen's POV

At the cafe…

After school, I met up with Kimi and Zoe.

"You're buying the drinks?" Kimi asked.

"I just wanted to say sorry for accidentally melting a chair." I said.

"You never say sorry." Zoe said.

"Well now I am." I said. "Is Zac still going?"

"No." Zoe said. "If our ancestors played a part in ending the war by not choosing to use the chamber, then I agree with what Zac is doing. Raiden though wants to go just so he can check it out."

"And what about Erik?" Kimi asked.

"Erik won't go." She said looking at her cousin of a waiter. "He said he didn't want anything to do with Triton anymore."

"I can understand why." Kimi said. "Having all those horrible years on his back."

"Still, maybe Raiden shouldn't go either." Zoe said.

"Exactly." I said. "He can't start the chamber."

"Well he still is a Lightning Omega." Kimi said, as Rose came along to take our order. It was a rare time that we got to see Rose working in the cafe that wasn't in the kitchens.
"Hey guys." She said.

"We'll get some salmon shakes." I said nonchalantly.

"Why so down Helen?" Rose asked. "You should be happy."

"Why?" Zoe asked.

"My boyfriend talked him into not going." She said. "Said he could accidentally blow something up or kill himself."

While she was taking our order, I got a text from Diablo saying not to worry about Raiden not going, and that he was gonna talk to Zac about it. I couldn't help but notice that something was off a bit. But it kind of didn't matter. I had to protect the mermaids.

Rita's POV

In the moon pool…

"It's happening Persephone." I said to my Canadian friend who was sitting across from me. "Again. It always starts with a dream. And by now they know what it means."

"Did Sybil say anything about the prophecy exactly?" Persephone asked.

"According to the witness account, apparently not." I said, before groaning in exasperation. "I can't handle going through this again!"

"Sorry." Persephone said. "Going through what again?"

"Last year, my daughter was under a prophecy." I said. "And she's had dreams like this that started when she was ready and of age."

"Well Erik, according to his lineage, is of age." She said.

"Of that I have no doubt." I said. "He was quite thorough with how he kept up with time."

"Still tell me about what your daughter had to go through." Persephone said.

"The reason the Mako Pod fled." I explained. "Is because 3 mermaids let Zac regain his power, Lyla, Sirena, Nixie."

"Sirena was responsible for my nephew's awakening?" Persephone asked. "Along with Veridia's daughter?"

"Yes but that's not the point." I said. "They came on land, looking to take away Zac's powers and they ran into me. At first I wanted them to leave me alone, but I grew to care for them in time. They tried a strategy into becoming his friend and it worked..until they revealed themselves to Zac and Thalassa and right at that moment, they dumped the truth about her being my daughter. All in one night. And right after that, she saw in a dream, her father's death."

"Oh dear God." Persephone muttered in horror. "What happened to them?"

"Well Zac recovered in time in his case." I said. "But poor Thalassa nearly had to go to therapy and she locked herself in the bathroom for three days! That's why I can't just tell them about this
prophesy! You never know how they will react." Persephone's face went from horrified to murderous. "Oh come on, don't tell me you're not telling them."

"Rita you are so insensitive!" She exclaimed. "Bringing up the stupid prophecy when you know I don't want them to get them involved. I can't have them involved."

"Well I don't know what you expect me to do about it." I snipped.

"Not have an opinion?" She asked.

"This is happening to me too!" I shouted.

"No it's not!" She said. "You're not the one whose eldest son has inherited his father's ability to blow up in anger and you're especially not the one whose second born will literally blow up everything if he finds out."

"Persephone I wish you would grow up." I said.

"Excuse me?" She asked. "I have grown up!"

"No." I said. "I understand your need to protect your children. It's your way of recapturing the happy times. But Erik is not that little boy and Raiden is not that shy child anymore. Childhood is over...for all of us. It's time you face that."

Zac's POV

In his room…

I had gotten home from school, after me and Raiden's little talk. I had finally convinced that knucklehead not to go, only when I brought up what would his father say about his, I mean our ancestor doing what he did. It was a bit low but I had to get through him somehow. I would have thought that Diablo would pick a side by now.

"Wonder what Diablo is doing now?" When I opened the door, I found sitting on my couch, reading a magazine, was none other than the trickster himself. "Speak of the Devil."

"And he will come." said Diablo.

"What are you doing here Wolfboy?" I asked. "I don't recall inviting you in mi casa."

"1, your surfing magazines are legit." Diablo said. "Two, your house? Less legit."

"Diablo." I said, putting my bag down. "Can we cut the crap and get to what you really want?"

"Must you judge so quickly?" He asked. "I'm here to clarify a rumor that's been going around. First you and Raiden want to go, but now you back out. What happened? Get cold fins? What's to say about Raiden?"

"What?" I asked.

Diablo rolled his eyes. "Zac, whatever happened to the big, strong merman who could handle anything life dished out? Did he go into hibernation?"

I chuckled. "Now you're picking a side and you want me to go now? You have definitely changed
your tune."

"Well I was wrong before." He said.

"And so was I." I said, unpacking my stuff. "And frankly I think it's too dangerous."

Diablo spluttered a little. "How can you be sure? I mean, we're all dying to know what the place can do. What are you gonna do? Leave it to collect dust?"

"Seems that's what my ancient relative did." I said, taking out some textbooks.

"Que?" He asked.

"You better believe it." I said confidently. "Because according to my family history, I'm a descendant of the merman who built the place. And apparently he chose not to use it, so I'm guessing he's a pretty smart bloke."

"Yeah but that doesn't mean you have to repeat history and do what he did." Diablo said.

"No I don't necessarily have to." I said, taking out some worksheets. "But I'd be an idiot not to think about it. Thank God Raiden is not an idiot."

If I had been looking up, I would have seen Diablo smile at the mention of Raiden's name.

"Speaking of Raiden, do you approve of him dating your foster sister?"

"Well it took me some time to get over the initial shock." I said. "But, yeah I'm cool with it."

"You care about Thalie don't ya?" He said, almost sneakily.

"What does the merman chamber have to do with my sister?" I asked, crossing my arms.

"You know Mako will never be a safe haven as long as the chamber's a threat." He said. "Only you can give her back the peace she worked so hard for. Think about it, Thalie deceived you, betrayed you, and in the end, you saved her life. In the end, she stood by you, for you, for the pod and for her parents, even her dead dad. The pod still hates half bloods and she doesn't care about the discrimination anymore. You don't think she deserves her work to be in vain? You know the code to start the chamber. Unlike your cousins, you have the power in you to control the chamber. That's why you have to use it...for Blair." Diablo's mini speech got to me. I had not heard that name in a long time and there wasn't anything I wouldn't do for my baby sister. I loved her still and if activating the chamber was gonna make her sacrifice worth it, then so be it. "Fine. Do nothing. Just don't expect her to be happy when she sees you tomorrow."

"If I go." I said, standing up. "I go alone. If Mimmi, Evie, Thalie, my cousins, or my father find out, they'll want to come. I can't have them hurt."

"Don't worry my friend." He said, patting my arm. "I'll make sure they stay away."

Later that night...

Thalie's POV

At the cafe....

We all met at the cafe for our night show of Sirena's singing before we could go on our patrol. It was
usually at 8:15.

"I can't believe you changed your mind about going." I said. "You too Raiden."

"Well I'm glad I pleased my pearla." He said flirtingly, while kissing me on the cheek. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Ondina and Erik wave to each other, though Ondina blushed a little.

"Just be relieved he did change his mind." Evie said happily.

"But it was so sudden." Ondina said. "I can't help but wonder that something's happened."

"Like what?" Sirena asked.

"Like nothing." Raiden said. "Nothing's happened."

"Actually it has in case you forgot." Erik said. "Tell em Zac."

"We found out." Zoe said, smirking at Zac's flabbergasted expression. "That the reason the four of us are related is because we're descended of the oldest royal bloodline-the Bauman Clan."

I gasped at my brother, and sister, then cousin, then Raiden who was blushing.

"Do I have to call you Princess now Zoe?" Sirena joked at said mermaid.

"The Bauman Clan was razed from within centuries ago." Thalie said. "I can't believe you four are all of what's left of it."

"Wait." Ondina said. "Your great-great-great-great grandmother is Alexandria Bauman?"

"Who?" Evie asked.

"Only one of the top monarchs in the world." Zoe said. "She pioneered many of the medical techniques today."

"And word is, she had a 5 octave vocal range." Sirena added on.

Erik chuckled. "My mom does. You do not wanna hear that woman doing it with my dad. Whoo!"

Evie gave him an incredulous look. "You had to bring that up? This is supposed to be nice night."

"Anyway aside from the awkwardness." Zac continued. "Our ancestors helped end the war by choosing not to use the chamber. I think they had the right idea."

"Maybe they did." Ondina agreed.

"Well Your Majesty the second." Evie jokes. "Would you like to get the drinks."

"How about I do it Lady McLaren?" Erik joked turning to the counter.

"Why didn't you say anything Raiden?" I asked my boyfriend.

"It's kind of enough pressure to be a direct descendant of a powerful bloodline." He said. "I don't need another."

"Raiden." I said, staring into his bright purple orbs. "It doesn't matter who or what you're descended from, you're still the strong merboy I know you are. Don't let that pressure get to you." I leaned in, his lips locking on my own. We both stopped when Erik cleared his throat, and gave us a little look
that said, "Keep it mellow."

Helen's POV

Sirena had started singing then. I was getting distracted by her awesome singing and I was saved by Diablo tapping me on the shoulder. It was time to set the plan in motion.

"Let's go." He said. Zac, in my perspective back then, had no idea that we were following him or that he knew that we knew that we were in the works with him going.

I turned to look at Diablo and I found him smiling with his fangs and glowing eyes, which he had to hide under sunglasses.

Following the 17 year old merman, we dived into the sea, following Diablo because with his enhanced speed and reflexes with him being part werewolf. When we arrived on Mako, we followed Zac to the closed off chamber, until it opened, letting out golden light.

We ran inside, keeping a low and steady cover, maintaining our trail on Zac. Diablo nodded to me, telling me to get ready.

Zoe's POV

I nearly stopped breathing as vision by vision came, showing me Zac in the chamber and activating it.

"Zoe?" Evie asked me, shaking me out of it.

"Zac's in the chamber." I said. "Where's Helen and Diablo."

"I can't see them anywhere." Ondina said.

"Where did you come from?" Raiden asked.

"I've been here all this time." She answered.

"That's it." Raiden said. "I'm calling my mom and dad."

Erik's POV

I rushed to get some drinks in the kitchen with great caution, couldn't get any wet on me, when I felt my phone buzzing.

"Erik." My mom asked, sounding a little mad. "Perché ricevo un messaggio dal proprio fratello dicendo che tuo cugino è a Mako?" (Why am I getting a text from your brother saying that your cousin is at Mako?)

I froze at my mother's tone. Whenever my mother was mad when I was a kid, certain death was near. It appeared that she never changed that trait about herself. "Ciao, Mom." I said nervously. "Zac essere a Mako? Non è quello che pensi." (Zac being at Mako? It's not what you think.)

"Erik Alexander." My mom snapped. "Ho intenzione di Mako in questo momento! E Zacharai meglio non essere lì, o ti giuro, hai intenzione di essere molto dispiaciuto." (I am going to Mako right now! And Zacharai better not be there, or I swear to you, you're gonna be very sorry.)

"Mom, per favore." I pleaded before she hung up. Why was she mad at me you ask? Since I was the family elder, I was tasked with keeping tabs on my cousins and brother, but it was kind of hard to to
that and do my job at the same time.

"Erik." Raiden said. "Andiamo."

No one's POV

In the chamber…

Zac waved his hand over the pedestal, the symbols glowing a bright blue. He could practically smell the power radiating from the center. Once he entered the code, it took a few seconds before out of the misty trident center, came what looked like the trident.

Helen's blood ran cold at the sight of the object floating. It couldn't be. She thought. It couldn't be the trident. The pieces were buried under the Santos house.

Diablo's eyes widened. He certainly hadn't been expecting the trident to come out. But he couldn’t afford any distractions.

Just as Zac was moving to grab the trident, he heard Helen cry out, "Stop!"

"Move your hand away...now!" Diablo shouted, exactly Veridia had said a month prior to this one.

"Diablo." Zac said shocked. "What the hell are you doing here and why did you bring Helen?"

"You wanna protect Mako?" Diablo challenged. "So do I, and all mermaids."

"But we had a deal I'd come alone." Zac said. "And when is Helen involved in this?"

"Deal?" Helen asked. "What deal? And for the record, I want to protect Mako. It's gonna kill the mermaids."

"No it won't." Zac said. "Why would you say that?"

"Because Diablo told me." She said.

"Enough with the talk," Diablo said. "Helen, get ready to blow this popsicle stand."

"Helen don't!" Ondina exclaimed, arriving with Erik, Raiden, Zoe, Ondina, Thalie, Jacob and Persephone.

"Don't hurt Zac!" Evie cried.

"I won't if he gets out of the way." Helen said.

"Zac you said you weren't coming." Thalie said. "Why did you follow him? And Diablo, I never thought you would stoop this low to Helen after I refused your offer."

"Wait." Helen said, lowering her arm. "I was an understudy? You tricked me!"

"I'm just doing as my mother instructed." Diablo said, grabbing the black mermaid's arm.

"Since when do you consider Veridia your mother and you talked with her?" Raiden asked.

"She told me if I destroyed this place, she will help us." Diablo said.

"Are you sure that's what she promised you?" Jacob asked.
"Yes!" Diablo exclaimed exasperated. "My mother agreed that if I did this, she would help us against Slade!" He dug his claws into Helen, which started to bleed.

"Diablo get the hell off me!" Helen exclaimed.

"Only if you do as I say." Diablo said.

"Wait." Raiden said. "We need to know what this place is for."

"Raiden how many times must I say it?" Erik asked. "It's too dangerous!"

"Wait." Zoe said. "What if you destroy Mako and us?"

"What?" Diablo asked.

"Your mother doesn't know what this place does." Zoe said. "No one does. Or what will happen if you try to destroy it."

"My mom said it was the only way." Diablo pleaded.

"How do you even know she's right?" Evie asked.

"My mother said...that she would help us if I listened to her." Diablo exclaimed, still holding onto her.

Helen's arm started glowing red and burst into flames, causing Diablo to scream, holding his burned hand. "Diablo listen to me, Veridia isn't going to help you! She's using you! To her, you're nothing but collateral damage."

Diablo dropped to the floor, tears threatening to spill from his bright amber eyes. Persephone walked up to the shaking Latino merman and said, "My ancestor didn't destroy the chamber. Don't you wonder why?"

"We can't risk it Diablo." Helen said softly.

"I..." He said, his voice breaking. "I thought that after Lyla, that she would understand me, she called me her son. I just want a home."

"We all do." Jacob said. "So don't put it at risk."

Just as Persephone comforted the shaken merboy, Zac moved his hand to try to get the trident, only to discover that it was made of thin air. It was a hologram.

"We need to go." Thalie said, noticing the moon overhead was gone. Once everyone had gone out, they all gathered on the beach.

"Why didn't you tell us about your mother?" Ondina asked Diablo.

"Why did you trick my best friend first?" Helen asked.

"Forget that." Jacob said. "We just got told how to activate the chamber. And judging from your faces, I'd say it's a good news/bad news moment."

"Well the good news is." Thalie said. "We can't activate the chamber."

"Yeah." Erik said. "That hologram was just the lock. We need the key."
"We need the real one." Raiden finished his brother.

"You wouldn't happen to know where it is do you?" Zoe asked.

"We can't get it." Zac said. "Because it's gone."

"Gone?" Persephone asked. "What do you mean?"

"Gone as in...ka boom." Evie said.

"How could the most powerful of magical tools be destroyed?" Jacob asked. "I mean this is the thing that started the war."

"Because I destroyed it." Thalie said. "The bad news is, we'll never know what the chamber does."

"It's over." Ondina said, sighing.

"Jacob, take Diablo and the rest to the grotto." Persephone said, before glaring at her nephew who shriveled at the sight of her murderous eye. "I have to have a little chat with my reckless nephew."

Zac's POV

My aunt Persephone dragged me by the ears, which by the way, hurt! I'm pretty sure that she never clipped her nails, because I swear they pierced my skin.

"Zacharai Surachai Bauman Khatha." She said seething. "Why would you lie to us? And don't go saying that you were tricked."

"I was trying to protect you guys." I said. "All my mermaid friends."

"You could have just told me or your father." I said.

"He may be my biological father but he didn't raise me." I said, crossing my arms.

"He's trying to make an effort though." She said. "He's lived for over a decade not knowing about or your sister. Give him a chance."

"That's what I'm doing." I said.

"Then why go behind our backs when your father and your cousin told you they wanted nothing to do with the chamber?"

"Because it's my choice." I said firmly. "And I'm the one breathing in this body."

My aunt took a sharp breath as if she were remembering something. "I...why did you really do this?"

I slumped my shoulders in defeat. "Because I wanted to make it up to Thalie. But I wanted to make it up to all of you. You all have done so much for me and each other and I wanted to repay you by trying to make that place safe. I wanted to start taking responsibility."

"Zac." She said, brushing my cheek. "You don't need to take responsibility. It's my job to protect you, not yours. Your job is to be my favorite nephew and help build that severed bond of family. Maybe we are coming strong too soon, but we understand if you need space."

"Thanks...Aunt Seph." I said, taking the last link to my mother by the hand, "Come on."
In the grotto…

"Without the Trident." Rita said in front of the people who went to the chamber. "The chamber can never be activated." Jacob and Persephone had gone home.

"So Mako is safe?" Rita's daughter asked.

"Yes." Rita said to Thalie. "However Zac, you took a great risk going there tonight."

Zac sighed in shame. "Look I'm sorry I lied to all of you. But I thought I was doing the right thing."

"Zac." Erik said to his cousin. "As you grow up, you'll learn that there are lots of ways to...do the right thing."

"And we speak from experience struggling to do so." Raiden said with his girlfriend nodding in agreement.

"No." Diablo said. "Tonight was my fault. I listened to my mo….I mean Veridia's words and once again, I obeyed her like a dog."

"Diablo." Ondina said to the Latino. "How could you still listen to her, after all she's done, how can you still buy her crap?"

"Because you know what the insane thing is?" He asked. "I still love her." This got the rest to smile instead of them being outraged.

"Well this is touching." Helen said sarcastically. "And Diablo, you should have told us what you were really doing. I'm all for protecting my besties but when it comes to endangering a place like Mako, I'm not signing up."

"You guys don't think of me as cynical for loving my mother despite all she's done?" Diablo asked.

"It's the same as Xhiva and Xandou's mother." Erik said to his best friend. "Despite all she's done, they still think of her as a mom."

"And despite Thalie betraying me in order to help me and vice versa." Zac said. "We still love each other as brother and sister."

"Diablo." Evie said. "Loving someone who is related to you, despite their sins, it makes you stronger and a better person."

"And from what I'm told." Rita said. "You're not a dog, nor just a merman. You're a werewolf."

This got him to smile, his orange amber eyes glowing and his canines flashing as he smiled. "Thanks guys. I still have to tell Veridia what happened. I guess she'll go lolo on us. I'm sorry."

"If Veridia can't see what an amazing merman of a son she has." Raiden said to his best friend. "Then we'll all face her together."

"It's time we face her." Thalie said. "It's time I faced her."
Diablo's POV

At the shores of Mako…

I swam to said island to meet my mother with my friends at my back, when I was pulled to the surface by my girlfriend, Rosalina. She was busy with her family so she couldn't be there last night.

"Diablo." She said, crossing her arms. "Oí que usted engañó Zac y Helen casi destruir la cámara." (I heard that you tricked Zac and Helen into almost destroying the chamber.)

"¿Quién te dijo?" (Who told you?) I asked my fuming imprintee.

"Todo el mundo sabe pero me." (Everyone knows but me.) She said, her eyes glowing grey. "No puedo creer que manipularía a tus amigos como eso." (I can't believe you would manipulate your friends like that.)

"Rose." I said, holding her hands. "Admito que lo que hice fue incorrecto pero nunca signifiqué para que Mako a casi destruidos. ¿Crees que pudiera perdonarme?" (I admit what I did was wrong but I never meant for Mako to almost be destroyed. Do you think you could forgive me?) Before I could say anything more, Rose's lips locked on my own, and I pulled her in, deepening the kiss. "OK ahora estoy realmente confundida. Feliz, pero confundido." (OK now I'm really confused. Happy, but confused.)

"Diablo, yo ya he perdonado te." (Diablo, I already have forgiven you.) She said. "Pero todavía usted debe me han dicho sobre esto. Por lo menos te pude haber dado alguna ayuda o alguna guía." (But still you should have told me about this. At least I could have given you some help or some guidance.)

"Probablemente habría dado lugar a una discusión grande entre nosotros." (It probably would have resulted in a big argument between us.) I said. "Punto tomado." (Point taken.)

"Aún así, os debo han dicho." (Still, I should have told you.)

Veridia's POV

In the moon pool…

The water rippled and out of the water, came my son.

"You came." I said, smiling. "Good." He came alone, just as we discussed. It seemed there was hope for my son after all.

"I didn't come alone." He said, and out of the water came Nerissa's children, Caesar's sons, Xiaohui's sons, and...the Pigblood herself. Diablo then told me what happened.

"You did not complete your task as instructed." I said to my son. "In fact, I told you to come alone." 

"You wanna get to Diablo?" The daughter of Nerissa challenged. "You're gonna have to go through us."

"In fact." The son of Nerissa challenged, his eyes glowing a royal blue. "You're gonna have to go through all of us." Xhiva, Xandou and the Consorzio secondborn grabbed each other, holding Diablo.
"Is that so?" I said, letting out a cold laugh. "Me against a handful of children?"

"Oh we may be children." The Pigblood challenged. "But we have faced some pretty big threats and we're looking at one of them. That's right. I'm alive."

"I know." I said darkly.

"Wait what?" The Pigblood asked.

"You knew she was alive this whole time?" The Hindi skinned merman asked.

"She's just been toying with us." Xandou said.

"Not this whole time Xhiva." I said. "I suspected several moons ago. Then when I heard of the trident's destruction, I knew that she was alive. As mud as they are, only a Pigblood could have destroyed the Trident."

Instantly, almost all of them started to charge of me, but the redheaded mermaid conjured up a wall of water, making them go back to the wall.

"Guys let's not start a war now." She said.

"Smart choice." I said. "For a half blood." She narrowed her eyes at me, them glowing blue before fading.

"Very well son." I said to Diablo.

"No, no, no. After what you almost made me do, there's no way, I'm calling you Mom ever again!" He said almost truthfully. "Not when you ditched Lyla, my sister!"

Are you sure? I thought. "I was trying to what was best for my children. Besides, someone very smart once taught me that the best way to eliminate a threat is to get someone to do it for you."

"Veridia you don't know the first thing about being a mother." Erik said to me. "It's not about whose body the child comes out of! Your life, your body, your feelings, they all come second to making sure that that child is happy and safe!"

"At least I actually gave birth." I said. "You just raised your little brother. You're not an actual father Consorzio and you never will be."

Erik seemed affected by my words but apparently let it slide. "Look the chamber can't be started without the trident." Erik said. "So that means Mako is safe."

"Which means from now on." Raiden said. "You're gonna leave us alone."

"Oh that won't be happening." I said. "Not when the battle for Mako comes."

They all looked at me flabbergasted, as if they didn't know what I was talking about. But that was impossible, they would know at least what the prophecy detailed.

"What battle?" Zac asked.

"What are you talking about?" The half blood asked.

"You really don't know?" I asked surprised at their lack of knowledge about their destiny. "Huh. Well add that to the long list of things your parents haven't told you."

Still no response, just
confusion.

"What are you talking about?" Zoe asked.

I made a move to leave but Nerissa's son asked, "What aren't you telling us?"

I turned to look at the Daughter of Nerissa and said to her absolute shock,

"By the next full moon Zoe Khatha, we're going to duel."
The sky blazed with heat on this particular hot day, even in the small bus that carried the entire junior class that was taking history. They were on their way to the National Museum of Australia on a class field trip.

In the front, the history teacher and the school baseball team coach, Jet Rodriguez, was looking out into the horizon, praying to God that nothing would stop the trip.

Evie and Carly sat together of course, Carly was talking with Evie while said person was checking her phone every 3 seconds.

"Everything ok?" Carly asked her best friend.

The brunette mermaid looked up from her phone to the blonde girl. "Yeah, why?"

Carly raised an eyebrow at her. "You've been checking your phone every 5 minutes."

Evie simply shrugged. "I'm just waiting for a message."

"I hope it's nothing important." Carly said, chuckling.

"No." Evie said, turning her head around to the backseat. "Nothing important."

The back was where Cam and Zac were sitting. They had reformed but they were somewhat wary of each other. They were still good mates. Cam was typing something on his IPad, while Zac was leaning against the window, with a hurt and worried expression painted on his face. He could still feel the intensity of the battle, even remember Slade's terrifying grip on his throat.

"Zac?" Cam asked, distantly, snapping his fingers on his face. "Zac, you there?"

"What?" Zac asked, waking from his daze looking over to his best friend. "Sorry, what's the word?"

Cam was quizzing him on SAT vocabulary.

"Anachronism." Cam said, reading off his IPad.

Zac pondered for a minute before answering, "Something that exists outside of it's normal time."

"Good." Cam said, sliding to the next word. "Next word, incongruous."

Zac looked puzzled before asking Cam, "Can you use it in a sentence?"

"Yes, yes I can." said Cam. "It's completely incongruous that we're on a bus to some stupid field trip after what just happened. Incongruous."

"Out of place." Zac answered. "Ridiculous, absurd."

"Perfect." Cam said, swiping the IPad page to the next. "Up next, prophecy." This got a death stare from Zac. "It's a noun. This is a subject that has to be discussed you know, plus we're gonna be stuck on this thing for 4 hours." Zac looked away from him which got Cam to say, "Next word,
"Stubborn." Zac said, this time with pain. "Obstinent." The bus rattled as it hit a speed bump and Zac winced in pain, clutching his side.

"Mate you ok?" Cam asked the dark haired merman. Zac's grunts of suppressed pain was his answer.

"Cam?" Zac's girlfriend, Evie asked, coming over. "How's he doing?"

"Evie, I told you." Zac said. "I'm fine."

"Just let me see it." She said.

"Evie.." Zac tried to plead but Cam cut him off.

"Zac, let us see the goddamn scratch."

Zac gave him a questioning look before lifting his shirt to show a deep gash that looked like he had just recently been cut with a dagger.

"Zac you said that your injuries were gone." Cam said. "I mean it's been a day since…"

"That one's not as bad as it looks." Zac said.

"Not as bad as it looks?!" Evie hissed, quietly so no one would hear.

"Evie, this is because it was from a dagger made from Stygian Iron." Zac explained. "It'll take longer to heal. Evie, just go sit down."

"Zac I'm not leaving you like this." Evie said.

"Hey what about me?" Cam asked a little too loud.

Carly turned around and Zac had to practically force himself to smile as they waved her and she turned around. "Evie, I have Cam here. You need to make sure Carly doesn't suspect a thing. Ok?"

"Just be careful you too." Evie said going back to her seat.

Cam gave his friend a concerned look while Zac slumped against the window. "I can't believe he's related to me." He whispered.

"I can't believe Slade's related to me."

In his Volkswagen…

"Que estou recebendo para fechar?" (Am I getting too close?) I asked in Portuguese to my brother and my cousin who were accompanying me on the trip to the Suncoast High Field Trip. I didn't board the bus and I convinced Mr. Rodriguez to let me bring my siblings...and that sounded weird, to the field trip. "Estou ficando muito perto, não é?" (I'm getting too close aren't I?)

In the reflection of the hood of my car, was the back of the bus, really close. "Hmm, Isso depende de como você vê-lo." (It depends on how you view it.) Zoe said to me, caressing her black t shirt.
"Você está seguindo o ônibus ou você planeja montá-lo em algum momento?" (Are you following the bus or do you plan on mounting it at some point?) Raiden asked me, leaning from the backseat.

"Sim, talvez você deve dar-lhes espaço." (Yeah maybe you should give them space.) My cousin advised me.

"Zoe, você quer dizer o ônibus ou o outro primo que o meu irmão mais velho aqui está perseguindo?" (Zoe, do you mean the bus or the other cousin that my big bro here is currently stalking?) Raiden asked.

"Bem depois que aconteceu eu não estou deixando vocês três fora da minha vista." (Well after it happened I am not letting you three out of my sight.) I said, chuckling at Raiden's remark. Speaking of whom, "E Raiden, volte para o seu lugar e colocar o seu cinto de segurança." (And Raiden, get back in your seat and put your seatbelt on.)

Raiden slumped back in his seat and didn't even bother to put his seatbelt on. "Veja o que eu quero dizer?" (See what I mean?)

"Bem para o registro." (Well for the record.) I said to Zoe who was slumped against the window. "Isso tudo começou quando você e seu irmão veio bater na minha porta, literalmente." (This all started when you and your brother came knocking at my door, literally.)

I leaned back against the seat as my mind flashed back a few days ago.

Flashback…

5 days ago…

Erik was typing away on his computer, some English work, that was work for L.A. He got up to get a drink when he heard the door open. He moved to see who it was and saw that it was his cousin, Zac.

"Zac, I'm telling you." He heard Zoe's voice. "This is a bad idea. In fact, it's got the words bad idea painted all over it."

"We have to learn sometime." Zac said. "We can't rely on luck all the time."

"What exactly are you twins debating about?" I asked, crossing my arms.

Zac was about to speak when Zoe beat him to the punch. "My idiot brother thinks it's a good idea to start learning how to fight."

"I don't see how it's a bad idea." I said.

"That's because.."

"We wanna learn from you." Zac said, shooting a smug look at his older sister's face. "Erik, we know that we have to fight Slade in some big battle or whatever, but Slade's not gonna stop until someone stops him. So...we need you to teach us how to fight."

I thought about this for a minute before I smiled and said, "I thought you would never ask."

End of Flashback…

Zoe's POV
"Mesmo assim, você realmente tem que usar a força bruta e dor para treinar-nos no nosso primeiro dia?" (Even so, did you really have to use brute force and pain to train us on our first day?) I asked.
"Tenho certeza de que vocês, guerreiros apenas aprender como se conectar com magia." (I'm pretty sure that you warriors just learn how to connect with magic.)

"Zoe." My cousin, Erik said. "Cada guerreiro que vai para a batalha deve saber uma verdade simples. A dor é inevitável." (Every warrior who goes into battle must know a simple truth. Pain is inevitable.)

"O sofrimento é opcional." Raiden finished. (Suffering is optional)

"Bem FYI, literalmente esfaquear meu irmão na parte de trás foi completamente desnecessário." (Well FYI, literally stabbing my brother in the back was completely unnecessary.) I said, cringing at the memory. "Você sabe que ele pode fazer campos de força." (You know he can make force fields.)

"Será que ele realmente fazer aquela coisa com as setas?" (Did he really do that thing with the arrows?) Raiden asked, as he wasn't at the lesson.

"Nem setas, mas era água." (Not arrows but it was water) I said before realizing what my baby cousin said. "Espere, você sabia que ele ia atirar em nós?" (Wait, you knew he was gonna shoot us?)

"Hey." Raiden said, putting his arms in surrender position. "É praticamente impossível dizer sempre que o meu irmão está brincando." (It is practically impossible to tell whenever my brother is joking.)

"Meu humor não é tão ruim!" (My humor isn't that bad!) Erik protested.

"Ah sim apenas como aquele momento em que você brincou sobre ir em uma missão para fazer algum trabalho sujo na Coréia?" (Oh yeah just like the one time when you joked about going on a mission to do some dirty work in Korea?) Raiden asked.

"Sim." Erik said looking down.

"Ili u vrijeme kada je napravio mudar pukotine oko ... to rade po prvi put?" Raiden chastised switching to Croatian so I couldn't understand them.

"Točno." He said, looking embarrassed. "A za snimanje, gotovo da je to učinio previše." (At the recording, they're about to do it too much."

I gripped my seat belt, almost being terrified at their dark comedy, even though I couldn't understand them. "Part of me wants to ask what you two are saying and. The other part says knowing will be more disturbing than anything I could ever think of, so...I'm gonna drop this conversation now."

"Good girl." Raiden said.

"Wise choice." Erik said, before looking pissed. "And Raiden?"

"Yes?" He asked innocently, his purple eyes warning me that he was gonna explode

"GET YOUR ASS BACK ON THE SEAT AND PUT ON THE SEAT BELT!"

"FINE!"

At Jacob's house…

Jacob's POV
I pushed the sweat and rubbed my eyes as I was working some things with the orphanage in Thailand, Ko Ban. I could barely sleep in the past couple of days. You would lose sleep too, if your own son came back battered and bruised and bleeding.

Suddenly, I felt a couple of hands touch my shoulders and out of warrior instinct, I grabbed them and pushed the person to the table. Turns out the person was my sister-in-law, Persephone.

"Seph." I said, letting her go. "Don't scare me like that!"

"Sorry." She said, brushing herself. "You've seemed really stressed."

"Of course I'm stressed!" I exclaimed. "Do you not remember what happened these past few days?"

"Yes I do." Seph said, as I sat back down. "Jacob I have to ask you something."

"This question is gonna bring up a conversation, isn't it?" I mumbled.

"Why did you decide to drop the water ball?" She asked.

I looked at her, remembering that night too well.

Flashback...

In a restaurant...

Jacob and Phoebus sat together, drinking some water. They didn't drink any alcohol often because merpeople could get drunk a bit faster than humans. The last thing they needed was to get drunk.

"Hey Jay." The blond merman said. "You ok? You've hardly spoken."

"Phoebus." He said. "You know how..we've been discussing the matter of the prophecy and the children? I have to tell them. Me, Nerissa, Caesar, and Persephone were gonna tell them when they were around 16. Obviously, that plan didn't work. And now here we are, together after over a decade. And I'm still thinking, how can I repair the broken relationship between my flesh and blood..if there's this lie between the four of us?"

"It's not a lie." Phoebus said but then came victim to Jacob's death glare. "Well it is but you're keeping a promise to the mother of your children and the father of your nephews."

"It doesn't make it right Phoebus." Jacob said. "They're gonna find out anyway. I just don't understand why my sister in law can't grow up and tell them herself."

"Well look at it from her perspective." The blonde merman said to his best friend. "As far as she wants her children to know, they are together and finally have a family. Your wife and sister in law wanted to give their children as much of a childhood as they could give."

"Everyone except Zac got that gift." Jacob said.

"I know." said Phoebus. "And I still think that no child should ever have to carry a burden as their parent's death. It's why you and Nerissa were running and moved to San Francisco."

There was a pregnant pause before Jacob said, "Caesar Consorzio, who we didn't know was a prince when we met, was brave enough to start his journey, when he just started being a teenager. And I can't even go to the dinner that Persephone is arranging tonight and...tell them the truth."

"Caesar didn't go out of his family's territory empty handed." Phoebus said.
The Thai merman looked confused before saying, "Do you think I should bring armor?"

Phoebus chuckled at his friend's obliviousness before saying, "No. What I meant was that when Caesar left, he had a plan."

End of flashback...

No one's POV

At the Consorzio house…

The Baumans, Jacob and Thalie all sat at dinner in casual yet formal clothing for Sunday dinner. It was a dinner set up to connect, but unbeknownst to them, Jacob had set it to tell them about the Great Prophecy. The boys were all in white button up shirts, jeans and sneakers. Mimmi was in a nice black dress with silver accents. Persephone was in a floral dress and Thalie was in a beautiful summer blue dress. For Thalie's sake, they all got seafood that didn't include the flesh of chopped up sea creatures, so dinner included pasta with seaweed, kelp, the works.

"This is a lovely pasta meal." Raiden said, digging in his kelp.

"Thanks." Zac said.

"There is no beating Zac's cooking." Thalie said.

"Well I've had practice over the years that were tail worry free." Zac remarked causing Mimmi to chuckle.

Persephone tapped her glass with her spoon and got up. "I'd like to propose a toast." She announced.

"Aunt Seph seriously?" Mimmi asked trying to hide her smile.

"Is this a Clan Queen thing?" Zac asked.

"Mom." Raiden said blushing, and this causes some of the silverware to be shocked.

"Royalty and the famous toasts." Erik said, wiping his mouth.

"My family," She said, raising her glass. "Our stories do start out as a little off, but each of us goes through a period of suffering before we heal and rise to the occasion. And now after 10 long years of loneliness and wandering the Earth looking for a place to call home, here I am. I have been blessed again with my niece, Zoe, my nephew, Zacharai, my step-niece, Thalassa, and my strong and remarkable sons, Raiden and Erik. And my brother in law, Jacob Khatha. I wish I could have been there for all of you when you needed a mother the most, so let's all try to fill that void, together."

"May I be excused?" Jacob asked all of a sudden, getting up and leaving.

"Nothing happened to him all those years right?" Persephone asked.

"He's just being Zac's father." Thalie said. "AKA, the source of his smouldering charm."

"Hey!" Zac exclaimed in mock defeat. "I heard that!"

"I'm sure he's just being..Uncle Jay." Raiden said.
Raiden could not have been more wrong. Jacob was pacing in the bathroom, going out of his mind slowly. Needing someone to talk to, he dialed one of his best friends.

"Hello Jacob." A feminine voice sounded in the phone.

"Rita I'm freaking out." He said, sitting on the bath edge. "I'm at the dinner and I'm this close to having a panic attack."

"Settle down cowboy." She said. "This is why we practiced and set this dinner up without Persephone knowing why. Just remember the power of teaching."

"I have to go, they'll think I'm pooping." Jacob said without any thought to what he said. The merman turned off his phone and looked in the mirror, before doing some karate moves and going back out.

He went to the dining room and still stood, he was at the end of the table so it made what he had to say more profound.

"Gonna make a speech?" Thalie asked.

Jacob chuckled at his nephew's antics. "It's more like a lesson."

Raiden groaned. "Not school now! Not at dinner!"

Erik punched him lightly and Mimmi flicked him in the ear. Both of their glares demanded that he show manners.

"Jacob what is this?" Persephone asked.

"You know why teachers teach?" Jacob asked. "It's telling children something. Some things...that can't be said any other way. Things that hold to the truth. Things that are the truth."

Persephone quickly caught on and began to panic. "Jacob Khatha. Don't. Oh God, please, don't."

"No." He said sternly, his brown eyes showing a fatherly figure. "I need to do this. For the both of us." Persephone shut up at this and Jacob began his story. "Around 600 years ago, before the time of the Half Blood prophecy, the Oracle before the Oracle that preceded Sybil, gave her last foretelling, but it would spawn into a legend, the Blood Moon Prophecy. This legend over time became a forgotten myth among mermen and mermaids. It told that four amazing merpeople with great strength and valuable force of will would rise with the ability to bring peace to mermaids and mermen everywhere. I wish I could tell you what it means but I think I'm gonna let the prophecy show you instead." They all looked a little confused while Persephone was restraining herself not to take her babies and run. "2 pairs of enemies shall unite, while their families continue to fight. The unfolding descendants of Bauman, shall be born into this omen." At the mention of Bauman, the gears in the teenagers minds began to work, the four Baumans began to realize that this was more than a history lesson. This maybe could be their future. "A king without a crown, the chosen pair, and a Jupiter Omega shall answer the call, to the Pentax Power of Omegas, the feud shall fall. In the midst of a battle of three, a blood moon shall be summoned for the world to see." Now they were shocked to the core. This wasn't maybe. There was their future, the fight of their lives being told. "Between Triton's incarnate, The Apollo Half and the heir of a crown, there will be a warrior's showdown. Although two cannot live while one will survive, a duel between a Green Leader and the Artemis Half will determine if harmony will thrive."

Jacob sat back down, while Zac got up, his eyes glowing blue and said, "Unbelievable."
Cam's POV

Present day…

In the bus...

I continued to watch my best friend, who was still so stubborn, he wouldn't even admit he was in pain. It looked like he was trying to shove it down his throat.

I looked up when I heard a whistle. "Two of you!" Mr. Rodriguez barked at two students. "Back in your seats! Jared...carsick again?" He asked a pudgy looking kid with glasses who looked like he was gonna be extremely sick. "How do...how do you even get on a school bus?" Jared grunted a forced down vomit. "Look at me. No don't look at me. Look at the horizon. Keep your eyes...on the horizon." He then noticed Zac slumping more than usual. "Blakely! Not you too!"

"No Coach I'm good." Zac said, forcing a smile.

"Zac you're still bleeding." I said, looking down on his shirt which had a large blood stain. "And don't tell me that's part of the mer-dud healing process because I'm pretty sure that still bleeding means not healing. In fact, I think it means the opposite."

"Zac your shirt is soaked in blood." Evie said, coming to check on her boyfriend.

"Well technically a 14th of his shirt is covered in..." I was on the end of death stares from Evie and Zac who looked like they were about to kill me. "Yeah, his shirt's covered in blood."

"What are we supposed to do then?" Evie asked. "We can't use magic, we can't use water, and we most certainly can't use a moonring because we don't have one."

"Well what do you think we should do?" I asked sarcastically. "Put a band aid on it?"

"Guys." Zac croaked. "I understand you're looking out for me, but we can't do anything. Not in front of this many people."

"Then what are we gonna do?" I asked. "Do nothing?"

"No not nothing." Zac said. "All we can do is wait."

No one's POV

Flashback…

The Baumans sat quietly in the dining room, each of them looking nervous. The deadly silence was driving everyone insane.

"Let me be the one to break the silence." Raiden said. "That was the most awkward ending to a dinner I have ever had in my life, and that includes dinner with the other mermen in the tribe."

"This has to be a joke of some kind." Zac said.

"I'm afraid not." Persephone said. "We know that you must be mad at us."
Raiden scoffed. "Understatement."

"But we can explain." Jacob pleaded.

"Really?" Zoe asked. "Then go ahead. Explain. Explain why you and the rest of the Order have kept this from us. Explain why you wouldn't trust us. And explain, how our so called parents who have been out of our lives for 15 years can just turn on us, with no warning!"

"We were trying to protect you." Jacob said.

"Can we stop with the lying please?" Thalie asked

"But how can you be so sure it's us?" Erik asked.

"A king without a crown."

Persephone said. "Erik you never learned this, but in clans, when the heir turns 18, they are ready to take the crown."

"What is the chosen pair?" Thalie asked.

"When we first learned of the prophecy."

Jacob said. "We were all engaged to each other in our respective pairs. Then Sybil came and told us that one of us would have twins who were born with a balance in nature's energy, the powers of the sun and the moon. A boy and a girl. The boy would be the Apollo Half and the girl would be the Artemis half."

"So...I'm the Apollo Half and my twin is the Artemis Half?" Zac questioned.

"Well it makes sense." Thalie said. "I mean both of your powers come from the sun and the night/moon."

"But what about a Jupiter Omega?" Raiden asked.

"It's obvious who it is." Raiden said in disappointment. "It's me. In Roman mythology, Jupiter was the counterpart of Zeus and was the god of lightning."

There was a heavy pause weighed on them and none of them could speak a word. Persephone was panicking because now that her babies knew the truth, she would lose them.

End of flashback...

Raiden's POV

In the car...

I leaned toward my brother while Zoe took some time to sleep, with some shade brought with the hoodie she brought.

"Così è la frase: "Non li lasciando fuori dalla mia vista" letterale o una regola generale?" (So is the phrase, "Not letting them out of my sight" literal or a general rule?) I remarked to my brother in Italian.

"Perché?" (Why?) Erik asked.

"Si sta eseguendo su fumi." (You're running on fumes.) I said snarkily, noticing the gas alert sign on the car.
"Oh damn it!" He cursed.

"Si." I said. "E sono abbastanza sicuro che quel bus tiene avanti molto più gas di questa vettura."
(And I'm pretty sure that that bus ahead holds a lot more gas than this car.)

"Così ci fermiamo." (So we stop.) Erik suggested.

I gave him a look. "È questa gita davvero così grande di un affare?" (Is this field trip really that big of a deal?)

"Si Raiden si tratta di una quantità abbastanza grande." (Yes Raiden it is a pretty big deal.) said Erik running a hand through his bronze hair.

"Così li perdiamo, un grosso problema." (So we lose them, big deal.) I snipped. "Sappiamo dove sono diretti in ogni caso." (We know where they're headed anyway.)

"Raiden, non credo che si capisce il valore della mia promessa di nostro padre." (Raiden, I don't think you understand the value of my promise to our father.) Erik said. "Lo stesso padre che ha ottenuto pugnalato al petto salvare i nostri piccoli code." (The same father who got stabbed in the chest saving our little tails.)

"No Erik." I said. "Capisco. Capisco che non c'è niente che non fare per la tua famiglia , ma si sta sorta di assunzione di questo modo di serio." (I understand. I understand that there's nothing you won't do for your family but you're kind of taking this way too seriously.) Erik gave me a death stare.

"Voglio dire, abbiamo cose più importanti di cui preoccuparsi diverso se uno di noi è gonna bisogno di un cerotto. Abbiamo la lotta della nostra vita in un mese, l'intero destino del mondo è nelle nostre mani, Mimmi è incluso . E abbiamo bisogno di iniziare a venire con strategie di battaglia su come funzionera." (I mean, we've got bigger things to worry about other than if one of us is gonna need a band aid. We have the fight of our lives in a month, the entire fate of the world is in our hands, Mimmi's included. And we need to start coming up with battle strategies on how this is gonna work.)

"Hai dimenticato la parte in cui dobbiamo insegnare i cugini newbie che abbiamo come maneggiare un pugnale." (You forgot the part where we have to teach the newbie cousins we have how to wield a dagger.) Erik said.

"A proposito, come sta andando la loro formazione?" (Speaking of which, how is their training going?) I asked.

Erik chuckled. "Beh, è a due passi da essere grande. Ma non c'è nulla di peggio della prima volta." (Well it's two steps from being great. But nothing is worse than the first time.)

Flashback…

Zac and Zoe were on Mako, Zoe tapping her fingers impatiently against a rock.

"Hey guys." They all heard Erik running to them. "Sorry I kept you waiting."

"Erik how can you have superspeed swimming and still not be on time?" Zac asked.

"Sorry guess it still catches up to me." Erik said. "Now let's get to business."

"Business?" Zoe asked.

"We're here to train remember Zoe?" Zac asked.
"That's right." Erik said.

"I've done some background digging on you two and I visited all the scenes you fought at." Erik said with a military tone.

"Don't you sleep?" Zac asked worried.

"A couple of months ago you fought some of the Kanhoji." Erik said.

"It was a cheap score." Zoe said. "Plus I discovered I could kick ass with a staff."

The twins proceeded to give each other a high five while Erik just gave them an, "Are you kidding me?" look. "And plus when we were looking around at Slade's you nearly got waxed."

"Yeah but still." Zoe said. "I got everyone out."

"When you don't have your magic, what are you gonna do then?" Erik asked his cousin. "You could use your natural abilities. And I mean natural physical abilities. But you don't. You two just rely on magic to save your ass." He walked across the beach, going for his bag he brought. "There is a humongous difference between having powers and having precision."

"When we came to you, you said you could help us." Zac reminded his cousin.

"Living this life." Erik said, conjuring up a whip of water. "It takes more than magic powers. It takes discipline and since you two are probably as stubborn as I am."

"Wait what is that for?" Zoe asked.

"You're gonna run over there." Erik explained. "You're gonna come back. And you're gonna get hit with water."

The twins both laughed. "Oh you're serious?" Zoe asked.

Erik didn't change his death glare. "No we're not." said Zac.

"Yes you two are." Erik said.

"Ok." Zoe said.

"We will humor you." Zac said.

They both ran as fast as they could to the other side and both yelled in unison, "Ready?"

Erik readied his weapon and muttered, "Ready."

The twins ran back as fast as they could and when Erik threw the water arrow at them and they caught it. "Nice try." They said.

"Really?" Erik asked before pulling his hand back and two water poles came at them and stabbed them in the back.

"You shot us?" Zac exclaimed.

"This is your teaching method?" Zoe hissed through the pain.

"No pain no gain." Erik said, taking the water poles out, which caused the twins even more pain.

End of flashback…
Zoe's POV

I woke up to the sound of Raiden laughing. I didn't know what it was but I was doubting it was Erik, considering he can't really make a joke. And then we were shaken by the car stopping in front of the bus.

"Por que estamos parando?" (Why are we stopping?) I asked Erik in Portuguese.

"Engarrafamento." (Traffic Jam.) He answered.

Carly's POV

We all were shaken by the sudden stop.

"Why are we stopping?" Evie asked, waking up. "Are we there yet?"

"Afraid not." I said to my best friend. "Traffic."

Zac's POV

The pain I was feeling was intensifying and the Advil I was taking was not working. But I had to stay strong for the sake of my friends. And for Evie's as well. Cam was trying his best to not let anybody get suspicious and Evie kept checking on me every 10 minutes. I would pull a facade, saying I was fine, but I sort of wasn't. I wasn't going to complain even then. There was safety in numbers and the last thing those numbers needed was someone who was in pain. I still couldn't believe I was so stupid as to try to reason with the most evil of all evils. Yes, I, Zac Blakely, tried to reason with a madman. Yes, I wasn't thinking straight, yes, I didn't really have a plan. And still, I should have done something to make sure that Evie stays out of this. Even so, I just wanted this to end, all of this insanity and war.

Rita's POV

In the Grotto…

"Rita." Esmeralda said, coming down from her shift at the restaurant. "I've noticed you've been extremely quiet. You ok?"

"Hypothetically what would we do if the rest found out who the Siren's Creed was?" I asked.

"Rita you know why we can't do that." Esme said.

"But after the prophecy, I'm sick of secrets." I said. "They're what is close to tearing us apart again."

"Rita listen to me." Esme said. "If they find out who your daughter and her friends are, they'll get involved, then they will help them then they will show up at crime scenes, and then Agni will go after them. And don't think your little protege of a daughter will protect all of them even if she wants too. We can't tell them now. Not when the fight of our lives in looming closer and closer." Her green eyes blazed into my own green eyes. "Rita, please. You promised Harry that you would protect your daughter with all you have and she's the only thing left of him."
Cam's POV
On the bus…

"Zac as I am amazed on how well you're fighting the pain." I said to my best friend. "We've got one more problem."

"What?" Zac asked.

"Evie keeps checking her phone like every 2 minutes." I said. "It's like she's waiting for a text from someone. And I'll bet that it's something important."

"Whatever it is." I grunted. "It's probably something to do with her father."

"Either way." I said, taking out my own phone. "I'm gonna ask."

That's when Zac, despite his pain, grabbed my arm and I swear with his glowing royal blue eyes and the amount of strength he had, he was close to breaking my wrist. "Ever hear of something called privacy?" He growled.

"I'm just concerned mate." I said in my defense.

That attempt didn't really work as Zac's grip held tighter and he slowly got my phone and put it in his pocket. "Leave my girlfriend alone."

Evie's POV
I know that checking my phone every 30 seconds was a bit exaggerated but I had to make sure my friends were ok. And considering the big secret I was now keeping, I had to make sure my friends were ok.

Flash back…
3 days ago…

I walked around the school and was on my way to my locker when Rose runs past me, her wind knocking some papers out of my hand and says sorry on the way. I had a hunch that something was off about that girl so I decided to follow, and I overheard them saying something about the series of murders on brides when they were getting married and how they were gonna solve it with the lab work. When Helen moved to open the door because she somehow sensed me, I ran for it, but I wasn't finished. There were serial killings on brides lately but the mermaids agreed to stay out of it, and yet these mermaids weren't.

A few days later, with all my knowledge of the girls and their powers, I discovered a pretty big secret. One day out in the hall, the four Omegas got an alert on their phones at the same time and made a run for it and never came back to school. That night, I learned that the vigilantes, known as the Siren's Creed had captured a serial killer named Cathy Cupid who had been killing people out of revenge against her boyfriend who had been cheating on her. Seeing the heros in their suits, and their powers, it clicked to me.

Helen, Kimi, Rose, and Thalie were the crime fighting girls with the advanced suits.
I approached them one day, and at first they were freaked out to the T but I promised them and they made me swear not to tell anyone even Zac that they were the vigilantes. But unfortunately, Kimi was hurt badly, and they were in their lair (They hadn't shown it to me because they didn't trust me) and they would let me know the minute Kimi's prognosis was updated.

End of flashback…


No one's POV

On the bus…

Jared was still trying to hold it in but he wasn't doing so well. He was gonna throw up any second now. But Jet Rodriguez wasn't being so merciful.

"Jared, I'm warning you." Jet said to the carsick kid. "I'm an empathetic vomiter. You throw up, I'm gonna throw up back on you. And trust me, it will be profoundly disgusting."

"Please don't talk about throwing up." Jared pleaded through sick moans. "It's not good."

"I might throw up on you just to make a point." Jet said.

"It's not good." Jared said, shaking his head. "It's not good."

Jet gave the kid a little pat on the head in sympathy before turning to the rest of the junior class. "Now the rest of you, don't think we're gonna forfeit this field trip because of a slight traffic jam, tornado warning, Jared." When it came to baseball games, Jet would stop at nothing until he made the game. He was one of the most stubborn teachers Suncoast had ever seen. "We're gonna make this thing! Nothing is gonna stop us!" He then noticed Evie's hand up. "McLaren we're not in a classroom."

"Well there's a food exit about half a mile up. I don't know if we stop or…" She was cut off by Jet.

"We're not gonna stop." He said.

"She has a point." Cam said. "If we stop…"

"Mitchell!" Jet screamed blowing his whistle and not willing to listen to excuses. "Shut it! Seriously, it's a little bus! Stop asking me questions!"


Evie's POV

"It's official." I said, walking up to Cam and Zac. "I hate him."

"Did you call Rita?" Cam asked Zac.

"I keep getting her voicemail." Zac answered with a shrug.

"Alright that's it." Cam said, taking out his phone. "I'm calling Raiden."

"How are my cousins gonna help?" Zac asked. "They're back in town."

"They're not." Cam said, pointing to the Volkswagon right behind them. "They've been following us
for hours. Pathetic Zac, really."

Raiden's POV

My phone rang and I answered, seeing it was Cam. "Yo Cam what's up? And before you ask, yes we're chilling at a movie…"

"I know you guys are right behind us." Cam snapped. "Put me on speaker."

"D'ok." I said, turning the phone to speaker holding it out in the center.

"Ok." Evie's voice rang through the phone. "Zac's still hurt."

This caught us by alarm. Mermen and mermaids had double the healing speed as humans but it tripled when we were in the water. And since Zac slept in the moon pool after what happened, he should have been getting better.

"What do you mean still?" Erik asked. "He's not healing?"

"No he's not healing." Cam said "In fact it's getting worse. The blood's turning into a black color."

We all winced in sympathy. "That means it's getting close to being infected." Erik said.

"What's wrong with him?" Zoe asked.

"What wrong?" Cam asked. "I don't… do I have a PhD in merfolk biology? How am I supposed to know that?"

"We have to do something." Evie said. "It could be killing him."

"We need to get him off the bus." I said.

"And take him where?" Zoe asked. "A hospital? They'll run tests."

"No I mean he's a merman." I said. Erik was on the phone with Xhiva so he couldn't really talk. "He needs to be in water, it's his natural habitat so there's a chance he'll heal."

"So we need to take him to a park then." Zoe said understanding.

"If he's dying then yes." I said.

"Thanks Xhiva." Erik said, putting the phone away. "Evie, Cam, there's a park with a rest area about half a mile up. Tell the coach to pull over."

"Yeah we've been trying." Cam said.

"Well reason with him." Zoe suggested.

"Reason with Coach Jet?" I asked. "I'd like to see you try. This guy will play ball in rain, shine, tidal wave, whatever. No reason will get through him."

"He's right guys." Cam said. "Have you met this guy?"

"Just try something." Erik said, turning off the phone.

Evie's POV
While Cam sat down, I did my best reasoning to talk to the coach.

"Mr. Rodriguez." I said. "It's just 10 minutes for a bathroom break. We've been on this thing for 3 hours." I was cut off by the man whistling at me. "It's not far to the next rest stop.." Whistle. "Being cooped up for hours is not good." Another whistle. "You know our brains need the fresh air.." But it was no use as every time I tried to speak, the Coach would whistle at me with his whistle. "Let me talk!"

"Get back to your seat McLaren!" He exclaimed.

"Fine!" I shouted.

Cam's POV

I patted Evie's back in good hope. "Nice try Eves." I said.

"And Jared." Mr. Rodriguez said. "Keep your eyes on the horizon."

My head perked up and Evie looked at me worried. "I'm gonna let you do the work." She said, holding her nose and Zac's.

Reasoning didn't do the work, so there was Plan B, also known as...Jared. I sat down in Jared's seat, bracing for the calm before the storm. I felt sorry for the pudgy little kid, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

"Hey Jared. How you doing?"

No one's POV

The stench of vomit filled everyone's noses and in a matter of minutes the bus pulled over and everyone was running out of the bus to get away from the massive pool of vomit that had spread all over the floor. A window opened on the bus and Jet was spraying FebReze spray everywhere and yelled, "Jared, you suck! Hey, someone grab some towels or a mop. Or a new bus."

Meanwhile, The Consorzios, Cam, Evie, and Zoe all carried the severely wounded Zac to the lake, where luckily it was a 5 minute walk from the bathrooms and set him down, letting him transform into his merman self, and also showing his almost infected wound. The sight of it was summed up in one word: Terrifying. The wounds were now clothed in black blood and the veins were showing around it. It hurt to even look at it.

"Oh Jesus." Raiden said.

"Why didn't you tell us it was this bad?" Zoe scolded her brother. "Why did you even come?"

"Sorry?" Zac managed to get out.

"Ok." Evie said. "Just give us a second."

While Zac took some time to try to get some rest, the rest of the team went off a few feet to discuss the problem.

"This shouldn't be happening." Evie said.

"We've seen him heal from worse than this." Raiden said.

"Yeah, like our first attack from Slade." Erik said.
"What's left to do then?" Cam asked sarcastically. "Call an ambulance? Use the water."

"What if it's too late?" Raiden asked.

"You know it could be psychological." Zoe muttered.

"Like psychosomatic?" Raiden asked.

"Somatoformic." Evie said.

Zoe's face brightened in realization. "Of course! It could be Acheron Syndrome."

"What syndrome?" Cam and Evie asked.

"It's a rare psychological condition." Zoe explained. "It only happens under great duress, and basically, all that stress is stopping him from healing."

"Because of what happened with Slade." Erik finally said. "He's berating himself and therefore he can't heal."

"What do we do?" Cam asked.

Evie reached into her bag and pulled out a sewing kit. "Stitch him up." They all looked at her like she was crazy. "I'm serious. Maybe all he needs to do is believe he's healing."

"Alright." Raiden said in an authoritative tone. "Cam, keep stalling the bus, Evie, you do the sewing, Zoe make sure that no one comes here. If they do, get them out of here so that no one can see them. Erik and I will try to help Cam. This could take a while."

Evie's POV

I jumped in the lake, my tail forming and I threaded the needle, after calming down because I was freaking out for my boyfriend's sake. But he was apparently, passed out. I could only imagine what was going on in his mind.

Zac's POV

Flashback…

I was in my room in the Blakely residence, preparing to go out when I heard a knock on the door. I opened it and it was my little cousin, Raiden.

"Come on in." I said. "Raiden if you keep showing up, people are gonna start suspecting something. And by people I mean my foster parents."

"I came to drop this off." He said, tossing back my staff. "You should know, a merman never leaves his weapons behind."

"He is if he's going to try a different approach." I said.

Raiden spluttered. "What do you mean?"

"You're not gonna believe me or let me out of this room if I tell you." I said.
Raiden crossed his arms and smiled confidently. "I'm the only freaking Omega merman in this town. Try me."

"Alright." I said, setting my jacket down. "I'm gonna try something no one has ever done before."

"Is it stupid?" Raiden asked.

"Yes." I answered instantly.

"Is it gonna get you killed?" Raiden asked.

I pondered for a minute before saying, "Probably."

"Alright let's hear it." Raiden said.

"I'm gonna reason with Slade." I said.

Raiden looked confused before laughing out loud. "Reasoning with Slade? That's a good one."

Noticing that I wasn't laughing, like at all he stopped laughing too. "Oh… oh you're serious?"

"Serious to the T." I said.

"You..you've gotta be kidding me." He said. "Zac, this guy, murdered my own father right in front of Erik's eyes when he was a child, is the reason my mother lost an eye, and is the cause of thousands of lives. 4 clans are lost because of him and there used to be 7. This man, this monster, he's beyond anyone's help."

"Raiden." I said. "That's why I have to try."

"Oh you're not trying anything." He said. "I'm a delinquent but even I'm not that stupid."

"Raiden I'm going alone." I said. "And you're not gonna stop me."

Raiden chuckled, laying out his arms, electricity travelling on them flowing to his palms. "Is that so?" He charged but I used the light in the room, and there was a lot of light, and I used that light to generate a force field cage that covered him like plastic wrap on food. Raiden tried to use his powers to break himself free but all he did was just electrucute himself.

"Oh and by the way." I said, opening the door. "Before I leave." I pushed the force field to be tighter and I pulled up his underwear and he accidentally gave himself an electric wedgie. "Now you know how I feel!"

As I left, I heard Raiden swear in Italian and I was pretty sure he was saying that he was gonna kill me.

What I didn't notice was that about half an hour after I left, Raiden, although electrocuting himself in the process, broke free of the force field and ran, muttering, "I have to warn the others."

I swam to the far end of the Ares Tribe territory of Neptune Island. I took out few guards here and there and I almost killed someone but I let him go. I swam my way, as stealthy as I could and I found myself in this general war room. Inscriptions of war and bloodshed covered the walls.

"Why does the fish, swim into the fisherman's net?" I heard the most terrifying voice I ever heard in my life. I looked over and I saw a merman with pale skin, the skin of a corpse, covered with scars and black armor. Half of his face was burned off showing black, soulless eyes. I was scared to death at the aura he was giving off, which was the aura of death.
"Because the fish this time, didn't take any bait." I snapped back.


"I didn't come here to fight." I said. "I came to talk. To try to change your mind about everything you've done."

Slade laughed a cold merciless laugh. "This...this is the one rumored to defeat me? The Son of Nerissa? What shame she must feel. Especially your uncle Caesar."

I was filled with rage, but I let it slide at the moment. "All of this loss Slade. And for what? To become unstoppable? To rule the world? To fan the flames of hate? The unity between mermen and mermaids, between men and women can bring peace, hope, and light."

"Or misery, suffering, and darkness." Slade said, gesturing to his scars, indicating that he was from a clan, that apparently didn't treat him very well. "See, I know what it is to live in fear, to be dominated by hatred. But even as a boy, as the scapegoat of a society, I vowed to rise above the tyranny of mermaids and finish what my ancestor started."

"Then why create a tribe built on that standard?" I asked.

"Well you need war to conquer war." Slade said.

"Or maybe you use war, death and fear to conquer people." I said in realization. "To control those who follow you. And to get rid of those who won't."

Slade chuckled. "Clever boy."

"The world wants peace." I said. "And the answer starts with you stopping with all of this madness."

"I'll show you what my answer is." Slade said with venom.

"Why do I feel like things are about to heat up and blades are about to clash?" I asked.

"Of course I'm going to attack you." He said rhetorically. "Did you think you were getting out of this without a fight?"

Zac, thinking on his training conjured an ice trident and Slade got out his arm blades made of Stygian Iron, only this one had no magic. There was a deafening silence before Slade charged at Zac. Zac managed to get Slade in a few hits but he was thrown around and knocked to the ground with a swipe of his bladed sword on his abdomen, blood pouring out like a faucet. "Pathetic." Zac nearly escaped as a fist came down, creating a crater in the rock. "But that is to be expected when your father is a weak willed coward like Jacob. He doesn't deserve to carry my ancestor's name in him. You on the other hand, should never have tried to do this alone."

"Oh he didn't." Erik's voice rang out. They both looked at a trio led by Erik whose brother had hands crackling with electricity, and Zoe's eyes were glowing blue.

"Guys get out of here!" Zac yelled.

"We wouldn't have come if we wanted to be here in the first place." Zoe remarked.

"And by the way." Raiden said. "I still am gonna kill you for that force field."

Immeately, they charged. Zoe kept teleporting all over the place while Erik fought Slade and Raiden almost blinded him with his lightning. Zac made a move to strike but he was knocked into
Zoe.

"Do you fools really believe you can defeat me now?" Slade thundered.

"No we didn't." Zoe remarked. "We just needed to keep you busy long enough to get Zac."

"Oh and by the way, "Boss." Erik mocked. "Catch!" He threw something wrapped in seaweed which created a blinding light and gave enough cover for Zoe Khatha to teleport them out of there.

When Slade's vision cleared, he laughed evilly and said, "Soon they will face me."


No one's POV

On the bus…

According to the news, there had been a break in at the museum and the Sirens Creed was on their way to try to save the day. Because the attack was critical, the field trip had been postponed. Erik's car was broken down and a tow truck had picked it up. Kimi was gonna be ok since she pulled through her injuries. On the bus, was the entire junior class including Zoe and the Consorzio brothers who had to take the bus back to the city. Zac fortunately was getting better.

"So the first thing you did when you rescued Zac was punching him in the face?" Cam asked incredulously.

"Yep." Erik said in pride. "Raiden did too. He kind of deserved it for being an idiot."

"Yeah, Zac can be pretty spur of the moment when it comes to making rational decisions." Cam said.

"And that is why I'm the oldest." Erik bragged quietly.

Mimmi sat with Raiden, looking into the horizon. "Hey Raiden?" Zoe asked.

"Yes?" He replied.

"You know how I say, you shouldn't bother Zac or just be a good little cousin or brother?" She asked.

"Uh huh." He said.

Mimmi gave him a big hug. "I'm glad you don't listen to your older siblings." They both laughed at this.

Meanwhile Zac and Evie sat together. "I can't believe you tried to reason with him." Evie scolded her boyfriend. "What were you gonna do after it worked? Invite him over for dinner?"

"I know I took a risk." Zac said. "But it was worth a shot."

"Was almost dying worth a shot?" She asked.

"It almost is." Erik said, he was across from them in the back. Zoe and Raiden were in front. "I understand why, but you really shouldn't have tried to get yourself killed."

"I said I knew I screwed up." He said. "It was still worth a try."
"And that's why we need you." Zoe said.

"Look Zac." Raiden said. "Me and Erik, after our time serving in war, all we can see in a person are the flaws, the lies, the dark thoughts people think we don't see. Zac, I wish I could be you. To be honest Erik was a bit jealous of you at first."

"But Raiden you know that you guys matter more than I do." Zac said. "Raiden's got the power, Zoe's got the mermaid magic and Erik's got the brains."

Evie gave him a smile and said,

"And that's why your family needs you. Because you're a person who sees the best in people."

After credits scene…

Flashback…

After getting recovered, the Khatha Twins met in the moon pool to try to help Zac heal. The others agreed to sleep out in the ocean that night. When they got to the Mako moon pool, they found Jacob there.

"Dad?" Zoe asked. "What are you doing here?"

Jacob pinched the bridge of his nose. "There is one more thing I still haven't told you." He said. "Slade and I knew each other in the tribe. We were comrades, but when we were kids, we didn't know we were more than sparring partners."

"I don't understand." Zac said. "What do you and Slade have to do with us and each other?"

Jacob sighed in contempt before continuing. "Slade and I...may not share the same grandfather..but we share the same ancestor. Triton."

Zac looked like his eyes were gonna pop out of their sockets, while his sister looked like she was gonna pass out. "No. It's not possible." She said.

"Zoe." Jacob said to his daughter. "It took me a long time to believe it too. I was just like you, shocked, afraid, nervous. But it's the truth."

"Aside from him being our distant cousin." Zac said. "We've got one thing that Slade doesn't." They all looked at him confused.

"Something worth fighting for."
Thalie's POV

You wanna know how to become a champion? It's easy. Turn your dream into your goal. Plant it deep in your heart. Then for the next few months or years, your goal becomes your life. Even in a tiny second. You wanna know how to stop becoming a champion? I actually tried that once. Believe it or not, that was a lot harder.

Line break...

In the grotto, it was surprisingly Raiden who was giving us a lesson, an Omega for a few. Personally, I hoped he wouldn't cause a riot or something. But actually he turned out to be a pretty freaking good teacher.

"Let's talk about music." He said, noticing our befuddled expressions and laughing. "You're probably thinking, 'Music? I thought that Raiden here was going to teach me how to be awesome!' What if I told you, that all mermaids and mermen are musicians? The rhythm, tempo, steady beats, and then...the crescendo!" We all laughed at this. "Today I'm going to teach you how to play your individual instruments. How many of you are in tune with your element?" We all raised our hands. "How many of you are ready to learn La Anastasia?" Everyone slowly put down their hands but Helen's stayed up. "Come on." He gestured her to come to the middle. "You can set yourself on fire?"

"Sure." She said to the Lightning Omega.

"Let me see." He said.

"Ok." She said, taking a few steps back and taking a breath. She raised her right arm and flames erupted, coating her entire arm and not once did she flinch.

"Yes!" Raiden said clapping. "Lots of power, I like that! Now guys, let me show you how it's done." He took a few steps back and the lights around him seemed to dim, his purple eyes were glowing as his spread out his arms and then his whole body was taken over by electricity, and then it seemed like he was made of electricity. The lights went out and he was a sparkling glow stick. But the moment seemed to end when the lights came on and his lightning was absorbed back into his body.

"And that's how it's done. La Anastasia, was named for the first mermaid who did it; Anastasia of the Russian Pod. It's one of the hardest techniques in the world. It's when you literally become your element, while maintaining intact biological functions. This was considered impossible before Anastasia did it."

The lesson continued with some of us getting it, but I almost got it unfortunately, I almost broke my arm doing it.

Rob Blakely's POV

I heard Zac come in through the kitchen and I saw him get some water and snacks.

"Hey Zac." I said to my adoptive son.

"Hey Dad." He said. "Just getting some food for my sister, she's working non stop."
"I'll go see if I can distract her for a bit." I said, taking my coffee and going down to his shed. When I opened the door, I saw my American redhead foster daughter, with some books in front of her and she was writing something down. "Hey Thalassa."

She looked and smiled her beautiful smile. "Hey..Dad."

I chuckled at that. "How you doing? You looked like you've ran a marathon."

"It's nothing." She said. "My grades for the past few months have been slipping. And I can't fall behind. Mom said I should just try to relax. Don't tell her ok?"

I left the shed and met my wife, Lauren on the table. "Rob what's wrong?" She asked.

I sighed, tapping my fingers on the glass table. "Pure determination, dressed up like a teenager."

We both laughed, remembering how stubborn our daughter can be.


Later that night…

The Sirens Creed was out on patrol when we heard a distress call, about Hell's Angels. So we went there to try to stop them. We were winning against them, but I accidentally missed my shot at one of them, giving them a chance to punch me out hard and stick a knife in my stomach. The others tried to help me but I told them to go on. I tried to stop them but my efforts were in vain as they got away before we got a chance.

When we got back to Mako, everyone was down. Rose tried to keep everyone in happiness and Helen was fuming on how we blew it, and Kimi was checking my wounds.

But I knew what really happened. "Guys, go home, get some rest. Tonight was my fault. I screwed up so I'm gonna keep going." I dived down, against Kimi's protests.

"Is she ok?" Rose asked.

"I hope so." Helen said. "I really hope so."


At the grotto…

My own patrol was finished, and I came back home already unsuited, defeated, slumping in the chair.

"Thalie you ok?" Sirena asked. The mermaids were having a lesson with Evie.

"What's wrong?" Evie asked.

"Nothing." I said. "I'm fine."

They looked at me concerned before resuming and letting me watch and give out tips and pointers. But in my mind, I kept seeing and hearing the sound of my failure. It was the scene of my dreams of a better future, starting to fall apart.

At school, the next day…

I walked around the school eyeing my friends and siblings closely. I couldn't even believe that they were going in a battle in less than a month, and one of them could die. I couldn't afford to lose any of them. What was I gonna do? What was I gonna tell? What should I do? I thought.

I didn't do many things when I was in that dark time, but that night, I almost did something that would haunt me for the rest of my life.

It was when I almost became the person I hated the most.

Later that night…

Me and my friends were on a late night swim, far past Mako Island. We didn't know we were really far because we were all having so much fun.

Do you think we went too far? Rose asked.


It's a school night guys. Being the smart one, Kimi reminded us.

We should turn back. I agreed.

Oh not so fast.

We all surfaced to the voice and when we turned around, it was Judge Veridia.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Helen asked, partly setting aflame.

Veridia chuckled. "I just came to give you girls a message. Very convenient you girls are here. Tell your friends that the Mermaid Council will be coming at you with your best shot, and after we win, I might just either wipe your memories or your families."

"You're not gonna trick us with your trickery!" Rose exclaimed.

"Very bland way of putting it but whatever you're selling, we're not buying!" Kimi exclaimed.

"Such bravado." Veridia said coldly. "If only you were actual mermaids, not this...heap of intolerable distress."

"Veridia, please." I said, holding down my rage. I wanted to take this woman down, for hurting my family and everyone she's hurt, but I knew better than that. "As crazy as this sounds, we don't want a confrontation."

Yes, the others looked at me weirdly. I had expected them to. Veridia seemed puzzled before she swam up to me and smiled sickeningly sweet. "Oh Thalassa. That's a little ironic isn't it? I bet deep down you want to please that daddy of yours."

Stop it. I thought, shaking my head and blinking out tears. Snap out of it Thals. She's just trying to get in your head. "Veridia please. I know it isn't my place to fight you. As much as I want to, I can't. But Veridia, why would you kill my father, an innocent man? He stuck his neck out for mermaids, he protected them! Did you know that he ran in with a woman named Dr. Denman and she almost posted a specimen of a dead mermaid online but got rid of it? My father protected mermaids with all
of his heart, even you!"

"Then he shouldn't have met your whore of a mother!" She exclaimed.

That was the moment everything came boiling up. The oceans reflected my mood and the girls swam out of the way. Every feeling of anger, sadness, and hate came into my heart, darkening it. Veridia looked at me terrified then. I only had one thought on my mind: Moon ring, destroy.

Thalassa, you're better than this. I heard my father's voice speak in my head.

Not anymore. I said, showing my moon ring which was glowing a blood red color as I poured all of my negative energy into it. Do it Thalassa! I thought to myself. Destroy her!

So I did, or I tried. I fired a blast out of my moon ring at her, hitting her hard. I'm pretty sure I broke a few ribs. Then I summoned a wave of water and was about to send it flying at her, but Helen got in my way and cried, "No! Snap out of it Thalie!" I paid no attention to her as I punched her aside. I swam towards her and she kept backing away. I fired my moon ring at her, when Kimi froze my arms and held me.

"No stop!" I screamed. "She's getting away!" I broke free of the icy restraints and continued to hurt my friends, not caring what I was doing until I had Veridia's blood on my hands. I continued to fight her and she fought me until I felt a hand close my mouth and the air leaving me, knocking me unconscious. The last thing I saw, was Veridia's fin leaving the scene.

When I came to, I could feel my legs so I assumed I was on Mako Island beach. But when I looked up, I saw Rosalina look at me with wide eyes and I had never seen her more terrified.

"What happened?" I groaned in my natural American accent, getting up. The other girls all wore the same expressions like I had murdered someone. Murdered someone? That's when I remembered and before I was knocked out. I looked at Rosalina who was trembling to even talk to me. "HOW COULD YOU DO THAT? I HAD HER!"

"What you just did." Helen said coldly, seething with subtle rage. "We never signed up for."

"We said, we catch the guy." Kimi said, stepping forward. "That's it."

"I never should have let you help me!" I shouted and checking my moon ring, and then seeing it was out of power, I let out a frustrated snarl. I looked up and the three girls formed a wall around me. "Out of my way!" I screamed, preparing to strike when Kimi froze my feet and Helen got around me and Rose walked up to me, ready to knock me out. I smiled and with my other hand, I summoned three jets of water that knocked them to the tail, literally.

"Thalie." Rose pleaded. "Let's talk about this!"

I didn't listen as I created my water board and soared into the night and diving in the ocean to go to the Secret Sanctum.

Once I got there, I walked in, after I got dry with some of the adults giving me weird looks.

"Thalassa?" Persephone asked. "Are you ok?"

"I'm fine Seph." I said, opening the lab doors. In one of the shelves, there was a device that trapped moonlight that could restore the moon ring's powers.

"Is everything alright?" I heard Jacob asking.
"I'm fine!" I snapped, unplugging the moon ring and testing it out. To my relief, it was working. Just as I walked out, the Thai merman grabbed my arm.

"What are you doing?" He asked.

I turned and gave him a cold look. "What my mother should have done a long time ago." I broke free and when I turned the door latch, it was locked and no matter how many times I tried to get it open, it was stuck. I turned around and saw Jacob with just his arms crossed. No gestures of power, nothing.

"You're going after Veridia aren't you?" He asked, but it was more of a statement than a question.

"Yes." I hissed, banging at the door. "Open!"

"This isn't you Thalie." He said, sounding sincere, but I wasn't going to listen to anyone.

"Jacob." I said. "I don't know what you're doing, but open the door."

Jacob looked a little pissed at the way I was speaking to him. "Do you want to push me? Let me tell you something, killing someone, it ain't a pretty feeling. It takes away part of yourself, it darkens your soul. Your boyfriend has killed a few, and not a day goes by when he or Erik don't regret what they have done."

"I don't care." I snapped. "Just open the door please!"

I continued struggling but no luck prevailed. "Will taking a life make you happy? Will it make you smile?"

"Yes!" I said before realizing what came out of my mouth. "No! I don't know! Open the goddamn door!"

"Is this what your parents want?" He asked.

"It doesn't matter!" I exclaimed.

"Is this what your father would have wanted?" Jacob said.

"MY FATHER'S GONE!" I screamed, pounding the door. I wanted to be strong but I was just sitting there, like a scared little girl, crying my heart out. I didn't know what to do, just like when I told who my mother was. "My daddy's gone."

"Thalassa…"

"Jacob…" I said to my apparent stepfather. "I… need to be alone."

He gave me a pat on the back before heading out, "If you need anyone to talk to, I'm here for you."

I spent about two hours crying feeling helpless like I shouldn't have been and whispering, "Dear God, what have I done?"

Being there for my family was supposed to lead me to what I really wanted in life. But what humanity I retained, was slipping away.


The next morning
At Suncoast High…

I sat outside, on a bench in the hallway. I called for my mom to meet me out there. I had finished typing a message on my phone when I heard the soft clicking of heels.

"Thalassa." I looked up and it was my mother. "I got your message. You said you wanted to talk to me about something?"

"Nu uh." I said immediately.

"Nu uh?" My mother repeated. "You weren't looking for me?"

"No." I said. "Talk. I can't 'talk' about it."

"Is everything ok?" She asked me, in a very motherly tone, soft and centered.

I stayed quiet for a minute before asking, "Can we go someplace quiet?"

My mom looked at me suspiciously.

Line break…

"What's going on?" My mom asked, when we were in her office. Her assistant Anna had stayed home sick so we were good to discuss..things.

I took a big breath. "I..didn't have the nerve to tell you so I wrote it." I showed her the text screen on my phone, with the letters spelling out the words, "Everything is crashing down on me. I don't know if I can keep this up, I want….to quit."

Mom looked at the phone, then me, then the phone in shock, her mouth hanging open. "The full moon is two weeks away and you wanna quit? Is this a joke?"

"No." I said. "I wanna go home."

Mom clapped my shoulder. "Thalassa, is there something going on that you're not telling about?" I shook my head. "Then you're gonna have to do better than I wanna go home because this is not making any sense!"

"I just wanna be normal Mom!" I exclaimed.

"Baby you weren't born to be normal." She said. "Everything you have done your entire life has been exceptional." She noticed the look on my face. The look of pure stubbornness. "No! No you are not gonna quit! No, you have worked too hard for this, Thalassa! We have sacrificed so much for this, for everyone being together! And now you wanna quit? Exceptional people don't just up and quit!"

"I don't want to be exceptional!" I exclaimed. "I don't want to be a warrior!"

She stayed silent for a minute. "Does Zac know?"

"No." I said, with my voice breaking. "Can you tell him?"

"Oh, you have to be kidding me Thalassa!" She said, barely keeping her frustration. "You took an oath! What you're doing is dishonerable! If you want to quit, you tell your brother and sister yourself. And after that you tell everyone else whose heart you're gonna break!" She left the office, leaving me to my thoughts.
I thought I was doing the right thing at the time but at the same time I couldn't help but wonder, was I really doing the right thing and if I was, then why did I feel so bad about it?

In the grotto…

All the adults gathered there and to say they were shocked, was an understatement. Everyone but Jacob was unaware of what I came close to doing.

"You want to what?" Phoebus asked.

"She wants to quit." Persephone reminded her best friend.

"And I've told her." My mother said. "Look at all the people that have sacrificed for you. Your Aunt Nerida, Aquata, Zac, your friends, Erik, your father, your boyfriend, me."

"I know Mom!" I said holding back tears. "I can try to pay you back."

"No Thalassa, you cannot pay me back!" My mother nearly shouted. "Paying me back would be doing the thing you want to do and you just want to throw it all away! You think the others aren't scared or want to be normal?"

"She is gifted." Esmeralda said, getting up and sitting on the table, facing me. "One of the best mermaids I have ever seen, and she is quite talented for a half blood and for someone her age."

"I know that." My mom said. "And she knows that too."

"But a mermaid is more than magical knowledge and moon rings." said Esmeralda. "If she doesn't have it in her heart, it isn't there. We can't teach it, you can't force it. And even your daughter can't make it any different." I was close to crying but I didn't want to be a brat. I just wanted this all to end. "A champion, isn't made of muscle. A champion is made of heart."

They left me to go in the hallway, with a heavy heart. I followed them, turning invisible.

"We'll give her some time to figure this out." Persephone said to my mother. "If she wants to quit, she will."

Mimmi/Zoe's POV

In the cafe…

Our parents discussed with us, Thalie's issue and we were trying to find ways to convince her to come back.

"Zoe?" I heard Evie's voice. "Earth to Zoe?" I looked at her. "Something wrong?"

"You heard what happened with Thalie?" I asked.

Evie looked glum at the mention of Thalie. "Oh yeah, I heard about that."

"I don't know what I'm gonna do." I said. "I want her to come back. We have worked so hard to try to keep Mako safe, the fight of our lives is right around the corner and now she's just backing out. I mean, she's practically my little sister and there's a lot I want to say to her to show that we got her back, but I don't know how. How do I even talk to a stubborn girl like her? i
"Well no one isn't without weakness." Evie said. "I'm just saying, that should she get in a sticky situation, she could crack. I happen to know she works under pressure."

The waves started to churn in my mind as an idea came into my head. "I got it!" I said hugging her. "Thanks Evie!"

Raiden's POV

At the house…

We were talking about Thalie's dilemma. Somehow the word got out but we kept our knowledge from her, because the last thing she needed was more pressure.

"Poor Thalie." Zac said. "She's always carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders."

"Well I can't blame her." Erik said. "Her dad died to save her."

"Erik, that's not helping." Zac said to my big brother.

"Hey." Erik said, putting his hands up in surrender. "I'm not trying to help."

"Frankly I'm surprised you guys didn't run away." Zac said.

"Oh we tried." I said, taking a sip out of my hot chocolate filled mug. "It didn't really go well."

"See this scar?" Erik said, lifting his shirt a little and showing a large white line on his chest. "I got this trying to escape. Raiden managed to hide but I wasn't so lucky. I couldn't breathe for a month without pain."

"Jesus." Zac said wincing.

"Why didn't you tell me?" I asked.

"I just didn't want you to worry." Erik said. "Zac, you don't understand what it's like in that hellhole. It's literally kill or be killed, eat or be eaten, shark-eat-shark."

"He's right." We all heard Jacob as he came down. "It's been nearly 30 years but I still remember the tense atmosphere in there." He sat down. "We've seen the guys in there. The rest of the little merboys. They're either going to battle or being doctors or forging weapons or worse."

"They're caged." Erik agreed, holding back tears. "Got no future."

"And that's why I couldn't stay." Uncle Jay said. "I wanted a future."

"That's why you're pretty famous." Erik said. "You're the first merman to leave that hellhole and live."

"Raiden?" My cousin nudged me. "You seem quiet."

I had been for a long time and without thinking, I stood up and said, "I want to go to San Francisco."

"Why would you wanna go there?" My uncle asked.

"To see Aunt Nerissa's grave." I said.
Zac nearly knocked over his cup of hot chocolate and Erik accidentally made his mug hot and he yelped when he burned his hand. "You wanna what?"

"Guys." I said. "We're all in a funk, and Thalie's in the biggest funk of the century. We're all so distracted because we're worried about her, our battle plans, Slade. We've all been so stressed that we can't even remind ourselves where we come from. So I think that if we go back to where we started, we might get a little boost of some sort. For all of us."

"So let me this straight." Uncle Jay said. "You want us to go with Thalie to San Francisco to the place where your aunt's empty grave is to give us confidence? I think that my daughter will be a little upset but I think that Thalie might not want to go and I don't think Rita will let her go."

"We'll talk them into it." I said. "I mean what do we got to lose? We need all the help we can get."

Thalie's POV

At the Marine Park…

I walked in the park, hoping to get some of my mind cleared. This had to have been the worst day of my life. I let everyone down, and now I didn't know how to get back on my feet. I wish I had someone to talk to who didn't give me the cold shoulder.

Persephone's POV

In the Secret Sanctum…

I walked down the halls of one of the bases me and my team set up in the world in our travels. I heard some chatter in the lab with the three other Omegas.

"Hey girls." I said looking at them, but they looked kind of glum. It seemed that not having their leader had taken it's toll.

"I guess it was hard for her, having to go through her identity crisis." Helen said. Recalling Thalie's reaction, I sighed and said, "I'm sure it was."

"But she got over it." Helen said.

"With the help of her friends." I reminded them.

"But now she has new ones." Rose said sadly. "Will she leave us?"

"There will be new friends you all will meet." I said to them. "But you three are the first and the best. Your four have a bond that can never be broken by anybody. Nerissa was like her once, she wanted a normal life so she tried to quit. Didn't work out. I have some regrets in my life but..letting her go in that burning building is one of them."

Thalie's POV

I walked up the park by myself, and I heard a Canadian voice call out, "Marine Park souvenirs! Take
the fun home!" I walked up to my sister who was wearing black lipstick and a black cap and said, "Hey."

"Hey Thals." She said. "I heard you're in a bit of a funk. Do you need someone to talk to?"

"Well maybe." I said, but then we heard the sound of a dolphin clicking. "Did you hear that?"

"Yeah." Zoe said. "Sounds like the dolphins are stressed."

"Let's go." I said, dragging her away. We got to the dolphin tank where the dolphins were arguing about something but it was hard to tell what they were saying because they spoke in mashed up voices. But when they dived down, they splashed us. Luckily, we dived down and maintained cover and surfacing at the space we had under the bridge.

"Great, we're stuck." I said.

"Maybe." Mimmi agreed. "In the meantime, you need to have a talk and stop being so stupid."

I scoffed at her. "What did you say? Did you just call me stupid?"

"Yeah what do you think it's called when you give up for nothing?" Zoe asked.

"It's not for nothing." I said. "I wanna just live a life. A normal life."

"You're living the life you were meant to live." She said. "You're a half blood, you're not meant to be normal."

"I know but."

"No buts ok?" She said putting her hand up for emphasis. "Warriors don't whine and complain. Erik puts me and Zac through Hell and back and you know what? I love it. Because it makes me better. Now you gotta tough it out, it's the life of a warrior."

"Mimmi." I said sternly. "I want to come home, I want to be with everyone."

"Thalassa listen to me." She said before narrowing her eyes. "Are you listening?" I nodded. "You are with everyone. And when you go out on Mako on the full moon, we're gonna be right there too. Can't you see that? You're fighting for all of us. You didn't think you were doing on your own did you? I mean, who do you think gave me the slap speech on how the mermaids view on mermen was wrong?"

"If I recall it was Zac who was giving you the slap speech." I said.

Zoe pondered. "No that was you. Zac never did that."

"Uh yes it was our brother." I said. "Let me tell you how it went."

Flashback…

(A.N This takes place in the Episode, "Awakening" after the events with the merman chamber.)

Mimmi staggered, after feeling those effects of the strange event in the merman chamber.

"Easy." Thalie said, holding her up. Zac was behind her. "Take it easy."

"Did you stop Zac?" She asked. "Did you take his powers?"
"No," Zac said. "They didn't. And we don't know how."

"Why not?" Mimmi asked.

"Why are you judging us?" Zac asked only to get a bitch slap from Mimmi.

"I didn't need you to save me!" She said. "I needed the threat to be stopped!"

"Hey." Zac said. "If it weren't for us, you wouldn't have made it out! You almost passed out from that weird thing."

"I'm a mermaid." Mimmi said. "We're prepared from hatching to give our lives for what's right for mermaids. I knew what the consequences were going into this mission. I bet you would have reacted differently if I were a merman."

"Oh playing the sex card again?" Zac snapped. "You know what? I have had just about enough up to here listening to going on about how terrible men are."

"Does the truth hurt boy?" Mimmi hissed.

"Newsflash!" Zac exclaimed. "You mermaids ain't so perfect either! You act brave but cutting yourselves from your own kind was cowardly, not to mention stupid! Like less communication between men and women is what the world needed!"

"How dare you.."

"No, I'm not done!" Zac said. "You've met your first merman what like, 15 minutes ago? And you think you have us all figured out. I'm sorry but not everything a merman does is to further some misogynistic agenda. We don't attack mermaids because we're trying to keep you down. I saved you because you're a friend. Now I don't know what this chamber is supposed to mean, but like it or not, me and Thalie aren't gonna abandon a friend in need. Merman or woman."

End of Flashback…

"It doesn't matter." Zoe said, after I finished recalling the event to her. "You and Zac did something that almost no one else can do; you changed my mind. That is saying something. You touch people's hearts, Thalie. If you know that, then we'll always be a family. Because no matter what you do you can take us with you."

Just then we heard the sound of a gate opening and we knew that we had to get out of there. As if she was hearing my thoughts, Zoe grabbed my hand, smiled at me and we were surrounded by shadows and silver light and before I knew it, we were in the ocean, looking towards Mako.

I gaped at my sister who was resisting the urge to laugh. "You mean..you could have teleported us out of there? All along?"

"Well, there was shade." Zoe said, prompting a little punch from me.

"Zoe Khatha, you sly mermaid!"

Once we were done laughing, Zoe looked at me seriously. "But seriously, take what we talked about and think about it. Don't quit on us." She gave me a hug, even though I never had an actual sister before, she was the closest. "And one more thing, whether you come back or not, you're my sister."
Later in Thalie's room….

I lay down on my bed, trying to get some time to think when I got a text from my mom, telling me to come downstairs. So I did and I found a note on the living room table saying to plug in the cassette into the DVR player. I did and you will never guess who came on.

"This is Harry Santos." The screen showed my deceased father. And this is the first test of my daughter using her powers. Baby tried to levitate a toy ship but I ended up making it fly around. "Wait, stop stop stop!"

I couldn't believe my eyes. My dead dad was there and I thought I would never see him again.

Another video came on. "The seventh test of my daughter using her powers." The sound of a blender could be heard as baby me tried to use her powers. "Wait no, that wasn't supposed to turn on!"

Another video came on and this time, my father looked tired. "Harry Santos again, and this is the 10th test of my daughter using her powers." The water she rose, seemed ok until she got exited and the water hit the outlet, causing a power outage. Harry then shined a flashlight on me. "I'm not giving up on you kiddo, you don't understand this yet but you've got a big road ahead of you. So let's get back to work."

That really got to me, what he said.

"This is uh, Harry Santos and this is the 12th..test. What do you say kiddo?" Baby me levitates water without a single mistake. "You did it. YOU DID IT! Oh this is amazing!" He picked baby me up and hugged me tight, causing me to break out in tears. "I knew it! I knew it, I knew it, I knew it! I can't believe it!"

"Daddy? " Baby me asked on the video.

"Yeah Thals?" My dad replied.

"Are..you..proud of me?" Little me asked.

Harry looked serious before smiling widely. "Is that even a question? I am! I really am! Oh man! Wait until your mother sees you!" He looked into the camera. "You're gonna help so many people kiddo. So many. That's all for now. Good luck. " The video stopped but it seemed to keep going forever. I sat there, in my house on the floor, crying because I was so happy and sad. After the prophecy ended, and the night I took that oath to be a member of the Sirens Creed, my father hadn't made an appearance. But now that he was here, in spirit and video seeing how much he loved me and my mother, it just filled me to the brim.

"Thank you father." I said to the ceiling, hoping he would listen. "I'm so sorry. I guess I'm not like my parents. God, I screwed up."

"Thalassa?" My mother came in, looking concerned. "You saw the video?"

I nodded. "Did Jacob tell you about what I did?"

She nodded and I broke out in even more tears. "Mom, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry!" She hugged, me, embracing me as her child. "I screwed up Mom!"

"It's gonna be ok Thalassa." She said, holding me tight.
"I'm so sorry." I said.

"We're going to catch Veridia." My mom said looking at me. "But this time, we'll do it right. I'm just glad you didn't do it like I did."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

Rita's POV

Flashback…

I had Veridia in my grasp, ready to kill her. I had already cracked a few ribs but that was nothing compared to the ultimate movie I was going to make.

"Rita please." Veridia squeaked out because she was being choked.

"Save it for Hades." Rita growled with intensely focused ferocity. "You took everything from me when you sent my baby flying into the ocean. Now I'm taking everything from you. You're going to watch everything you've built disappear. Then it's your turn."

"Rita!" The two mermaids heard a masculine voice shout. Sufracing, was Phoebus, Persephone, Jacob, and Caesar. This was several months before his death.

"Let her go!" Caesar shouted. "Is this what Harry would have wanted?"

"Harry is gone because of her!" Rita pointed at Veridia.

Jacob looked at his best friend. "This won't change anything. Trust me. I know."

End of Flashback…

My daughter was shaking with shock. I was concerned that she was going to yell at me, tell me what an idiot I was being. But instead, she said, "You tried to kill Veridia. I tried to kill Veridia. I want to say genetics are amazing but I know that'll sound awkward."

I chuckled. "Now Thalassa, we all make mistakes, some we regret more than others. Don't do something you will regret for the rest of your life. Like quitting. Don't quit on your clan Thalassa. And remember, no matter where you are, you take us with you."

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Erik's POV

At Mako Island…

"Again!" I barked at Zac, Zoe, Raiden, and the rest of the Omegas. The performed some sword slashes. The most important weapon anyone could master, is the sword. "Good guys! Not half bad."

"C-can I join?" I heard an American voice ask. When I turned around, I saw the redheaded Omega of Water/halfblood. "I quit quitting. I'm back, and I want to fight for peace for all mermaids and mermen."

I smiled at her, proud of my cousin.

"Let's get to work."

---
2 days later…

San Francisco, California…

No one's POV

San Francisco, The Shaky Town, home of the Golden Gate Bridge and most of California's economic life. Tied with Los Angeles and Hollywood, San Francisco was the New York of the California State. More than 835,000 people lived there within the 23 districts. The Baumans, including Thalie got at the city 2 days prior and got a room at a cheap motel. Zoe had teleported them to the city in the dead of the night, as it was discovered that by nightfall, Zoe could teleport anywhere, but during the daytime, she could only teleport within a 4-6 mile radius, anything else would just cause a nosebleed and possible passing out. The city sights were amazing, the city life bursting with Californian life. But not all was happy because they were at the city for one reason and one reason only: To see Nerissa. Jacob and Persephone decided at the last minute to stay behind because they thought it would be best if the kids went on their own. Ondina and Evie however, came along.

"I can't believe I was gonna live here." Zac muttered, once they

"I can't believe I wasn't going to be raised in a pod." Zoe said.

"I can't believe that you guys were gonna raised to be city kids."

"I can't believe you're still not believing it." Raiden snipped.

"Raiden!" Erik hissed, holding his bouquet of white roses. "Not here. Not now."

"Can we just get this over with?" Ondina asked.

"Ondina's right not in that tone." Evie said. "We should just get started on finding Nerissa's...grave."

They looked up at the gloomy sign that said, "San Francisco National Cemetery."

"Let's go." Zac said, taking a breath.

The four looked around trying to find the right grave, as creepy and sad as it sounded.

"Anyone find anything?" Erik asked.

"No." Everyone but Zac said.

"Zac where are you?" Thalie asked, the rest following her as she went deeper in the graveyard. "Zac?"

Zac stood there, in front of a grave, still as a statue. He was trying to feel sad for his apparently dead biological mother, but how could he cry for someone he barely remembered? The rest stood in front of him and the grave read:

Nerissa Khatha
1974-1999

Loving mother, sister, and maid of the sea.

"The best gift of all is hope."
The rest of the mermaids/mermen each had different reactions. Zoe was crying, with Thalie holding her for comfort, Erik was trying not to cry, because he had to be strong for his family, and especially for his aunt, the aunt that he barely knew. He then set down the bouquet of flowers. Raiden was feeling numb because here he was, standing in front of an real grave, something he failed to give his own father during the funeral, but that was because merpeople never had actual graves. Ondina was shedding tears because of the pain she was feeling for her best friend. Evie however, was a mess, because the last time she had been at a cemetery, she was there on her birthday a few weeks ago, visiting her mother. Losing a mother was one of the worst pain to ever feel, even if you never really knew her.

"Look." Evie said, pointing to a picture on the gravestone. It was a picture of Nerissa, when she was living in San Francisco. "She has your smile Zac." This got her boyfriend chuckling a little. "And Zoe, she looks just like you!"

"She does." Ondina agreed.

The group stayed silent before Raiden asked,

"Do you think she would have been proud of us?"

Giving her boyfriend a squeeze on the hand, Thalie gave a sentence that gave everyone hope.

"We're gonna make her even more proud guys. That's a promise."
The Truth About Evie

Thalie's POV

At the Marina…

Every since the visit at the cemetery of San Francisco, things had started to look up. Crime on the streets was dropping thanks to our work as the Sirens Creed, the training with the others was looking pretty good and the secret was being kept. Until that day when Carly found out by accident. And to this day, I blame my sister for making the potion disgusting and not effective at all.

It started with something we all love to hate. I was heading down there on a morning stroll, because I was pretty bored and I needed the fresh air. I heard a loud sneeze so being naturally curious, I ran to the noise and I noticed it was Evie's dad, Doug, sneezing his head off.

"Whoa!" I exclaimed. "You feeling ok man?"

"Ah." He said, wiping his nose. "I'm just fine. Just...got a bit of a nose problem."

I shook my head at him. The McLarens tended to be a tight family and wouldn't stop working, even if they had a cold.

"Well I'm not gonna stop you." I said. "But if you're feeling sick, please take it easy!"

"Trust me." Evie said. "I've tried to get him out of work."

"Don't worry girls." Doug assured me and giving Evie a kiss. "I'll be fine." But instead he sneezed, rolling his cart away.

"I swear one of these days he's gonna exhaust himself to death." I said.


"Like father like daughter." I agreed.

Evie gave me a look. "What is that supposed to mean?"

"You know what I mean." I said teasingly.

---

Rose's POV

I was serving some people their food for the cafe's day that day, with Erik helping out of course. Yes, he showed up on time, and all it took was the one motivation we all don't want to face: Mom.

"Erik?" I heard Carly ask when she came in with Evie. "You're here? And you're early?"

The Italian-Canadian merman glared daggers at her. "Got a problem with it?"

"No." The blonde said. "I'm just surprised."

"Well I'm here." Erik said.

Evie pulled me aside, and whispered, "How?"
"His mother dragged him here." I explained. "With her fingernails and let me tell you, it wasn't pretty."

Evie winced. "I swear Persephone never fails to have her nails perfectly manicured. His ear must be hurting like hell."

I scoffed. "His ear? She dragged him here by his neck."

"Ooh." Evie winced. "Even worse!"

Then David came out, all decked out in a business suit. Tie and all, and even the gelled hair.

"David." I said. "Look sharp! Esto me gusta."

"Gracias." David said. "It's the young entrepreneurs seminar. I have to dress for success."

"Oh that's what it's for?" Diablo asked, sitting next to the merman twins. "I thought you were taking Sirena to the prom."

"Diablo, junior prom isn't for another two months." Erik reminded the Argentinian merman.

"Assuming we live that long." Xhiva mumbled.

"But Erik, I trust that you will handle this well?" David asked.

"Wait what?" Carly asked in outrage.

"I don't understand." Erik said.

"Erik despite being late, you work a lot of shifts." David said.

"I'd rather be dead." Carly mumbled. "Is this even a good idea?"

"It is." I said. "I mean Carly's always been David's second in command. So why not shake things up a bit?"

"Exactly." David agreed. "In buisiness, sometimes you have to take risk to get the reward. I'll see you guys later."

Carly pulled Erik aside and said, "You may have gotten lucky, but one slip up and I'm calling David's father."

"Bring it on." Erik challenged and giving me a high five.

"Rose are you insane?" Carly hissed.

"Probably."


Raiden's POV

At the beach…

I planned to spend the entire day with my beautiful girl. The reminder that I was supposed to help out Erik in the cafe was nagging in my mind but I chose to ignore it. See after Erik bailed me and Diablo out from when we were shoplifting, he made us promise that we'd help him one of these days in the
cafe. And he kept reminding us every minute at breakfast.

"Guess you have to go repay your debt." My girlfriend Thalie told me.

"I guess." I shrugged, checking my watch. "I'm kind of running late."

The redhead chuckled. "Not you too! First Erik and now you? Whatever shall I do with you?"

I laughed at her humor. "I think you should start worrying when our kids start inheriting the gene."

She laughed but then looked at me horrified. "You're not serious are you?" I flashed her a smug grin. "Tell me you're not serious. Matter of fact, I don't wanna know what's going on in your head!"

"Thalassa." I said, holding her hand. "It's a simple fact. You're one of those fishgirls. I'm one of those fishboys, and together we're gonna have fish babies. It's inevitable."

"Raiden, you.." She trailed off. "Are such a merboy!"

I blushed. "If I could, I would splash you right now."

Thalie laughed. "But you can't, because you're just lightning! Besides why would you wanna get me wet?"

I leaped forward and captured her in a kiss. Any day, anytime was a good day to taste my girlfriend in her sweet salty lips. While she was distracted, moaning at the kiss, I snuck my arm around her waist.

When we broke off, I whispered in her ear. "So I can do this." I picked her up bridal style and carried her to the ocean.

"Raiden!" She screamed and laughed. "Raiden Consorzio, put me down!"

"Not a chance." I said smiling and I ran into the sea, feeling my legs fuse into my cobalt fish tail, but I relished the feeling of Thalie's tail forming in my arms. To make sure no one saw us, I dived down, still carrying her like a bride and my tail settled on the beach floor. I was still carrying Thalie in her gorgeous golden tail, her blue hair streaks highlighting her happiness. But I saw her looking at me, and giggling a little.

What? I asked through the link.

Raiden, you're such a merboy. My merboy. And she captured me in a deep and passionate kiss which I gladly returned.


Diablo's POV

To say that that day was a bad one, was the understatement of the year. It was like the whole world decided to come to the cafe and it wasn't easy, managing a few thousand people at the same time. Rose unfortunately had to stay in the kitchen though because 3 of the cooks had a bar mitzvah to go to since they went to the same synagogue which mean my poor girlfriend was stuck in the kitchen. I couldn't even talk to her.

But I was also pissed at Raiden. While I kept to my end of the deal after being bailed from jail, he skipped out. I may be a trickster but we tricksters keep to our deals. Erik's own brother apparently didn't.
Carly was working her ass off and no matter what, she still let me help her, but not Erik. Apparently she still didn't like him. But I had to be very, very careful not to get wet.

Evie was then sent inside the cool room but after she hadn't come out for some time, Erik went inside the cool room to see what was going on. I just hoped that things couldn't get any worse.

Erik's POV

I headed in the cool room to see what was going on, when I saw Evie standing, fakely smiling.

"Hi Erik." She said. "Nothing here. Just me getting some...sandwiches."

I crossed my arms and raised an eyebrow at her. "Evie, we both know how this is gonna end. So how about we both cut the crap and you move aside?"

"Fine ok." Evie sighed, defeated. But when she moved aside, I saw a tray of burnt and still smoking sandwiches. There was a tray of burnt sandwiches in a cool room.

"What...did you do?!"

"Erik." Evie said. "I can explain. But actually, I really can't."

I hyperventilated, just looking at the tray. "David's gonna kill you! And then me!"

"Erik, I don't know what happened ok?" Evie asked. "I just came in here to get them and then suddenly, I sneeze and that happens."

"Wait a minute." I said. "You sneezed and that's what happened?"

"Yes." She said.

"Uh Evie..." I said. "I don't quite know how to put this. Mermaids and mermen don't get colds."

"You don't?" Evie asked worried. "So why is this happening?"

"Erik what's going on?" Diablo asked. "Carly's hot on you."

"Nothing." I said. "Just stall her."

He left and I continued talking to Evie. "Apparently your magic is having a bad reaction. And your cold's causing it. Alright? We have a cafe full of people and we're on a tight day. You've gotta get cured stat."

"No." Evie said. "When things get hairy, I'll leave."

"Evie this is serious." I reminded her.

"So am I." Evie said leaving. I wouldn't hold her, because one, she was my cousin's girlfriend and she was one stubborn girl.

Diablo's POV

I listened outside of the door, hearing every word of the conversation. I may stink at math, but I
know that a mermaid plus a cold, equals very bad things. I had to warn Zac and fast. And when I
was coming out, I saw Zac and Cam come in. I sighed immensely in relief as I never felt so happy to
see them. I got an ipad to pretend like I was taking their order.

"Zac." I said to the Thai/Canadian merman.

"Hey just in time to take the order." Zac said happily.

"That's not what I'm here for." I said.

"What then?" Cam asked.

"Your girlfriend? Evie." I said. "She's got some sort of cold. And I'm not talking about your standard
cold, I'm talking about Evie sneezing and.."

"Hey Diablo." Carly interrupted me. "I'm sorry, it's just that we've got a bit of backlog of orders."

Kimi's POV

In the reef…

I swam with my boyfriend in the water. He had already left the cafe after I invited him. It was a short
swim but it was worth it. We raced, laughed and swam with the fishes and dolphins. I saw something
in Xhiva that I had never seen before. While on land he was at home with technology, he seemed
really at home. He may have been raised by criminals who live on land, but I knew that he was
meant to be a merman.

Xhiva smiled at me, taking my hand. I snuck in and gave him a deep kiss. Merman, land boy, nerd, I
love Xhiva Vali Tiraken.

Zac's POV

In the cafe…

Evie came with our drinks. She didn't look very good, in fact, she looked extremly pale and her nose
was red and blotchy.

"Hey Evie." I said. "You ok?"

"Yeah you don't look so good." Cam noted.

"Here." Evie laid down the drinks. "Two banana smoothies."

"I ordered a tropical bonanza." I said, earning a glare from Evie. "But this is fine."

"Oh." Evie said fanning herself. "When did it get so hot in here?"

"I haven't noticed by now but it is pretty warm here." I said. "You look like you could do with some
fresh air." So I took her outside, and it didn't help cause it looked like she was burning all over. "Just
take it easy ok? You have been rushing around."

"I-I-I think I caught my dad's cold." She said.
"Zac!" I heard Erik run over. "How is she?"

"What do you mean?" I asked my cousin. "What do you know of her cold. I mean it's just a cold right."

My cousin looked at her wide eyed. "Why haven't you told him?"

"Told me what?" I asked.

"You girlfriend here has been having a freaky cold." Erik said. "She sneezes and bad things happen."

"What bad things?" I asked. "Like what?"

"I toasted sandwiches." Evie squeaked out.

"So?" I asked, confused.

"With my.." But she looked like she was gonna sneeze and Erik stood in front of me. "I think the mermaid part of me is having a bad reaction."

"What bad reaction?" I asked before Evie sneezed and instantly an umbrella burst in flames.

"Does that answer your question?" Erik asked in alarm.

"Do you know anything about this?" I asked him. "Medicine? Anything?"

"Oh yeah I happen to have a cure hidden somewhere in a book." Erik said sarcastically. "No I don't know anything!"

"There's too much of a commotion." Evie said.

"Couldn't agree more." I said. "I'll get Evie out of here. Erik you try to keep Carly stalled."

"How am I supposed to do that?" Erik challenged. "She hates my guts."

I gave him a glare. "Use your imagination."

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Mimmi/Zoe's POV
In the grotto…

"I've had colds before but never like this." Evie said hoarsely.

"Like what?" I asked, fiddling around with my black leather boots.

Zac was about to answer when Evie sneezed and a pillow exploded in flames. I instinctively teleported me and Sirena off the couch and next to Zac and Evie.

"That...doesn't usually happen does it?" I asked worried.

"No!" Evie squeaked.

"Can you even help?" My brother asked.

"I-I don't have any experience with this sort of thing!" I exclaimed.
"Mermaids don't get colds." Sirena said.

"But I'll see what I can do." I said, rushing the the potion stand to get started on my improvisational cure.

Erik's POV

At the cafe...

Diablo took the blame for what happened in the cool room, he said he brought a lighter and set it off by accident. And Carly was gonna pin the blame on me for being irresponsible as a manager. I never understood Carly's problem with me. She's just looking for ways to blame me for things to go wrong. But I wasn't going to let her get me down. Not when David was counting on me. I really wished Raiden was there like Diablo. And speak of the Devil.

Raiden's POV

"Hey guys!" I said cheerfully. "What's happening?"

My brother came out from the counter, fuming. "Te lo dico io cosa sta succedendo, fratellino." (I'll tell you what's happening, little brother.) He said in Italian. "Noi siamo più impegnati che mai , un ombrello ha preso fuoco , e stiamo a corto di personale perché qualcuno , non si preoccupò di mantenere la sua promessa." (We're busier than ever, an umbrella caught fire, and we're short staffed because SOMEBODY, didn't bother to keep to his promise.)

"Rilassare." (Chillax.) I said nonchalantly. "Sono qui proprio come ho detto che sarei." (I'm here just like I said I would be.)

My brother continued to give me the death stare and even a mouse could tell that he wasn't a happy camper. "Non abbastanza buono per tagliarlo." (Not good enough to cut it.) He said.

"Ho detto che sarei venuto qui , oltre che la mamma mi ha ricordato e lei è in carica." (I said I would come here, besides Mom reminded me and she's in charge.) I said, still holding onto the Ipad.

Erik stood tall, hovering over me since he was taller. "Bene. Oggi e come il vostro tutore legale , comando io. E sei in punizione." (Today and as your legal guardian, I'm in charge. And you're grounded.)

I shook my head, unwilling to believe that I was grounded, and by my own brother. It wasn't the first time but it was rare. "Belle chi se ne frega? " (Fine who cares?)

"Oh you should." Erik said in English, probably so Carly could hear. "Because starting today for a whole week, you're cleaning this cafe until it's spotless before it opens and after it closes."

I was about to say something when Erik narrowed his eyes and I went outside. I could have sworn I saw Carly give Erik a thumbs up when I left.

Sirena's POV

In the grotto…

I had already cured Evie of her weird cold. Believe me, what went in that potion was so disgusting it
wasn't worth even being spoken about.

"Wow." Ondina remarked sarcastically. "Redecorating?" She pointed to the pillow that was burnt and messed up.

"Long story short." I said. "Evie had some sort of weird cold, she did that, and I cured her."

"I'm pretty sure that you're supposed to stay in bed when they've got something contaigious." She said. "I speak from experience."

"I'm sure Mimmi did her best." Sirena said confidently. "Besides, mermaids don't get colds."

I then started fanning myself as I felt extremely hot. "Does anyone else feel hot?" But it was then that I felt a pulling in my gut, and I knew that was the feeling I got right before I teleported. But the good news was I didn't. The bad news, I might have been getting a cold.


Diablo's POV

In the cool room...

After the fiasco with Evie spilling the water, I led Evie to the cool room.

"I want to tell her Diablo." She said. "I really do."

"You can't." I said. "It was hard for me too, not telling my friends that Veridia was my mom or that I was part werewolf."

"Wait." Evie said. "You kept those things a secret? Why?"

"Same reason you did." I said. "To protect myself and the others. Besides, who needs Carly anyway? You've got us."

Evie looked like she was gonna burst in tears and I gave her a big hug. "That came out wrong didn't it?"


Zoe's POV

"Oh no." I sadi fanning myself. "Now I feel hot."

"I thought you said mermaids couldn't get colds." Ondina challenged.

Just then Sirena and I sneezed. Sirena's sneeze caused candles to light on fire, and I accidentally teleported myself across the room.

"I'm gonna have to write this down." I said, rushing to the drawers.


Rose's POV

The kitchens were pretty hectic since i had to do some more of the work than I usually did. But I was happy to help anyone anytime. Evie came in, looking glum.
"Rose can I ask you a question?" She asked.

"Sure." I said, sprinkling some cinnamon in a mixutre and turning the fire off. We walked outside to the dress shop area because I knew this was gonna be a hefty conversation. "So what's up?"

"It's Carly." She said. "She knows I'm hiding something. I want to tell her but I know I can't. Rose, how do you do it? How do you keep a secret, and not just being...you know what?"

I chuckled sadly, already feeling bad for her. "I have to say, it wasn't easy at first. It's bad enough having to lie to our parents but our friends? It tears me apart but I know I have to protect my friends. It's a hard life, it is. But we have to do what is right with everything that is going on. As hard as this may be, keeping the secret is keeping her safe."

Suddenly, I started coughing, and a cold breeze rushed past us. But we were inside, that meant.

"Oh no." I breathed out.

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Thalie's POV

After I got a drink from Evie, I went out to Raiden, who was walking alone in the park.

"Hay Raiden!" I yelled out.

"Hey Thals." He said.

"Glad I met you here." I said. "I still feel terrible about you being grounded."

"Nah." My boyfriend laughed. "It's cool. My brother's just a bit uptight." Just then, I felt a cold breeze. "Hey you ok?"

"Do you feel cold?" Raiden asked, taking off his green flannel shirt.

"Raiden seriously don't." I said.

"Hey if you're cold, I'm helping you." He said, putting the shirt on me. "I'm your boyfriend, it's my job."

Just then, I sneezed and the entire canal froze. Raiden looked at me wide eyed and took me to the cafe where he hoped his brother would fix things.

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Sirena's POV

In the moon pool...

"I feel so much better washing that gross taste out with nice clean seawater." I said.

"My potions might work." Zoe said. "But they're not exactly tasty."

We laughed until both of us started coughing and I sneezed, causing a side of the moon pool to be frozen. Mimmi kept teleporting in and out of the moon pool until she stopped sneezing.

"I don't think the potion worked." Mimmi breathed out.
"Evie!" I realized in horror.

Erik's POV
At the cafe…

I nearly jumped a foot in the air when Evie sneezed. It wasn't when she sneezed that alarmed me, it was the aftermath. The entire counter was frozen solid. I wondered if Kimi was around to fix this. Then I remembered that Xhiva was taking her out. Xandou was with his father, Helen was in the synagogue, and Raiden was with his girlfriend.

"The uh potion did not work." Zac muttered.

"You think?" I snapped.

"Oh man." Cam said, coming to check it out. By then all the customers had left. "How are we gonna explain this one?"

"To be honest Cam, I don't think we can this time." Diablo said, looking around.

Just then a cloud of darkness appeared and out of it, came a shivering Zoe, Sirena and Ondina. "We have to go to Rita's and find another cure. Before things get worse." She coughed again and she teleported on the counter before slipping off, but luckily, Zac jumped in the way and caught her by the arms.

"Guys we have a problem." Raiden said, coming in with a shivering Thalie.

"So do we." Ondina squeaked.

"Why is everyone leaving?" Carly asked. "Whoo. It's like Antarctica in here. And what is all this? Evie? Erik?"

"Uh we're not feeling well." Rose said, turning visible. The cold was making her powers go wacko. "Evie has to go."

"Oh no." Carly said. "You're not leaving until you tell me what's going on and Rose how were you invisible?"

"Actually." Cam said turning around. "I've been reading about this. It's some sort of virus that affects temperature."

But then Rose sneezed and then Cam was sent flying back and just when he came walking back, Thalie sneezed that she froze him.

"I'm going home." Evie said, leading everyone out of the cafe, but when we went outside, we didn't notice Carly watching us as Zoe teleported us to Evie's home...after a few stops because of her limits.

Carly's POV

They left me with a frozen Cam. They had superpowers and did I mention that Cam was frozen? Oh yeah, as an iceberg. I was going to get answer one way or another. So I strapped Cam to a roll board and rolled him to Evie's house.
No one's POV

In Evie's backyard….

The mermen were aside on the opposite directions of the sick mermaids. They didn't want anyone discovering the secret. At least, they tried not to make anyone discover the secret. The mermen were fine while the mermaids were freezing their tails off.

"We have to tell Carly the truth." Evie said. "It's the only thing she'll believe."

"You know we can't and you know why." Thalie reminded her.

"She's this close to finding out anyway." Zoe argued.

"Not to mention Cam knows." Diablo reminded.

"Only cause Zac told him right away." Raiden quipped.

"The less people who know the better." Ondina said.

"Considering the...cold we're in, it looks like she's gonna find out anyway." Rose said.

"She is my best friend." Evie said. "I don't wanna lose her."

But then the girls started, "ahhing." And Zac took this as a warning and created a force field covering the mermen while the mermaids sneezed. At first nothing happened, but then snow started to fall, instantly transforming the mermaids.

"Evie I need answers!" Carly called out, rolling Cam with her. But when she looked at them, her jaw dropped in shock. First at the girls who had mermaid tails instead of legs, then Zac whose hands were vibrating and creating a force field.

Having enough of the suspense Raiden cried, "Screw it!" And gave everyone electric wedgies, even his own brother, causing Zac's force field to collapse and all the mermen, even Raiden who was dragged down by Diablo grabbing his shirt, down to the snow, having the mermen grow their blue scaly tails.

Evie was the only one without a tail at the time. "Carly there's something you should know." She said, letting herself become wet and a mermaid.

The secret was out to Carly Morgan.

Line break….

After the storm was vanquished and the merpeople dried up and on legs, Cam was still freezing. The others were unsure about using their powers on him so Carly made him some hot lemon tea.

Evie and Carly had a little chat and Carly needed some time to think. The question remained, would Carly keep the secret?
In the grotto…

While us mermaids stayed sitting on the couch, the boys were trying to avoid us as much as possible. But not my mom.

"It looks like you might have recovered, but you should definitely drink this." Mom said, handing out cups of green looking tea.

"You sure it will work?" Sirena asked.

"Like your parents, I've encountered more than a few colds on my time on land. This is definitely the right recipe." She said proudly.

"It tastes a hell of a lot better than Mimmi's." Ondina remarked. "No offense."

"Will Carly keep our secret?" Rose asked.

"I think the better question is, will she understand?" I asked.

We all looked at Evie for an answer and all we got was, "I don't know."

No one's POV

At the cafe later that day….

By sunset time, the whole mermaid cold fiasco was well and taken care of and the cafe was booming in its normal business. Carly and Rose seemed to be doing well. Diablo in full respect, quit the job on account of bringing a lighter to the cafe when smoking was prohibited in there.

Raiden however was in deep trouble with his mother and brother. "Ho perso la cognizione del tempo e mi dispiace." (I lost track of time and I'm sorry.) He said, trying to be convincing. "Ma lui non mi può terra. Non quando sei qui." (Not when you're here.)

"Nel caso in cui hai dimenticato fratellino." (In case you forgot little brother.) Erik said smugly. "La madre era fuori dal quadro per una grossa fetta della nostra vita e che ti ha cresciuto? L'ho fatto? Chi ha fatto in modo che si erano vestiti e nutriti? L'ho fatto. Tecnicamente, quindi, come il tuo tutore legale, sì, posso terra voi." (Mother was out of the picture for a big chunk of our lives and who raised you? I did. Who made sure that you were clothed and fed? I did. Technically, therefore, as your legal guardian, yes, I can ground you.)

Raiden looked at his mother in horror. There was no way he was cleaning the cafe. "Mamma. Si prega , intervenire qui." (Mom, please, step in here.)

"Mi sta bene." (I'm fine with it.) She said. "andando del caffè vicino presto comunque." (The cafe's gonna close soon anyway.)

Raiden rolled his eyes and groaned, slamming his head flat on the table while Erik laughed and rolled his eyes and went outside to take an order.

"Hey guys." He said to the table. Sitting in it, was Zac, Evie, Thalie, Rose, Zoe, Ondina, Sirena, Kimi, Helen, and Diablo. "What's wrong?"

"Carly's coming." Helen said. "I can sense her heat signature."
"This is a travesty of international proportions." Diablo muttered.

"I'm sure we can make her understand." Rose said.

"Yeah." Thalie agreed. "She can forgive us right?"

"What if she can't?" Evie asked worried.

"I agree with her." Kimi said. "Considering she hasn't spoken to you guys all afternoon, we're looking at a 60% chance of catastrophic failure."

"Which is a 40% chance of catastrophic success." Rose said in her usual optimistic tone.

"You've been spending too much time around Diablo." Sirena noted.

Everyone's breath hitched as Carly came to their table as she wasn't on her shift. She looked stoic and ready to kick their ass. "I just have..one thing to say." Everyone braced themselves for the big insult but instead she said, "Do the tails come in different colors?"

Everyone let out a big breath of relief as Evie and Carly hugged.

"Thank God Carly!" Erik cried out. "You almost gave me a heart attack!"

"Hey Erik." Carly said. "I'm sorry for being such a jerk to you. I shouldn't have judged you so quickly."

"Eh it's fine." Erik said to the blonde and shaking her hand. "I get that all the time."

"And case in point you were a jerk once." Ondina pointed out.

"Shut up Dinie." He said jokingly.

"I have so many questions." said Carly sitting down.

"And before you start rambling, begin with one at a time." Helen advised.

"First." said Carly. "How is this even possible?"

The rest looked at each other before Thalie broke the silence.

"Sit down for this Carly. Because boy do we have a story for you!"
Raiden's POV

At the Cafe…

I slumped down on my seat after cleaning the place from top to bottom. I still didn't get why I had to clean. I was just spending time with my girlfriend, that's all. Peering over my shoulder, I saw Erik and Carly conversing for a bit. It had taken some time, but Erik and Carly weren't at each other's necks anymore, despite Erik being late all the time. When he walked over, I took my cue to try to sweet talk him in the most brotherly way I could think of.

"ya 'iirik." (Hey Erik.) I said in Arabic, the language me and Erik used rarely. We didn't want to be reminded of our time in Arabia. Trust me, the time in there was not pleasant.

"'iidha kunt turid aldhahhab limuhawalat altahadduth li fi alhusul ealaa lak 'ilgha' alard, w hdhaan la yahduth." (If you're going to try to talk me into getting you un-grounded, it's not happening.) Erik said turning to me.

"Damn it." I cursed. "ldhlk ... yumkinuni alhusul ealaa alssuda?" (So...can I get a soda?)

"shaghal maqead." (Take a seat.) My brother said to me sarcastically. "sa'ahdir lak kullama astataet." (I'll get to you whenever I can.)

I just instead rolled my eyes at him. "Tough break from being grounded?" I heard Cam.

"Well Cam I've only got two words for you." I said, cupping my hands to my mouth. "I'm. Bored!"

"At a loss huh?" Cam said, wincing sympathetically. "Where's your girlfriend?"

"Well at first I thought she'd be here." I said wistfully. "But she must be swimming with her friends."

"You guys need some sort of sonar to keep track of each other." Cam suggested.

"That would be pretty handy dandy." I muttered, cupping my hands at the last part of the next sentence. "And yet no sonar and I am still so very, BORED!"

"Well maybe this will give you some entertainment." said Cam. "Last year, if you needed a sonar, you could have the Trident. It had this stone that glowed whenever mermaids were around."

That got my ears perked up, and I gripped on the chair in anticipation. "Wait the stone glowed? Not the trident?"

"Yeah." He agreed. "Actually I was kind of a witness to all of it's doings and I was there when the Trident got broken."

"So..it wasn't destroyed?" I asked now pretty scared since the full moon was tomorrow night.

"Well." Cam rubbed the back of his neck. "Strictly speaking, it was destroyed ish. And by ish, I mean..no."

I ran off into the cafe to try to warn Erik and the whole time, I never noticed a certain green eyed Asian merman watching and hearing the whole thing and ran off superspeed to go to my cousin's house.
Zac's POV

In his garage…

I was working on some schoolwork when the door opened and sped in was none other than Xandou Tiraken.

"There's this new thing." I snapped at him. "It's called knocking, it's a land person thing."

"I need to talk to you." Xandou said to me. "I found out that the mermaids did destroy the Trident but not the stone. So it doesn't matter that the Trident is broken, it's the stone that counts."

"It was a long time ago." I said. "And my guess is in all that time, the mermaids would have taken what was left of the Trident and destroyed that."

"But you don't know for sure." Xandou persisted. And when I said nothing, he ran superspeed to the chair, blowing away the papers.

"Xandou can you stop using your superspeed?" I asked irritably.

"Can't." He said. "It's in my nature. Same as your destiny and control of the merman chamber. If there is any possibility that the chamber can be activated, we've got to take it. We have to take it. We owe it to all mermen."

"Is that what your father tells you to get him to do his dirty work?" I challenged. Xandou's eyes turned from their jade green to a glowing blood red. "Hey I'm just saying."

"My father's work has nothing to do with this." He said.

"I'm sorry Xandou." I told the Chinese/Hindi merman. "As far as I know, the Trident is gone."

"No." He said. "I'm gonna find it."

"Xandou." I said, stopping him from leaving. "Why did your father agree to work with Slade? Is he part of the tribe?"

Xandou snorted. "No genius, what's the difference between a thief and an assassin?"

"One steals and one kills." I answered dumbly.

"That's right." He said. "The Kanhoji and the Ares are two different things."

"So why work for someone like Slade?" I asked. "Why work for the bad guys?"

Xandou shrugged. "No boundaries. They gave him the chance to push genetics and science beyond anything conventional science had ever seen. Beyond what any government allowed."

"Wait." I said. "So you and Xhiva and your dad have no idea what they're getting themselves into? You do know that Slade is gonna turn on you right?"

"I know." Xandou said. "That's why it's good to have a Plan B. My father will probably just take his resources, money or whatever when this is over."

As he reached for the door, I called out, "Your family is messed up. You know that?"
He stopped as if to calm himself down. "You don't know the half of it." And without warning, he ran off at superspeed.

I then immediately picked up the phone and dialed Erik.

"Hello?" I heard my cousin's voice at the end.

"Erik I need to tell you something." I said to him.

Erik's s POV

After hearing what he had to say about his conversation with Xandou, I hung up on my cousin and dialed Rita. Luckily she was in a meeting with the rest of the Order.

"Hey." I said. "Xandou's onto it. He knows about the Trident being not broken and don't deny it because I know you of all people would have something to do with it."

"Erik this is serious." Phoebus came in. "If Xandou finds out where it is, he's gonna tell his father who's gonna tell Slade. Agni's a total trout mouth."

"I say we find the punk and lock him up." Jacob said. "I volunteer the basement."

"We can't Jacob." My mother said reasonably. "You know what tensions that will bring. Besides, Xandou can bust out of any prison.:"

"Damn the smarts of those Tiraken Twins." Jacob muttered, causing me to giggle.

"Who told Xandou anyway?" Esmeralda came in.

"I assume it was you or Ondina." Jacob told her.

"Why would I do that?" She asked.

"To get back at Xandou." Rita said. "He is Xiaohui's son after all."

"He wants nothing to do with his mother so leave him out of it." Esme snapped.

"Look." I said cutting in. "I know that I screwed up joining Slade when I was a kid and to this day, I still feel like a dick about it. But if there's anything I know about him, is that Slade won't stop until he has every advantage possible. And we cannot let him get ahold of this one. If he does get the stone, he'll activate the chamber."

"And then the whole world land and sea is doomed." Jacob said, voicing everyone's thoughts.

Thalie's POV

After I was done with the swim with my friends, we headed to the cafe and got a table with Sirena, Ondina, and Zoe, who was fiddling with her black dress.

"You guys inspired me to invent a new juice for mermaids." Carly said, handing us clear frothy juices. "Coconut and seaweed. I added a little saltwater, ocean fresh."
"Thank you!" Rose exclaimed. "That's so nice of you!"

"This is lovely!" Kimi exclaimed.

"Delicious!" Ondina exclaimed.

I have to admit, the drink was pretty amazing. But I would never, ever eat even a shrimp.

"Thals." Sirena said in admiration. "I've never seen you eat something that's from the sea."

"I'm a mermaid vegetarian." I said proudly. "And that's all you're getting out of me."

"Yo fish femme." Helen said. "Is that your big bro?"

Right on cue, Zac came walking to our table. From the looks of things, he was pretty concerned about something.

"Hey what's wrong?" Ondina asked.

"When the uh Trident got zapped." Zac began. "What exactly did you do with the pieces? There was a stone in the middle, it was the power source right? It was like the moon ring stone but much bigger."

"How could I possibly forget?" I asked darkly, my mind briefly flashing to the day when I met the Trident's wrath. "I almost died cause of it."

"What happened with the Trident after...the fight?" Zac asked awkwardly.

"What was left of it, Sirena hid." I said.

"Wait." Ondina said. "The Trident wasn't destroyed?"

"Why didn't you guys tell us?" Zoe asked.

"Well the Trident wasn't technically active so we're in the clear." Kimi said, earning a "for real?" glare from Helen. "No pun intended."

"Are you sure?" Zac asked. "I just need to know it's safe."

"Trust me." Sirena said. "It is."

"Slade will try to kill us if he finds out about this." Ondina reminded us. "We need as much of the upper hand as we can get."

"When was the last time you checked it?" Zac asked.

"3 months ago." I said.

Jacob's POV

In the grotto…

We all met with my son, daughter, Ondina, and the rest of the girls in the grotto for a meeting. Apparently, the Trident wasn't technically destroyed because the stone survived. And it happened to be the key to starting the chamber. 20 years ago, I was drawn to the Trident because of my ancestor
being my ancestor but I was lucky enough to have my friends to draw me away from it. We had never even gotten close to seeing the chamber but we only heard it because of the prophecy.

"It's been in here the whole time?" My son asked Sirena who held a small tin box.

"I thought it would be the safest place." Thalassa said.

"And I agreed." Rita said. "Not many people know what lies beneath my house." She eyed her daughter and her friends carefully, as if she knew something.

"It's ok." Sirena said opening the box to reveal a large blue moonstone. "It's harmless." She handed it out to Zoe who passed it to Ondina and so forth.

"It is like the moon ring stone." Esmeralda said, taking a look at it.

"Wow, just take a look at the structural density." Xhiva said admiring it.

"Agreed." Kimi said. "Imagine the things they could have used besides the chamber to power it up. It could probably power an entire city!"

"Ok can we stop with the nerd talk?" Helen snapped. "There are some people who want to have a look."

"It's still hard to believe how much trouble that's caused." Persephone said.

"Can't believe that my ancestor could give power to this little guy." Erik said in wonder.

"Eh looks like a dud." Raiden said. "Catch!" He threw it to my son who caught it and the minute he did, the stone glowed a bright blue.

"Is...is that supposed to happen?" Diablo asked.

"No." Rita said worried. "It's really not."

"What did you do?" I asked worried.

"I-I don't know." He said. "I just touched it."

"Give me that." Ondina said grabbing it, but when she did the stone glowed and she fell back, looking like she was having a seizure but stopped after a bit.

"Get Ondina to the couch!" Persephone shouted. "And don't touch that stone!"

"Ondina are you ok?" My daughter asked her, concerned for her friend's safety.

"I...never, ever want to feel like that again." Ondina said panting.

"Did it feel like the life was being drained out of you?" Sirena asked.

"Yes." She said looking confused. "How'd you know?"

"We've been affected by it including my daughter." Rita explained.

"I'm so sorry." Zac said. "That has never happened before. It's only glowed around you guys not me."

"Well you hadn't discovered your true powers last year." Rita said. "It's when you got stronger and
so did your connection to Mako. The stone seems to be connected to you, it's reaching out to you.”

"That can't be good." Phoebus said.

"No kidding." Helen snapped. "Sorry Mr. Marino."

"Maybe the stone is the key to starting that place up after all." Erik said in realization.

"And your cousin just turned the stone on again." Esmeralda said.

"Jacob?" Persephone asked me. She must have noticed that I do that thing where I drum my fingers on my chin whenever I'm thinking about something deeply.

"If the stone..steals a mermaids' power, life and magic." I said, before dawning on the conclusion. "Maybe that's what the chamber does."

Line break…

Xhiva had used his technopathic abilities on his phone to summon from it, a 3D model of the pedestal of the chamber in green light. I never really understood his obsession with the color green, it must have been his favorite color or something.

This is the model of the pedestal right?" Zac asked.

"Yes." Xhiva said, enlarging the model so we could see the symbols.

"I think." Zoe said to all of us. "The chamber was designed to draw the magic from the moon pool. It amplifies the stone's power and steals the magic from mermaids that were born in the moon pool."

"Wait." Xhiva said. "What do you mean born from the moon pool? I thought that mermaids were conceived the same way we were."

"No. Not everyone is." Ondina said. "There's a reason why pods are made up of just mermaids and why they need a moon pool. They use the moon pool to make eggs and the fish nearby fertilize it while the magic of the moon pool, makes the eggs stable for 6 months until the mermaids hatch. Everyone in here who came from a pod, was conceived in a moon pool, while the rest were conceived the natural way."

"So that's why Ondina technically doesn't have a grandfather from my side of the family." Esmeralda said. "Same goes for you Erik and Raiden."

"So our mission at first was to find out what this chamber does and suck magic out of pod mermaids?" Diablo asked.

"It makes sense now why Slade would want the chamber." Erik said. "If he's looking for an advantage, then this chamber will weaken the hundreds of mermaids in the pod, even our parents."

"Not to mention that anyone who was transformed by the moon pool is automatically linked to it." Zoe added on.

"But why would natural mermaids who were conceived in a moon pool be in danger?" Thalie asked.

"Maybe because mermaids who were born in it are linked to it as well?" Helen suggested.

"Exactly." Rita said.
"Well I won't have that." Zac declared, picking up the box. "I'm gonna put this away, somewhere no one will find it."

When he left, we all jumped in conversation.

"None of this would be happening if I destroyed the chamber if I had the chance." Diablo muttered.

"It's not your fault." Xhiva said.

"Yeah." Zoe agreed. "Zac's gonna take it someplace where it can't be bothered."

"Speaking of Zac." Raiden said. "Can someone tell me why even though me and Erik are descended from Artifix, the stone didn't glow around us?"

"Well the stone was made for war." Kimi said. "My guess is, that in order to maintain control, you have to have some warrior blood in you and be a merman."

"Even so." said Ondina. "He's the Apollo Half of the Chosen Pair. Don't you think part of him might be tempted?"

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Cam's POV

At the cafe…

When I sat down in the cafe table like I arranged, Agni Tiraken himself showed up. He wasn't dressed in his usual business suit like he was the last time we spoke. Instead to blend in with the civilians, he dressed in casual clothes. He even had his beard and sideburns shaved to make him look unrecognizable. He almost looked like an older Xhiva, only without the red/brown irises. But he had Xandou's cocky smirk.

"There have been a few developments since we last spoke." Agni said in his strict voice.

"Really?" I asked.

"The mermaids did destroy the Trident but not the stone." Agni said. "And Xandou says that the stone is the key to the lock."

"You're kidding." I said in wonder.

"So now that we have further information." Agni said to me. "We can further in our deal."

A while ago, Xandou introduced me to his father, who was pretty much the most terrifying man I had ever met. We made a deal, that one of these days I would owe him something, and then he and his Kanhoji will work their best resources to get me a tail of my own.

"Hang on." I said. "Even if you got the stone, you can't open the chamber. Only Zac can. All that chosen pair stuff."

"Let me worry about the details." The Indian merman said quietly but his tone laced with steel. "You just do what you have to do to acquire what we discussed. This is a one time offer, don't make the wrong choice Cam."

With that note, The Lord of The Kanhoji Cult left the cafe, leaving me to think about what I was doing.
In the hardware store…

I walked through the aisles of the store, looking for some spare gears to get to fix my bike, and then my car, when I got one.

"naneun jonglyuui gigye e daehan yeoljeong eul chaj-eusil su issseubnida." (I sort of get your enthusiasm for machines.) I heard the steel voice of my father. I turned around to see him wearing a navy blue t shirt, with jeans and sneakers. "naneun Xhiva gisul e daehan gwansim-i jeomjeom gwa bangbeob-eul bol su iss-eossda." (I could see how with Xhiva getting the interest for technology.)

"yeogiseo mwohanaungeoya?" (What are you doing here?) I asked in Korean.

"aboeji neun adeul-ui yeoljeong e gwansim-iiss-eul haneun geos-i beomjoe inga?" (Is it a crime for a father to be interested in his son's passion?) My father asked sarcastically. "Ani, ani, sasil naneun sa-eob eul dolboneun geunyang yeogiiss-eo." (No, actually I'm just here, taking care of business.)

"naega al-aya hal geon?" (Anything I should know about?) I asked, fiddling with a gear.

"dangsin Xandou e gwanhan amugesodo." (Nothing that concerns you Xandou.) He said.

We stayed silent before I broke it. "aboeji ... dangsin-eun ama seulle ideu uli leul kyeogo ama uli cheobun hal geos-eul kkaedadge habnikka?" (Father...do you maybe realize that Slade will turn on us and probably dispose of us?)

My father's steel gaze met my own. "geuleohge doemyeon, naneun junbigadoeoiiss-eul geos-ibnida." (If that happens, then I'll be ready.)

"geuleona Xhiva eotteohseubnikka?" (But what about Xhiva?) I asked. "geuneun mueos eul dachige doenun gyeong-u? geuga salhae doenun gyeong-u?" (What if he gets hurt? What if he gets killed?)

"Chungbunhi!" (Enough!) My father shouted. "hyeongnim ije dangsin eul, jasin-ui seontaeg eulhaessda. geugeos-eun geoya museun il iya? ssijog ttoneun gajog?" (Your brother made his choice, now you make yours. What's it gonna be? Clan or family?)

With that, he left the store, after tossing me a roll of bills, which he probably stole. I was left to a decision. The made up clan here on land, or my seriously messed up family?

Raiden's POV

At his house…

"When Zac turned it on." I said to my girlfriend, looking over the trident stone in it's case. "Even though I'm not the one supposed to be in control, I could feel a liver of it's power. It was like it was calling to me but...in a whisper. And I know that if I heed it, I could hurt the mermaids and that is the last thing I want."

"You mean..." Thalie trailed off. "You wanted to start the chamber?"

"I'm being honest here." I said. "Yes I was tempted."
She must have been sensing my fear, because she put her hand on mine to give me comfort, which worked fortunately. "So what are you gonna do?"

"Yeah Raiden." I heard a distinct Chinese voice behind me. "What are you going to do?" I quickly closed the can just as Xandou's eyes were on it. "I thought your cousin said this was gone."

"That's none of your business." I snapped at him.

Xandou scoffed. "I beg to differ. The merman chamber is not just your destiny, it's mine and every merman's."

"Leave it Xandou." I warned, my purple eyes starting to glow.

"Part of you wants to start the chamber." Xandou hissed. "Am I even right?"

"Ignore him, Raiden." said Thalie, who was obviously restraining to get in the fight. Good of her. A warrior always knows their fights.

"You don't know what you're running into." I said quickly.

"Hundreds of years ago, mermen wanted to start up the chamber!" Xandou cried. "But your royal ancestor wouldn't! He walked away, just like you're doing! Who is to say, he was right?"

"That chamber, that place." I said, already getting tired of his stubbornness. "It drains magic from mermaids! It practically kills them!"

"That can't be." Xandou said, in denial. "I'm not like those mermen who ever wanted to destroy mermaids. My ancestors weren't either. That place has to be something more."

"Why?" I asked. "Because your dad says so?"

"Being royal doesn't make you the only good guy." Xandou said. "And for the record, how can you say that about my father when yours is ashes?" Rage filled me up, causing my hands to start crackling with electricity but Thalie stepped in front, her blue eyes glowing blue and her face highlighting her anger.

"Xandou, if you've come here to pick a fight, leave but you're still not getting that stone." She said bravely.

"Doesn't matter." Xandou shrugged. "I'm getting that stone anyway. And I'm prepared to go down in a fight."

Pushing my girlfriend out of the way, I fired an electrical shot at the Chinese/Hindi merboy, sending him flying back a few feet.

"Good." I said smiling. "Because you just found one."

"Raiden!" My girlfriend scolded.

Xandou got up, his eyes now a glowing blood red. "Let's go. Now how does a water and lightning Omega beat a merman with superspeed? Even on land?"

"We'll let's find out shall we?" Thalie asked, raising a wave and almost dropping it on Xandou. But he ran out of the way, avoiding getting splashed.

"Catch me if you can." Xandou said happily and in a creepy way. He started running around,
creating a yellow blur behind him and we tried catching him, but no such luck prevailed. No matter what we did, he would always escaped us. Luckily, Thalie managed to dry me one time.

I had to admit Xandou had a point. We may have had the power, but he had the speed.

Thalie's POV

I struggled to catch Xandou or at least make an aim. I silently urged him to keep still because how was I going to catch someone if they kept moving? Xandou had tried to get to the box, but while Raiden was distracting him, I ran up stairs quickly and stashed it away and ran back down as fast as I could.

I knew he had to have a weakness, but what?

Remember. Xandou can't run if there is no heat. Limit the amount of humidity. I heard Xhiva's voice in a flashback.

Ok. I thought. So without heat, he can't run. But how could I make heat go away? I'm not Helen, Kimi, or Rose. So water is all I got. If I could have complete control of the weather, I could make it cloudy. But clouds and water? I got it!

I raised my hands high in the air as Xandou kept teasing and running around, throwing a few punches to me and Raiden.

"What is that for?" Xandou called out, already having punched Raiden in the jaw. "Your call of surrender?"

I smirked. "Nothing like it!" I lowered them slowly, and instnatly, the clouds darkened and rain started pouring down, drenching Xandou.

"This isn't over!" He yelled running into the canal.

After he was gone from sight, I helped Raiden get up. "You ok?" I asked him.

"Yeah I'm good." He said. "We haven't seen the last of Xandou have we?"

I sighed in contempt. "No we have not."

Cam's POV

At Zac's garage

I rushed over to Zac's garage in a hurry after I got an SOS text from Thalie's phone. Of course, when I opened the door, I found, sort of to my surprise, Thalie herself. Well it had to be Thalie because I'm pretty sure Zac's never had blue streaks in his hair.

"Cam." She said, closing the door. "Before you ask, Zac's not here, he's busy with his foster parents."

"So why bring me here?" I asked completely puzzled.

"Because.." She said pausing. "The responsibility I'm about to give you, is a pretty big one. Think of it as literally putting the fate of the world in your hands."

"Sounds heavy." I deadpanned as Thalie walked over and got a silver tin. She opened it and a big
blue stone was there. There was only one stone like that and it was the Trident Stone. "How did you get it?"

"It's a long story." She said. "But this is where your responsibility comes in. This stone isn't safe now, Xandou knows we have it." I paled but regained my composure. I couldn't let the others know about the deal me and Agni made. "I need it hidden. Somewhere, no merman, mermaid, or halfblood no matter what type, will ever find it. That includes me and Zac. Neither of us want to know. Please Cam, I need you to make sure not a single living things finds it."

"Yeah yeah." I waved my hand absentmindedly. "You want me to lose it. Easy."

"Cam I am serious." The half blood said to me very sternly. "None of us can't know and neither can any merman, even Slade because if he does find out, we're toast even the city."

There was a pregnant pause before Thalie brushed her hand on my cheek and said to me sweetly, "You've been friends with my brother and me for a long time. Even though you tried to take over Mako yourself and almost drowned Evie, I still find it in my heart to forgive you and to trust you."

Lending me the tin, I took it from Thalie. But now I was stuck between choices. What was I gonna chose? My tail or my home?

Xandou's POV

At the cafe…

I tapped my fingers nervously at the table and just turning my head around in different directions for no reason. And in one glance, my eyes landed on one black teenager leaning against the rail with a fiery aura I could recognize anywhere, Helen Carter.

"Hao." (Ok) I whispered in Chinese. "Wǒ jīntiān yào gàosù tā. Cóng nǎlǐ kāishǐ? "Hǎilún, sǐ lái dé yǒu yīzhì dōu shì wǒ ài nǐ. " Luó." (I have to tell her today. Where do I start?) "Helen, Slade has a plot against his agreement with my father and now I want out, and I always have been not just because of Xhiva, it's because I love you." Nah.) I ran my hand through my shaggy hair. "Tā yǒngyuǎn yě bǔ huì xiǎngxīn wǒ. Búguò, wǒ dé xiǎng shì shì." (She'll never believe me. But I gotta try anyway.)

I went over there to talk to her when she said to me, although not speaking to me, "Wǒ yīzhì nǐ huì xiǎngxīn chūlái, xùnsù nánhái." (I thought you would show up, speedy boy.)

I laughed at her humor before switching to English to make the conversation more heartfelt. "Helen, I...I know that Slade is planning to turn on my father."

"Oh." She said a little concerned.

"And now, after all this time." I said to her. "I've always wanted out of this whole thing. To be honest, I was jealous of you girls and the guys who left. They had the choice of having a life, having a future and….having someone."

"Then why don't you stop being lazy, get up and take that chance?" Helen snapped at me.

"Haven't you been seeing?" I asked. "If I'm not Kanhoji, I'm nothing."
"That's not true." Helen said. "In fact, that's a load of sharkcrap. Your father has no problem using you guys as his tools, and Slade doesn't care about mermen, it's all about him. He just wants power. Tell me, if you think it wouldn't hurt your reputation, which would you choose?"

I stayed silent for a minute before answering, "I would choose to get the hell away from this and fight against the tribe and pod."

"Xandou." Helen told me. "You don't think you are, but you're stronger than this."

"What happens now?" I asked.

Right then, Helen kissed me on the cheek. It was a pretty hot kiss, I had to admit. "That's for you to decide."

Line break…

Cam met me at the cafe later on and we discussed our plans to give the stone to my father...

Evie's POV

"What happened with the stone?" Zac asked Thalie.

"I gave it to Cam." She answered.

"Cam?!" I nearly screeched.

"Cam?" I nearly screeched.

"It's fine Eves." Thalie said to me. "I trust him."

"I trust him too." Zac said.

"You both know that Cam's always wanted a tail." I reasoned. "What if he thinks that starting up the chamber is a way to get him one?"

"He won't." My boyfriend said.

"Look." said Thalie. "Even if he might be tempted, Cam will choose on his own. He's mature enough to take that responsibility."

Agni's POV

At the docks…

"So." I said to Cam and Xandou who agreed to meet me there to discuss our business. "Any news?"

"You know me." Cam said. "I've wanted a tail for a long, long time."

"Exactly." I said. "So we're doing this right?"

"We had to give it a lot of thought." Xandou said. "The stone's got a lot of power. It would be irresponsible of me to not think about where it would end up or what it might do."

"Xandou we have our code." I said to him. "We steal not kill."
"You say you just want to discover things Agni." Cam said earning a glare from me. "I mean, Mr. Tiraken. Just like I do. That's why we had to think about where the safest place for the stone would be."

"You've already got the stone?" I asked with high hope.

"We had a lot of options, me and Cam but we weighed em up." Xandou said to me.

"Because I don't want a tail if it means using the stone against the mermaids." Cam added on.

"I won't hurt them I told you that." I said annoyed at the human. Actually the mermaids were collateral damage, and if one of them got a scratch for getting in my way, so be it.

"Really/" My son raised an eyebrow at me. "But anyway, we still needed to feel good about it. About them."

"Now that that's out of the way, hand over the stone and my resources will get to work on getting you a tail." I said holding out my hand.

"I don't think so." Cam said bravely putting the tin box in my hand. "That's why we hid it. Somewhere you will never find it."

"And that's why, I'm pulling out of the mission." Xandou said to me.

I closed the box looking at them. "You can't quit the Tirakens. It's blood in, blood out. And Cameron, I have to say I'm disappointed. You're offered the chance to satisfy yourself and you give up the chance of having a tail?"

"I used to think that having one would be the best thing in the world." Cam said to me. 'But I lost a good friend over it. And you know what? It wasn't worth it."

"Same here," Xandou said. "All my life I wanted to be top of the food chain, but I ended up pushing away my little brother. And it came to me today, life is worth more than living up in the family business. We've moved on."

I scoffed. "Are you two crazy?"

"Not crazy enough to risk a group of people we consider family." My son, I mean Xandou challenged.

"This isn't what you want." I said. "I know you."

"You don't know me or what I want!" Xandou yelled at me. "Father if you ever once asked me what I want! I'm not you! What would my sister think of this? I bet that's why you shipped her off.."

"I never shipped her anywhere." I said, finally coming clean.

Xandou's eyes widened. "What?"

"I never sent her anywhere." I said. "She ran away."

"You lied to your sons about your own daughter?" Cam asked clearly outraged. "How can you do that?"

"In any conflict, the winner is prepared to do what the loser is not." I snapped my fingers and dozens of Kanhoji soldiers came out, armed at the ready.
"Should have known you'd do this." Xandou muttered.

"You take the ones on the left and I'll take the ones on the right?" Cam asked nervously.

"I'm afraid I can't let you leave boys." I said. "You've seen and know far too much already."

The Kanhoji cornered them and was about to attack when out of nowhere, a voice yelled out, "MR. TIRAKEN, YOU ARE A HORRIBLE FATHER!" And then suddenly, a wall of ice erupted, protecting them. I looked up and I saw on the cargo boxes, the Sirens Creed themselves.

"How many times do I have to face you four brats?!" I screamed.

"What do you say we skip the banter?" The red one names Blaze asked. "And get right to the part where we kick your ass?"

"GET THEM!" I ordered my soldiers.

Cam's POV

The Sirens Creed was there. I couldn't believe that the Sirens Creed was there. It seemed like a miracle. Though how they found us, I don't know. Though they could have used something more hot and less freezing cold.

"I can't believe it!" I exclaimed. "Xandou wait until we get back to the others!" No response and I was starting to get worried. "Xandou?" I looked around to find him curled up and shivering. "You ok?" He flashed a glare at me. "Ok you're not ok. Can you use your superspeed to try to get us out of here?"

"I. Can't." He growled.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"My powers." He said. "They rely on heat, even my speed. This ice dome is cold so I can't move."

"So what now?" I asked. "We just sit here and wait?"

"Apparently." He said through gritted teeth.

I didn't see it, and neither did Xandou, but phasing through the ice wall, was a girl in a black body suit, silver arm and leg bracers on her legs and pink shoulder gloves. She was wearing a pink strapless dress and a pink helmet that had glittery silver accents on it. On the dress was some sort of logo with an olive branch and a sword making an X over a crescent moon.

"Hi." She said in a distorted voice, making us jump. "It's ok guys. I'm going to get you out of here."

"How did you?" I asked.

"Are any of you afraid of heights?" She asked.

"Yes." I answered a little scared but Xandou said, "No."

"Well then you'll have to close your eyes." She said. "Take my hands." Each of us got one hand and instantly, I felt lighter than air. She lifted us up in fight and we phased through the ice glass. Phasing felt really weird, in a tingly matter of speaking. Down below, I saw blasts of fire, water and ice and the Kanhoji fighting them. Got to admit, they looked pretty awesome. I wondered what it was like to be out on the field.
"Hang on." I said to the superhero. "You're that girl, Windsresher, Windsracer?"

"It's Windsrider." She snapped.

I noticed Xandou looking down with pure hate. "You really are a horrible father." I had a feeling he was talking about Agni.

No one's POV

In the grotto…

Flashback…

After Cam and Xandou agreed to join them in the fight and put the stone somewhere safe, the Blade Boys pulled Xandou aside and near the pool. Erik went with them to make sure nothing went wrong.

"Xandou why are you doing this?" Raiden asked.

"Yeah." Diablo agreed. "What's your ploy?"

"My ploy is that for the first time ever." Xandou began. "I'm listening to my gut instead of my father. And my gut is telling me that we are not our parents. I mean stealing and killing doesn't make you happy." He looked at Raiden. "Driving your family insane, your brother and cousins even, makes you happy!" Erik chuckled while Raiden blushed in embarrassment. Xandou looked at Diablo. "And you, being yourself makes you happy. How predictable." Diablo laughed at this. Xandou turned to Erik. "Erik, lots of things make you happy. Even Ondina." Erik scowled and grinned at this. Xandou finally turned to his brother. "And Xhiva, you do not have to rely on your smarts to get a girl. You are so cool!" Xhiva chuckled at this. "And I don't want to see mermaids or mermen suffering. It doesn't make me happy. I want to go to school and be with my friends even Helen. Because Helen makes me really happy. Us being friends makes me really happy. Not destroying things. It's my life guys." Xandou stuck out his fist. It was a bit of a wait before Raiden stuck out his fist too.

"It's my life too." He said.

"It's my life." Xhiva said.

"So." Diablo said. "Just to be clear, we don't have to worry about how really made your parents are gonna be? Because they're gonna be really, really mad."

"Their parents can't touch these two." Erik said to the twins. "Not while we're sticking together."

"Ok then." Diablo said sticking out his fist. "It's my life."

"Erik come on!" Raiden exclaimed and Eris stuck out his fist and the Blade Boys were united once again.

End of flashback...

Sirena's POV

In the grotto...

"What will we do with the stone?" I asked Zoe and Ondina.

"We could bury it." Zoe suggested.
"Or drop it on an ocean shelf so that the only living thing that can ever touch it again, is a giant squid." Ondina deadpanned.

"Let's go with that." Zoe said.

"Should we go and suss out a possible drop off point?" I asked.

"You two go on ahead." I said. "I'll check Rita's ocean charts in case anything stands out."


Zoe's POV

After the others left, I searched through maps when I realized I forgot to change Poseidon's food bowl. So I went to the kitchen, got the cat food and went to the roof. But just as I was pouring the food in the bowl, I felt a hand grab my throat and mouth. Ropes were tied on my hands and a bag was put over my head. I panicked, which meant that Zac should have been getting a vision anytime now.


Zac's POV

In his room…

I was practicing my moves and my powers when I got this searing pain in my head, followed by a vision of Mimmi in a warehouse, feeling more terrified than I had ever seen her. She felt stuck and helpless.

On instinct, I dialed her number. I expected to hear her voice, but instead I got this.

"If it isn't the Apollo Half himself." I heard a cruel voice, a voice I could never forget. "Slade. I'm only gonna ask once. Let. Her. Go."

"I have the Artemis Half." He said. "No harm will come to her, as long as you do everything I say. Bring the Trident Stone to the warehouse on Fullerton and Halsted. And I'll let her go. Oh and one more thing." I heard a bloodcurdling scream and I yelled, falling back, clutching my stomach. It was as if someone stabbed her, and I had a vision then, showing me that someone did stab her. "If you tell anyone even your father, I will fill a lagoon with her blood. You have 10 minutes."

With no time to waste, I ran and dove into the sea, trying to swim as fast as I could to the warehouse.


No one's POV

In the warehouse…

Zoe was fighting the pain, gritting her teeth and fighting back tears. It hurt like hell but she had to be strong and keep holding on.

"Slade." She choked out. "You don't have to do this."

"I do actually." Slade said cowering over her, and caressing her face.

"Stay away from me!" She screamed.
Slade darkly smiled, his pale skin cracking to show his teeth. "You're like your father Zoe. Always stubborn, always challenging. It's a shame my cousin was too much of a coward. After this is over and Mako and all the oceans in the world are mine, I could have some place for you. As my...pleasure slave."

Zoe's eyes glowed a royal blue before fading. "You sick son of a bitch."

"Madness Zoe." He said. "Is only a feared perspective of the world. And I have a vision for this one. A world in which all mermen will rule."

"Is that one of your reasons why you set the fire 15 years ago?" She asked. Slade took a few steps back and answered. "I don't know what you're talking about. Oh that fire, yes. I don't know of any fire because if I did, I would have been the cause."

"You mean, you didn't try to kill us in San Francisco?" Zoe asked puzzled.

"Whoever did." Slade said. "Saved me the trouble of finding your parents. Jacob and Nerissa, quite a pair to try to find. Even on land."

"Well if you didn't set the fire who did?" Zoe asked.

"Master." A merman told Slade. "He's here."

"Bring him." There was a cluster of mermen bringing the teen over in the glowing rope.

"Slade you asshole!" Zac yelled looking at his bleeding twin. "You promised you wouldn't hurt her!"

"I never keep to my promises." Slade said to him. "Give me the stone."

"First Zoe." Zac demanded.

"THE STONE!" Slade thundered making the walls shake a little. Zac reached into his back pocket and pulled out the big moonstone. Slade took it and breathed deeply, smiling in victory. "Just as legendary as our ancestor."

"We are not family!" Zac shouted.

Slade chuckled darkly. "Without Triton we wouldn't exist now would we. Boys, hold him like we planned."

The rope was taken off Zac and he was pushed down, face facing upward and Slade towered over him in pure predatory movement. "Slade you have the stone! Just let us go!"

A roll of seaweed gag was put in Zac's mouth and Slade laughed coldly. "I said I needed the stone. I never said anything about what I was gonna do with it. I just need your power to get in the chamber." He pushed the stone on Zac's chest and pain erupted through his body. He then understood how the mermaids felt when they were around the Trident. His gold aura surrounded his body and entered the stone and within seconds, Zac passed out. "I just don't need you. And after you, that brat of Caesar's is next." All the mermen then left and Zoe's chains had been already unlocked. Using every amount of strength she had, she walked with the blinding pain and dizziness because she lost so much blood to her brother and used the last bit of magic in her to teleport herself to her house.
Raiden's POV

At Mako…

I walked along the beach… trying to see if anyone was there of course. Seeing that no one was there, I dove into the sea and swam for a few miles before I stopped to surface. When my trained senses perked up I shot a lightning bolt and some mermen came out. And then, it was a hundred. I shot a wave of electricity before I shot several more while building up all my energy. When I contracted my arms, while getting some hits by the Aresmen, I opened my glowing purple eyes and yelled, throwing my arms and a massive wave of electricity exploded, electrocuting the unit. But I was severely weakened, which wasn't really good, since I felt a hand grab me and whipped me back. I shot a weak lightning bolt but Slade, somehow caught it and made it stronger before throwing it back, weakening me to the point where I could barely move. Slade brought me to the surface and held out my wrist.

"What are you doing?" I breathed out.

"Getting the power to destroy mermaids." He said in his dark tone. "After all these years, your power is ripe for the picking. It's a shame that you never saw what gifts you had." He used the water to slice open my right wrist, blood already pouring out like a faucet. He cut his own left wrist and applied some sort of glowing sand on it and pressed it to mine. It was as if someone let a grenade explode in my body as I felt my magic, my powers leave my own body. I didn't see it but my body glowed a purple aura and streams of purple lightning traveled from my fin to my hands and when the ritual was complete, the pain subsided and the purple glow in my eyes was gone.

"Now you know how it feels to be just like everybody else." Slade whispered. "Isn't it just convenient that you finally got your wish?"

He left me go, my wrist still bleeding and I sank to the bottom of the seafloor, passed out.


Ondina's POV

When we got back after finding a good drop off point, me and Sirena found a smell of blood. And we raced towards it knowing full well that sharks would be on the hunt. We found Great Whites surrounding a merman and I used my moon ring to chase them off. Sirena dove down and I followed her and to my horror, I saw that the merman was Raiden. But he was almost unrecognizable since he somehow lost his gold hair streaks. I noticed then that his wrist was bleeding and badly.

Help me pick him up. Sirena said to me. I nodded and helped pick up the young ex-prince.

Oh Raiden. I said. What has he done to you?


Thalie's POV

At Jacob's Place…

The entire gang, including our new recruits, Carly, Cam and Xandou gathered to see how Zac was doing. Apparently Slade got the stone to take Zac's magic into the stone itself. Zoe was ok despite her injury and losing some blood. But Jacob kept saying how this was his fault and no matter what we said, he would still blame himself for not being there when they needed their father the most.
"GUYS!" Ondina screamed getting everyone's attention. "It's Raiden!" Erik immediately got up and helped Sirena and Ondina carry the barely awake Raiden Consorzio. I rushed to my boyfriend's side and set him down on the couch.

"Raiden." I said. "Please don't be dead."

Raiden groaned. "This isn't one of those movies is it?" This got everyone chuckling as Kimi cleaned his wound and gathered the sandy remains of the wound. But when Kimi checked his eyes, that's when we knew we were doomed.

Raiden's POV

When I fully came to, I saw everyone looking at me like I had just died. "Che cosa?" I asked. "What are all of you staring at?"

"Um Raiden." Rose said giving me a compact mirror. "Take it easy ok? This gonna be a shock."

Slowly I brought the mirror to my face and I paled, knowing what she was talking about. My gold hair streaks were gone, leaving my hair to be a complete chestnut brown and my eyes. They weren't purple but a bright sapphire blue. My mother's eyes.

"What did he do to me?" I asked scared.

"I've tested some of the sand on your arm Raiden." Zoe said to me. "It's sea dune sand. It's used to absorb one's power to another. In this case, Slade has taken your power into himself."

"With Zac's powers in the stone, he'll be able to open the chamber." Erik said.

"And now he's unstoppable with Raiden's lightning in him." Zac said.

"And the full moon is tomorrow night." Sirena reminded us.

"We'll lose Mako forever." Ondina said in disdain. "What will we do?"

My girlfriend, Thalie, stood up and said to all of us..

"I'll tell you what we're gonna do. We're gonna get my brother and boyfriend's powers back. And we're gonna save Mako and the world."
Battle For Mako: Part 1

No one's POV

Near Neptune's Island…

In the bright early morning of that fateful day, a conch shell was sounded earlier than wake up time and all the mermen got up groggily. Swimming to the war chamber, they saw Slade in his ever terrifying glory.

"Welcome my brothers." He said quietly but his tone was loud enough to reach all of the 250 mermen. "We are the sons of the sea, the superior race! Until today, only one thing stood in our way, the Chosen Pair! I am here to tell you all now that I have stolen the Apollo Half's power and the Artemis Half has admitted defeat!" The mermen cheered. "This is the day we have trained for all of our lives! The day when we are free of the tyranny of mermaids! This is the full moon where we will all roam the seas once more!" The mermen all cheered and Slade smiled evilly, nothing could stop him then.

Zoe's POV

In the moon pool…

I tapped my fingers on the ledge of the pool, in anticipation. That day, today was the fight of our lives. Every minute, every second of our lives since the moment we were born, had come to that day. To say I was ready, was sort of right. I was so nervous that I could barely eat my breakfast that morning. I flicked my tail because at the time, I needed something to hold me down or I was gonna freak.

"Hi Zoe." I heard a deep masculine Italian voice speak. In reaction, I shrieked and nearly slid off. I looked up to see a merman who looked exactly like Erik, only a little less tanner.

"Who are you?" I asked, even though he felt familiar.

He chuckled. "It's ok. You probably don't remember me, it's been a long time though." He swam to me and brushed my cheek. "But even in death, your uncle could never forget his own niece."

I gasped, trying to take his hand but my hand passed through. I tried to give him a hug but I ended up falling over.

"I can't touch you." I said depressed.

"No I'm just waiting to come back to life." My uncle said to me sarcastically. "Zoe, I'm a ghost. Duh."

"Now I know where Raiden gets his sarcasm from." I muttered. "Uncle Caesar, why are you here?"

"I'm here because you need me." He said plainly. "You seem to be in a conundrum."

"I...as a matter of fact I am." I admitted. "Tonight is the big battle. My brother's out of commission, my cousin has lost his power, and now in 12 hours I have to face the cruelest of all mermaids. The prophecy says that if I win, I might have to kill her, but it also says that if she wins, all balance will
be lost. But I don't want to take a life, I want to end this feud but I just don't know how."

"A true creature of the sea can weather all the lies and illusions without being lost. The true heart can
determine their path, their lives while fulfilling their birthrights. Since beginningless time, darkness
has always thrived inside us like a weed but shrivels in purifying light. I'm going to let you in on the
secret of magic, we bend not the elements but the energy within ourselves. Think on that, and you
have a chance of beating her."

"I..don't understand." I said confused.

Caesar's ghost chuckled. "You're the supersmart mermaid. You figure it out. Oh and by the way, tell
Raiden this, sometimes the things we don't appreciate are lost before we can. I know that he's going
through a rough time but everyone is born the way they are for a reason." I then burst out in tears.
"It's ok Zoe. I will always be with you, Zac, and your cousins."

I then gave him an air hug, which he slightly returned, because he couldn't really hug me. "I love you
Uncle Caesar."

He smiled sadly, before vanishing into thin air and disappearing. I then swam and paced in the moon
pool, breaking down what he said, before I realized what he was trying to tell me. He had just told
me how to defeat Veridia.


Zac's POV

In his garage…

"Come on." I muttered to the mini rugby ball on the table with every amount of strength I had.
"Move."

"Give it a rest." My sister said. "I'm sure they'll come back."

I scoffed. "They better Thals. Slade's coming to take over Mako, I'm supposed to be there tonight
and..I'm useless."

"Zac this isn't about whether you have powers." Thalie said. "This is about you standing up for what
is right."

"Thanks Coach." I said jokingly. "But Evie is out of the city right?"

"Well…"

"Thalassa." I warned.

"She's staying." She said.

"What?!" I exclaimed. "I told Evie to get out of here so she won't get hurt!"

"Like you've ever talked Evie out of anything?" She asked. "She's gonna fight, no matter what you
say."

"She might get hurt!" I exclaimed. "She might die! And...oh God. I might die and I haven't even said
goodbye to my parents yet!"

"No." Thalie said grabbing my shoulders. "You're gonna come back. Evie is gonna come back."
"Thalie the prophecy says.." I started before Thalie slapped me.

"Zac snap out of it!" She exclaimed and I could see the tears building up. "You're gonna live. Evie is gonna live." She then gave me a giant hug. "You have to come back."

Raiden's POV

The day started off as a rather sucky one. I still felt just empty and when I washed myself, I looked at my tail and all of those memories of having my powers came back to me. Lightning was the only power I had and it was all I ever knew. Yet the problem was, the only way I had ever felt close to who I was was through my lightning. Some said it was a gift, some called it a curse. I was in a blurred line pretty much my childhood.

"Hey fratellino," I heard my big brother speaking to me. "Come va?" (How you doing?)

"Sto bene." (I'm fine.) I said looking at the mirror. It was strange seeing my purple eyes now replaced by my own mother's.

I looked for my toothpaste when Erik handed it to me and kissed me on the head. "Ti...manca?" (Do you...miss it?)

I stayed silent for a minute because I was brushing my teeth. "E 'come se avessi perso un arto." (It's like I lost a limb.) I said looking in the mirror. Erik and I really looked like brothers. Same tan, same eye shape, almost the same jaw. "Voglio dire ... un fulmine era l'unica cosa che ho avuto che mi ha fatto freddo , ma mi ha fatto un mostro." (I mean...lightning was the only thing I had that made me cool but made me a freak.)

"Ti lascio in un piccolo segreto." (I'll let you in on a little secret.) My brother said to me. "Quando ero un ragazzino, non volevo essere l'erede reale a tutti." (When I was a kid, I didn't want to be the royal heir at all.)

I looked at him in shock. My big brother, not wanting to be king? That didn't seem possible at all. "Sei serio?" (You're serious?)

"Come voi, tutto quello che volevo era essere normale. famiglia normale, una vita normale." (Like you, all I wanted was to be normal. Normal family, normal life.)

"Cosa ha fatto cambiare idea?" (What changed your mind?) I asked, spitting out some water.

"Dad." He said, looking in the mirror and patting my back. "E 'stato papà che mi ha fatto piacere la mia eredità." (It was Dad who got me to like my heritage.)

"Io non parlavo il nostro patrimonio." (I wasn't talking about our heritage.) I said.

"Lo so." (I know.) I said. "Ma il nostro patrimonio è una parte di noi . La nostra linea di sangue reale è una parte di noi . E così è il tuo fulmine." (But our heritage is a part of us. Our royal bloodline is a part of us. And so is your lightning.) He ruffled my hair which I of course, swatted away. And just when he left, he opened the door and looked back. "Un'altra cosa Papà mi ha detto. A volte essere speciale schifo." (Another thing Dad told me. Sometimes being special sucks.)

Rita's POV
To say the atmosphere was tense, was saying it like it was. Everyone was there, so worried but yet so ready.

"The silence before a battle." Erik said. "It murders you more than you murder them."

"I wasn't there when my family was targeted for murder." Jacob said. "I'm gonna make a difference this time."

"Me too." Ondina declared. "I may not have been there in all of this most of the time, but I'm gonna be there for all of you."

"No you're not." Erik said.

"What do you mean Erik?" She asked. "I'm going out there and you can't stop me."

"Ondina we need to talk." Erik said, leading the Portuguese girl out of there.

Ondina's POV

"O Erik ti eínai aftó?" (Erik what is this about?) I asked in Greek. We were out of the grotto.

"Ondina." He said to me. "Aplá den théloun na párei me ton trópo." (I just don't want you getting in the way.)

I scoffed. "O, étsi nomízete óti epeidí eímai kápoio eídos neanída pou diatréchoun kíndyno óti tha pligotheís?" (Oh so you think because I'm some sort of damsel in distress that I will get hurt?)

"Óchi den eínai aftó." (No it's not that.) He said trying to squirm his way out of this. "Aplos eínaí…" (It's just…)

"Ti Erik? Ti eínai aftó?" (What Erik? What is it?) I challenged.

"Eínaí óti s 'agapó!" (It's that I love you!) Erik exclaimed, looking relieved like he had put a giant weight off of him.

I remained stoic before answering, "Xero." (I know.)

Erik spluttered before saying, "Íxeres? Giatí den eípes típota?" (You knew? Why didn't you say anything?)

I stepped closer and he seemed to faze but he remained strong. "Epeidí kápopo ekeí." (Because somewhere in there.) I gestured to his body. "Eínaí éna pragmatikó ándra. ton échoun prósvasi kai na tou ypenthymíso íti o pólemos mitríkis mas eínaí étoimi na gínei to dikó mas. Aftó mou perilamvánei." (Is an actual man. Access him and remind him that our parent's war is about to become ours. That includes me.)


Zac's POV

At the cafe…

I sat there, just eating my fishburger, and possibly my last one ever. I still felt guilty for not trying but apparently there was no cure for stolen powers. There was one but it was just a rumor, that if your powers were stolen, you had to defeat the one that took them. But now that he had Raiden's powers in him, he was virtually unstoppable.
"Zac." I heard Erik's voice.

"Erik I don't need any sentimental crap right now." I said.

"I'm just here to give you a heads up." He said. "I trained you so I know that you can fight, and you've got the natural raw talent for it. Powers or not, you're a fighter and you will always be welcome to join us. But the minute you get in over your head, get out. I'm not gonna have someone else die because of me."

When he left I asked, "Is Raiden going tonight?"

"He's been trained longer than you have." He said. "He knows the risk. So he's up for it."

Raiden's POV

I was sort of up for it. God I missed my lightning. The currents and techniques really gave me a serious advantage. But there was nothing I could do at the moment. The afternoon horizon looked beautiful.

"Raiden?" I heard my mother's delicate voice.

"Mom." I said to her.

"Are you ok?" She asked, her one eye peering into mine.

"No." I said after a long silence. "It's weird having no powers. But lightning, I had to have been born with lightning. I couldn't have tropical magic or something."

"Omega or not." My mother said, brushing my shoulder. "You will always be my beautiful baby boy." She then kissed me on the head and hugged me. "I know this isn't easy for you."

"Easy?" I scoffed. "My lightning was the only magic I had. In some ways it was all I've ever known. And I was a little intimidated by it at first. And I was afraid of hurting Erik at first. Is this why you locked me away?"

"No." My mother said. "It's because you remind me of Nerissa, my sister. You are just like her in so many ways. Raiden, son, you have a gift, a gift that you don't see."

I scoffed. "You mean I had a gift."

"Don't say that Raiden." She scolded. "You may think that your lightning is gone, but it is still somewhere in there." She pointed to my heart.

"How can it be?" I asked. "You saw what Slade did to me!"

"You just have to try to believe." My mother told me.

"Maybe I don't need to believe but stick to the facts." I said.

"You don't know that." She said. "You can't give up."

"How can I not?" I stood up. "What can I possibly even do?"

I stormed off to my room and shut the door.
Persephone's POV

"Didn't go well?" I heard Jacob's voice as he approached me.

"That's an understatement." I said.

"This is all my fault." He said. "If I hadn't been on that stupid phone call making sure extra security measures were put in place at Ko Ban to protect the children."

"That's the thing Jacob." I said. "You were protecting children who needed help. It was just bad timing your own children needed you. But it still isn't your fault."

"It doesn't make it right Seph." He said. "Now that Raiden is down you should go talk to Zac."

"Now's your chance Jacob." I said to him. "You want to make up for 15 years ago and last night? Start by getting your son's confidence back and convincing him to take. This. Bastard. Down."

Zac's POV

I threw rocks in the river, as a symbol of my frustration. It hurt me that my family was going through this and I couldn't do anything. Not even to help them.

"Zac." I heard my biological father's voice. "I don't know much about your childhood, but from what your sister told me, you and Cam viewed Mako Island as just a place to get eaten alive by mosquitos and eat half cooked fish. All those years ago, when I came to Australia with my friends and met Rita, even we had no idea what the place was. But now we do."

"Dad.."

"Your ancestors built that chamber." He said. "Not mine. It belongs to you not Slade."

"I can't even move a blade of grass." I complained. "Let alone take on Slade."

"I understand how it feels to feel helpless." He said, looking at me. "Outweighed by the odds. We have the same ancestor, son. But right now, doubt is a luxury we can't afford anymore. You have more power in you than you realize. Don't think. And don't worry. When the time comes, you'll know what to do. It's in your blood after all."

He left me and then after some time, I stood up and looked out into the sea. Powers or not, I was gonna help defeat Slade. No matter what it took.

No one's POV

In the grotto…

Everyone was gathered there, all in a meeting.

"Please Uncle Jay." Erik pleaded. "You're the only one who could help us defeat Slade other than Zac."

"Erik has a point." Zoe said. "Why can't you help us?"

"I can't because it won't turn out well." Jacob said to them all. "Even if I did defeat my distant
cousin, and I'm not sure if I could, it would be the wrong way to defeat the war. History would just see it as more senseless violence. A tribesman killing his own chief for power. Zac wasn't born into it and he is a descendant of Artifix. So only Zac and Erik can defeat him, so this can end peacefully."

"And then.." Rose said. "What will happen to the mermaids and mermen? Will they go their separate ways?"

"No." Thalie said. "There is only one way to ensure unity, peace and order. We have to unite the Ares Tribe and Mako Pod into a new Clan."

"A clan?" Diablo asked. "But these two peoples are the most feuding of them all. I don't see how they can cooperate."

"That's the thing." Thalie said. "Look at all of us. We came from different sides of the story and yet we're all on the same page almost at the end of this chapter. If we're going to stop this feud, we need to start it here, with a new clan."

"Yes but who will rule it?" Helen asked.

"We'll figure out something." Kimi said. "But right now, we need to beat Slade and Veridia."

"No." Phoebus said. "Erik and Zac must face Slade alone but when Zoe faces Verida, she also stands alone."

"But the full moon is arriving." Rita said. "And our destinies are upon us. I will face Agni Tiraken on my own. We have some unfinished business."

"Which reminds me, how did you guys meet?" Xhiva asked.

"I went undercover as one of his father's agents but after I destroyed one of his bases and sent him to prison we lost touch." Rita explained shortfully.

"Now you four." Esmeralda said to the four Omega Mermaids. "You're gonna have to go into the moon pool to try to redirect Slade's energy so that when the Blood Moon is summoned, use your energy to try to turn it back. But it won't be easy considering we will be weakened by it. That's when Raiden comes in."

"But what if Raiden doesn't?" Helen asked.

"That's for him to decide." said Persephone.

"In that case, we're going to help." Cam said standing up.

"Are you sure?" Erik asked.

"He's right." Xandou pointed out. "Remember those bad guys you used to watch on Saturday Mornings? These guys are not like those guys. They won't exercise restraint because you're children. They will kill you if they get that chance. Do not give them that chance."

"I know." Cam said. "My dad sells firearms to law enforcement. And I know how to use most of them, including a shoulder fired missle lancher."

"I'm in." Carly declared. "Even though I can't fight."

"Me too." Evie said.
"So what's our destiny?" Xhiva asked.

"What do you think it is?" Rita asked.

"I think that even though we don't have Zac and Raiden at the moment." Diablo said. "We need to do everything we can to stop the feud, even if it means taking down some mermaids and mermen."

"And that means if those two are there." Sirena said punching her fist. "We'll be right there if they need us. But remember, if we go in, there's no saying if we come out."

Raiden's POV

I was in my room, gathering my weapons, mostly my arm gauntlets. It wasn't much but it was gonna have to do in maiming.

I then felt a cold wind and threw a knife instinctively and it passed through this man. This man who wore a white button up tshirt with jeans, a black tie and dress shoes.

"Who..who are you?" I asked. "Are you...a ghost?"

The man chuckled. "Credo che si conosce la risposta a quel figlio." (I believe you know the answer to that, son.)

I nearly tripped as I stared at the apparent ghost of my father. Sadness and joy swelled up in me like a balloon being inflated. "Fa-Father?" I ran and tried to hug him but I ended up landing on my face. "Ow." I got up and rolled my eyes at my amused father who was resisting to laugh his head off to keep his serious demeanor. "Non avresti potuto mi ha avvertito?" (You couldn't have warned me?)

My father chuckled. "Sarebbe stato meno divertente. Però Ora ascolta perché non ho molto tempo .. (It would have been less amusing though. Now listen because I don't have much time.) I still proceeded to blink out a few tears. "Ho intenzione di dirvi il segreto di essere un tritone." (I'm going to tell you the secret of being a merman.)

"Adesso?" (Now?) I asked. "Perché non 10 anni fa?" (Why not 10 years ago?)

"Non eri figlio pronto." (You weren't ready son.) My father said. "E ora sei. Ognuno è nato il modo in cui sono per un motivo. A volte si poteri dimostrare la persona che sei. Ma non si può pensare di usare la magia come concentrato, liberare l'energia. Non c'è concentrazione . Non c'è il rilascio . Perché è tutto uno. Non sta cercando di sfruttare la tua magia , perché avete già . Sappiate che nella parte più profonda del tuo essere. Non c'è passato, né futuro. Tu sei il potere, tu sei l'energia, tu sei il siete gli occhi su di te. E 'tutto una realtà. Ogni momento della tua vita ha portato a questo. Fa tutto parte di questo. Raiden, non sta controllando un fulmine, sei un fulmine. Ed è tutto parte dello stesso momento perfetto. (And now you are. Everyone is born the way the are for a reason. Sometimes you powers demonstrate the person you are. But you can't think of using magic as concentrate, release the energy. There's no concentrating. There's no releasing. Because it's all one. You are not trying to harness your magic because you already have. Know that in the deepest part of your being. There's no past, no future. You are the power, you are the energy, you are the release. You are the eyes on you. It's all one reality. Every moment of your life has led to this. It's all part of this. Raiden, you are not controlling lightning, you are lightning. And it's all part of the same perfect moment.)

"Suona come un clan." (It sounds like a clan.) I said.

"Può essere." (Maybe.) Father said in mock ponder. "Io lo chiamo essere impressionante." (I call it
being awesome.)

We both laughed at this before my father started to flicker. "No." I whispered.

"Raiden, non posso rimanere. Devo andare." (Raiden, I can't stay. I have to go.)

"No!" I screamed trying and failing to hold his hand. "Per favore, non mi lasciare! Non di nuovo." (Please don't leave me! Not again.)

My father looked at me sadly, tears also threatening to spill from his eyes. "Se ami qualcuno, allora devi lasciarli andare." (If you love someone, then you have to let them go.)

"Perché?" (Why?) I asked weakly.

He looked me dead in the eyes and bore into my soul. "Because you know that they will always be with you." I stayed silent until I gave him an awkward air hug while crying a little. Honestly, until that day, I couldn't really remember what my father looked like except for the locket we shared. Until I saw my father as a ghost, Erik was the father figure in my life and the Blade Boys were like brothers to me. Annoying, punk and impulsive, but still brothers. "I love you son."

I broke the air hug and said to him, "I love you too and thank you Father." And with that he vanished and left me to cry for a few minutes. And that's when I knew, I couldn't cry. Not when the fate of the world was at stake.


Erik's POV

I was sharpening my spear when I heard someone come in and ask, "Mind if I borrow a staff?" I looked up to see it was Zac.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"You taught me that a merman is never defenseless." Zac said twirling it like a pro. "Plus I've been practicing."

"No." I said standing up. "What the hell are you doing? I thought you had given up."

"Well I can't resist when my friends and family need help." He said.

"So you're going to fight?" I asked.

"Even without powers, I'm still a merman." He pointed out.

Smiling, I walked up to him and shook his hand. "Well done, cousin."


David's POV

In the cafe…

I wiped the tables of the cafe, as part of my day long shift. Hey any work is good work no matter how small.

"David?" I heard the lovely voice of my girlfriend, Sirena. "Can I talk to you for a second?"
"Sure." I said, paying attention to her.

"If I told you a secret." She said. "The biggest secret you will ever hear, can you keep it?"

"Of course." I said smiling.

She gave me a kiss on the lips and said. "That's all I ever wanted to hear."

"So what about the secret?" I asked.

She opened her fist and put in my hand, a blue USB drive. "If I don't come back here after 48 hours, watch this but don't tell anybody until you see it all."

Smiling at me, she left the cafe, leaving me to wonder, Was Sirena ok?


On the beach…

Nightfall had come, which meant the pod and the tribe were arriving. Everyone involved was ready. The land people who didn't have tails were on boats with first aid and firearm equipment. The mermaids and mermen all stood together on the beach, each of them armed at the ready.

"This is it guys." Erik said. "This may be the last time we're all together. Does anyone have anything they want to say?"

"There's a chance some of us might die." Zac said.

"It doesn't matter brother." Zoe said. "Mako is our home. So let's fight for it."

"Every moment of our lives has come to this." Raiden said.

"I want to say thank you guys." said Thalie. "For being friends and family."

"I'm the one who eats all the chocolate before my period. Or at least when I had one." Rose said, jokingly.

"I so don't understand the ending of LOST." Diablo said.

"It will be hard seeing possibly fighting my sister, Aquata." Sirena admitted. "Though I'll miss singing."

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." Xhiva said. "Albert Einstein. And I have minor OCD."

"Speed it up." Xandou said.

"I have an addiction to breath mints." Kimi said.

"I'll always be by your side." Evie declared.

"I..." Helen trailed off. "I want to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry I yelled at you, I pushed you. It's because I believe in you. I believe in your spirit and your potential. And every time I talked about walking away, it was because I was scared. It's amazing how we're all here and I get to call you brothers and sisters."
"Helen are you crying?" Rita asked.

"No." She said. "Just a little dusty eyed."

"I'll miss all of you." Esmeralda said. "I'll miss being a mom."

"I'll miss teaching that's for sure." Phoebus said.

Persephone said something and they all stepped forward, holding hands. In synch, as the waves touched their legs, they all dived in onto battle, with Persephone's saying ringing in their ears:

Tonight, destiny is our friend. I can feel it.
Battle For Mako: Part 2

No one's POV

Within the seas, the animals swam away, sensing that there would be bloodshed as the Ares Tribe and the Mako Pod came swimming to each other, every one of them prepared to die in combat. The full moon shone brightly, the two societies surfacing as the cavalry from land also surfaced to face them. Cold stares and glances were exchanged but sorry looks as well.

"It's over mermaids!" Slade yelled. "I have dreamed of nothing else for years!"

"Oi." Rose muttered. "Does he need a hobby."

"Last chance Slade." Jacob said. "Go. Home."

"I am home!" Slade thundered smiling evilly. "Attack!"

Instantly, the mermen charged while Veridia yelled, "Seize the island!" The cavalry also charged each of them fighting to the last.

Cam and Carly arrived on land to attack the mermen on land while Carly just went helped the unit that treated the ones that were wounded as best as she could.

Veridia did her best to find the half blood so she could finally deal with her once and for all when Nerida got in her way.

"Veridia, have you gone mad?" She asked. "I will not tolerate this assault on the House of Moon!"

"Silence you fool!" Veridia snarled punching her in the face. "The Artemis Half and I have unfinished business to attend to. And this time, you will not interfere."

Veridia then got tackled by Thalassa herself, sending her plummeting in the sea floor. Thalie was about to deliver the final blow but she stopped.

I'm not like you Veridia. Thalie said mentally. My team's oath prevents from me from killing a living creature, human or mermaid. But I will do this. Without warning, she punched her in the face. That's for my dad. And she left, to join the others in battle.

Meanwhile, Zac was struggling to get dry and Helen noticed this so she used her powers to dry his tail faster and he got up with Erik and they both ran to the chamber.

Elsewhere, Mimmi fought her way through the mermen and mermaids and turned around, seeing Veridia swim at her. They both surfaced, facing each other.

"After years of gaining purity for all mermaids, the universe delivers you to me as an act of providence." Veridia proclaimed proudly.

"Please Veridia!" Zoe pleaded. "We don't have to fight! You have the power to end the war and stop what you are doing! You can help mermaids bond with mermen!"

"NO!" Veridia yelled. "Mermaids are the true creatures of the sea! I will not rest until all pods are pure of their filth!"

"So be it." Mimmi sighed, drawing her weapon and they both charged into battle.
Rita's POV

On the shores of Mako…

I got dry and I used my powers to fight some mermen when I heard someone clear their throat.

"Hello Rita." Agni said to me.

"Agni." I said. "It's been a long time. 20 years to be accurate."

"You only came up when your daughter and her friends got my attention." He said to me. "And I was anxious to see you. After all, you never forget your first love."

"Speaking of that." I said, now playing my cards and getting our my chain. "How's your wife doing? Visited her in prison of late?"

"Ex-wife!" Agni exclaimed furious and yelling as he charged. Thank the moon Caesar and Jacob taught me self defense.

Evie's POV

In the water…

I fought some mermaids and mermen here and there and even some mermen. I was about to make a strike when I was pulled aside by Persephone.

Evie what are you doing? She asked

What does it look like I'm doing? I snapped back through the underwater link

You can't be out here. She scolded. You don't have enough training.

Neither do Zac or you guys. I reminded her. Besides, you're going to need all the help you can get.

Evie it's too illogical. Persephone said exhasperated. You're gonna get yourself killed!

I can't abandon Zac! I exclaimed.

Are you willing to abandon your life? She asked me.

I stayed silent, wondering about my father and my friends. But this was a battle, a battle for all mermaids and mermen and the world itself. If I was gonna die, so be it. If I have to, yes.

No one's POV

Raiden proved to be quite proficient with his arm blade gauntlets, using them with precision and deadly anticipation. He killed some mermen and mermaids here and there, but none too noticeable. He wasn't like the other girls who hadn't been in war, they just knocked them out. Powers or not, Raiden was so glad to have been forged into a warrior.

On Mako, things were getting heated up. Xhiva, Xandou and Cam were all out kicking butt.
"Whoa it's kind of getting dark." Xhiva muttered while he was running in the woods. "Wait. Let's use this!" He fished out his goggles which had night vision installed, got out his green and black bo staff and started twirling them around like a pro and attacking some of the mermen and Kanhoji. "Green staff of fury!" He yelled out.

Elsewhere, Xandou ran in a yellow blur, zipping past the soldiers, and punching them at supersonic speed. "SPEED IT UP!"

Meanwhile, Diablo had transformed into a full out wolf, his werewolf nature taken over and in control at once. "I LOVE BEING A WOLF!" He yelled out.

Cam had knocked out a few mermen but he managed to kick one in the nuts before delivering an uppercross punch.

While that happened, Carly was busy tending to the wounded. Surprisingly, even though she took the risk of getting killed while going into battle, no one made a move to attack her. She guessed that in a mer war, attacking a doctor was a big no no. She got out one of the potions that Mimmi concocted and rubbed it on mermaid's wound. "Now that's a chemical reaction!"

Erik's POV

Near the merman chamber…

Me and Zac ran side by side to the merman chamber. I stopped him to tell him something. "Zac if you want to back out now, I won't blame you." I said.

"I know." He said running in once the chamber door had already been open. And we went inside, to fight Slade.

Zac's POV

Once we entered the chamber, I signaled Erik to go invisible while I distracted Slade. But when I stepped to the glowing pillars, Slade was there, in still a helmet and leather clothing. He looked like one of those Berserkers from Viking history. Even on legs, he still could scare even a T Rex with the darkness emitting off him. His hand was over the pedestal and electricity was sparking in his fingertips.

"Son of Nerissa." He said not even looking up. "You've come sooner than expected."

I was intimidated by this bastard but I didn't show it. So I kept a stoic face. "I'm not a coward you murderer."

"A little irony in your sentence don't you think?" Slade asked. "You're related to murderers."

"It matters not." I said sharply, drawing out my portable spear. "The time has come to say goodbye Slade." I charged at him but he was 10 times more experienced than I was. But I couldn't give up, not then. I whistled, continuing to distract Slade, even though I landed a good kick on him. But my gut told me that he was just holding back.

I didn't see it, but Erik, who was still invisible charged at him without even making a sound. Somehow, Slade had eyes in the back of his head and grabbed Erik’s spear, electrocuting it and him.
"Foolish boy." Slade snarled. "I taught you everything you know. You hold no surprises for me." He used his own powers to throw Erik across the room.

"What tricks do you have on your own since you have no powers?" Slade asked. I still charged at him but lightning coiled out of his arms and lifted me up and with electrifying pain, threw me to Erik. Slade made some big ball of lightning and threw it to us. I covered Erik to protect him but the lightning surrounded us, trapping us in some cage. I hesitantly picked up a spear and poked it but it ended up shocking me.

Zoe's POV

In the sea…

The fight between me and Veridia was ferocious and I stopped because I had a vision of Zac fighting Slade and I felt pain, like no other. It was like I was being electrocuted from the inside.

Apparently noticing my hesitation, Veridia whipped me back, sending me down.

Come on Zac. I pleaded. Keep fighting.

Esmeralda's POV

On Mako...

I fought my way, taking out some mermen and mermaids. I only had my sword.

"How you doing Esmeralda?" Persephone asked.

"I must confess." I said. "It feels like the first day of combat school."

"And yet you could not find another and bigger sword Esmeralda?" She asked, punching a guy.

"Sword?" I scoffed. "This is but my dagger. Duck." I used Persephone as springboard to side kick a merman.

Jacob's POV

Out in the sea…

I had to admit, I kind of missed the adrenaline rush of a fight. It's a fish guy thing, so don't blame me for feeling the rush of a battle. It was more cooler because I had my friends.

Just like old times isn't it? I asked Phoebus.

Just like old times. He said straining to keep another's sword out of the way.

Thalie's POV

I kept fighting and fighting until I started feeling weak. I looked over at Mako and I knew exactly
what was going on. Slade had started the chamber and it would be a matter of time. So I whistled three times, that was the signal in case the chamber got started. The other Omegas following me, we swam to the moon pool but someone stopped us. I looked to the light and it was my aunt Nerida. My aunt agreed with me in many things but peace with mermen? Definitely no.

How could you do this Thalassa? She asked.

Leave this to me. I told the others. I'm sorry Aunt Nerida, I never meant to fall in love.

Love? My aunt scoffed. Mermaids are the sea! You turned your back on your sisters!

No. I said firmly. It is you who did that when you turned your back on your kind.

You were given a life of protection. She said stubbornly.

And you deny one of families and children. I said, blinking out tears, though I couldn't tell because of the seawater. Yes Aunt Nerida, we are mermaids and mermen. But we are men and women too.

I swam past her, the others following me, but that talk with my beloved aunt, would be the one I regretted the most.

Erik's POV

We tried getting out, well I tried getting out since Zac was pretty much useless. I fell back after the 5th time trying to get out. Slade had already put the stone inside the circle and the pool water was rising slowly

"Not working?" Zac whispered.

"No." I said back.

"Slade why are you cutting your arm?" Zac asked. "And why are you letting it pour in the center?"

"What does blood have to do with cleansing mermaids of their magic?" I asked confused.

"You don't seem to get it, Son of King Caesar." Slade said darkly. "I'm not cleansing magic. I'm cleansing the mermaids who don't have a drop of mermen blood in them."

The moonstone started to glow, very very brightly which meant that the chamber was being started up. Not a good thing.


Rose's POV

In the moon pool...

We were all panicking and trying to stay on the ledge as the moon pool, as the water was being flushed down, like a toilet flushing.

"What are we gonna do?" Kimi asked.

"We have to keep fighting." Raiden said out loud, gripping on the ledge.

"How?" Helen asked.
"Raiden's right." I said hopefully. "We have to keep fighting."

But suddenly, the moon overhead lost its silvery mystical glow and became a bright blood red. And I could feel myself getting angry at the mermaids but none of us could lose focus at the time.

Sirena's POV

In Mako…

During the lunar eclipse, I felt anger and hate course through my body, I had to use my chain to fight. I could feel the air getting tense as the battle continued. Suddenly this mermaid shone her moon ring and used it to blast me back, sending me hitting a rock wall.

The last thing I ever saw before darkness pulled me in, was the full moon shining red like blood.

Zac's POV

In the merman chamber…

We watched in horror as the red moonstone glowed and Slade let his blood drip in the trident circle.

"Why would you want to kill mermaids and even mermen?" Erik asked. "You realize that 20% of the tribe are land people who became mermen right?"

Slade scoffed. "So be it. The time has come for a cleansing. Then we will clear the way for the strong and burn the weak blooded. Together we can change the world...as a family."

He finished adding the last drops of blood in the circle. I could only imagine what must have been happening to the others.

Raiden's POV

In the moon pool…

Thalie continued to shine her moon ring in the sky to try to change the moon but it seemed it was absorbing her power. It was a good thing all of us were dry because it would have been embarrassing if all of us just flopped to the ground in tails. Then Thalie's moon ring was out of power and out of the blue, the girls started crying out and seizing in pain.

"It feels like I'm being burned from the inside." Helen said weakly. "And that's saying something"

Ondina's POV

All around me, mermaids and even some mermen started screaming and falling down in pain, and blotches of red started appearing on their skins.

"Mom!" I screamed running towards her. My mother wasn't doing so well.

"Ondina.." She breathed out. "Get your friends. We'll take care of it."
"No I'm not leaving you!" I exclaimed, holding onto her.

Raiden's POV
In the moon pool…

"Come on guys!" I said to the mermaids withering in pain. "We can't give up!"

"How?" Kimi asked.

"The chamber is drawing the life from us." Thalie said. "Raiden, I love you.

On the beach…

Rita's POV
I fell to the ground in pain and Agni stopped fighting me.

"What's happening?" He asked.

"The chamber is drawing the magic from the moon pool and from us." I said.

"What?" He asked shocked. "This wasn't supposed to happen!"

I raised my eyebrow at him. "You really thought this wouldn't happen? That he would allow you to take prisoners? You were a loyal dolphin back then and you're one now."

It took Agni a few seconds before he yelled out, "I'm pulling out of this!" And ran to the sea.

"COWARD!"

Evie's POV
I withered in pain. The mermaid who was fighting me died because of this unknown force that was causing some of the mermaids and mermen pain. The pain was unlike anything I ever felt, like I was fighting the urge to vomit lava. I tried to move, but I blacked out, but not before I felt a searing pain in my leg.

Zac's POV
In the chamber…

In the center of the red illuminated chamber. Slade stepped into the tower of water and began absorbing the energy into himself. How much power did that guy want? Even the pillars were glowing red. Every time I tried to get out or creep my hand out, the cage would shock me. Slade's lightning, it wasn't like Raiden's. My cousin's lightning compared to Slade, was controlled, steady and had emotion in it. But Slade's was just violent and brutal.

Erik tried to use his powers to open the cage but it was no use. He groaned. "My powers, it's not
"Well then what do we do?" I asked.

Erik stood still for a minute before saying darkly, "I need your power." He turned to me, stretched his hand, and instantly, my throat started closing up and I could barely breathe. I felt like my lungs were gonna explode.

"Erik." I choked out, holding my throat. "What..what are you doing?"

"Killing you." He said. "I know your powers are in there somewhere, man up and reach to them."

"I...can't." I wheezed.

"You're not a little kid anymore." He said. "Grow up."

Inside me, something snapped. A massive tug in my gut erupted in me and I screamed, with my eyes glowing blue and sending out a massive wave of energy that sent us flying around and broke the electric cage.

I got up and reached for the stone, and it flew to me, after a little tug of war with Slade, and the tower of water began descending.

"What are you doing you fool?" He asked.

"Reversing the spell." I said. "Together we're stronger than you are."

"Stop!" He thundered trying to use his powers to get it back. Slade started to look like he was burning slowly. The tug of war that time, was an intense one. Every fiber of me was concentrated as a golden aura surrounded me, but I was pretty sure I was getting a nosebleed. Just in the nick of time, Erik grabbed onto my hand and he started concentrating really really hard. Slade screamed while still fighting. His skin was melting off into a bloody mess and he was turning into sand. "Stop fighting it. We share the same blood. We're the same." With both of us giving one last push, Slade erupted into a cloud of hellfire and disintegrated, and we were sent back by a wave of force. And the blood moon was the last thing I saw, before I took my last breath.

Raiden's POV

In the moon pool...

The moon pool water was coming back, but the blood moon was out and the girls were weakened. "Guys we have to fight." Helen said.

"How?" Rose asked. "We're weak."

"No that's what Slade wants you to think." I said, getting in the pool. "We're not weak. We're one people. We're all connected. Even to our elements."

"Raiden what's happening to you?" Kimi asked.

"What?" I asked before looking at my hands and my body. My body was surrounded by this purple aura, power rushing in my veins and the crackling feeling of lightning popping in me. I could feel my eyes change from blue to a glowing bright purple. I didn't see it but streaks of my hair changed to gold amongst my brown hair. I was back. "Let's do this, us 5 Omegas, as one energy." I raised my
arms and a stream of lightning burst out, raising to the sky. It took a second before Thalie joined in, creating a jet of water that joined my lightning surprisingly well. Helen joined in, creating a tower of fire that joined us, Rose joined creating a tower of air and last Kimi joined creating an icy jet. All of our elements combined, creating a tower of pure white light that shot up to the moon and changed it from red to it's natural silver glow. We didn't see it but a wave of white light spread out all over Mako and the seas near it.

All of us were breathing heavily until Helen broke the silence. "Nice work guys."

Zoe's POV

I didn't really pay attention to the changing moon and the effects, because I was catching my breath. I had just defeated the most feared mermaid of all time. But I held my posture, strong for all the mermaids.

"What…" Veridia asked weakly. "What did you do to me?"

"Let's just say that you can't hurt or threaten anyone else ever again." I said. "Oh by the way, nice legs."

And at that moment, I remembered my brother. "Zac!"

Erik's POV

In the merman chamber…

I got up, shaking and I had a bit of a nosebleed. Some parts of my shirt was singed because of the lightning. I looked around the chamber, that was now back to normal with it's blue glow. I put my hands on my chest to see if I was really alive. I looked around and Slade was just a pile of ashes.

"Zac…" I breathed out. "We did it!" I laughed. "I can't believe it, we beat him!" No response was heard. "Zac?" I looked over and I saw Zac lying perfectly still like was sleeping. But his chest wasn't rising. "No." I ran over and shook Zac. "No Zac!" But it was no use, my cousin...was dead.

"Zac?!" Thalie screamed stumbling over, Raiden and Zoe following suit. "No, Zac you are not doing this to me."

"Zac get up!" Raiden yelled shaking him and blinking out tears. "Please get up!"

"Don't you get it?" I breathed. "He's not getting up."

"Zac!" Jacob yelled out with Persephone following him. "No, not again! Not again."

"Don't give up Zac." Mimmi said shaking him. It wasn't until then that my mother noticed the stone that Zac was clutching. She picked it up and placed it on his heart with all of us placing our hands on it.

"Zac please." Thalie sobbed. "Don't leave me. Come back."

"Come on Zac." I breathed out. The stone glowed brightly and just when it seemed like he was gone for good, he opened his eyes to show that his irises were glowing a royal blue before fading back to light brown, and took a big breath.
"Whoa." He said.

"Zac!" Thalie screamed hugging him.

"And I call Raiden a bonehead!" I exclaimed.

We all looked at the stone which was dust, just like the past. He looked at all of us and said, "Well this isn't the kind of family reunion I expected."

We all laughed at his weak attempt to make a joke while Uncle Jay hugged his own son tightly. Like he would never let him go. "I thought you were a goner, son."

Zac smiled and then his face became horrified as he got up and looked around the room. "Evie. Where's Evie?!"

Zac's POV

I ran outside, or what you might have called the limping version of running. When we had defeated Slade, I had kind of twisted my ankle. So I ran to the beach, trying to find my girlfriend.

"Evie!" I yelled out. "Evie! Evangeline!" Near the end, I saw a girl in blue clothes lying facedown, perfectly still. "No." Fearing the worst, I ran towards my girlfriend and started shaking her. I used the last bit of strength I had to, to get her wet and in her tail. Still no response.

"No." I breathed out. My heart felt like it was being cut into a thousand pieces. The world around me stood still, with the hanging reminder that I had dragged Evie into this. "I did this. I killed my girlfriend." I sobbed uncontrollably onto her for what seemed like forever. "Oh Evie. I'm so sorry."

"Hey." A merman said out of the water. "I can help her." He used his powers with intense strength to drag her out of the water and I picked her up and pressed my head on her chest. Relief poured in my heart as I heard her heartbeat. Tired but beating away. "She's alive? SHE'S ALIVE!" I screamed in pure happiness. The merman looked at me contently as I looked into him through my teary eyes. "Thank you...for saving my love."

But a blond merman came up, looked at her, and said kind of worried,

"Well, you know, most of her."
Evie's POV

I had no idea how much time had passed. It seemed like centuries before I finally opened my eyes. I groaned getting up which somehow woke my father, who was sleeping on the chair next to my bed.

"Evie." He said happily, but he hugged me so tight I felt pain spike up. "My beautiful girl."

"Dad." I said grunting with pain. "I'm happy to see you too. Now can I please have my oxygen back?"

"Sorry." He said quickly, letting go.

"I'm in my house." I said, getting a good look. "I'm in my room. What happened?"

"Evie." My dad said, looking at me. "Your friends told us about your diving trip and you got attacked by a shark. Your diving gear got stuck and some random shark attacked you. Your boyfriend managed to get you out but...you didn't come out in one piece."

"What?" I croaked, shifting in my bed. Something felt off when I moved my legs so I pulled off the covers and flung my hand to my mouth as I gasped in horror.

"It's ok Evangeline." My dad said softly, squeezing my hand. "It's ok. Take your time."

I sat in my bed perfectly still before lowering my feet on the ground. My left foot was ok but my right foot....was a metal prosthetic.

I could barely breathe as I registered the information. I had lost a foot in the battle. Wait how long was I out?

As if he could read my mind, Dad said to me, "You were out for three days."

Zoe's POV

In Rita's house...

Zac had picked his up, after insisting that she was to be in a wheelchair until she was ready to start walking with her new foot. He had spent days and nights watching him. I heard Evie's dad almost had to drag Zac out of the room just to get him to eat something. Zac to this day blames himself for what happened to Evie.

As soon as Zac rolled Evie in, I screamed happily and hugged both of them. "Evie I'm so glad you're ok!"

"It's good to see you Zoe!" She said. "I have a lot to catch up on. Speaking of which, what happened to Veridia?"

I smiled, launching into the story.
Flashback…

I was close to killing her, but I held back. I didn't want to end up like her, corrupted, twisted and dark.

No. I said. I'm not gonna end it this way.

Little girl, even with all the power in the world, you are still weak. Veridia spat trying to come at me but I caught her and used my moon ring to imobilize her. I placed my hands on her heart and forehead and closed my eyes. My mind briefly flashed back to what my uncle said before I raised my head at the full moon overhead and my eyes started to glow a bright royal blue. Our energies were at battle with each other, both battling for dominance before I became enveloped in this silver aura and sent forward a big burst of energy that pushed the magic out of her. We staggered for a bit before I held my ground strong and firm.

I didn't really pay attention to the changing moon and the effects, because I was catching my breath. I had just defeated the most feared mermaid of all time. But I held my posture, strong for all the mermaids.

"What…" Veridia asked weakly, once I surfaced with her so she could breathe. "What did you do to me?"

"Let's just say that you can't hurt or threaten anyone else ever again." I said. "Oh by the way, nice legs."

I dragged her to the beach, she was surprisingly light. And let me tell you, she kept weakly complaining. Key word, weakly.

"You did it!" Rose said, weakly, coming over to get dry. "I don't know what happened but I'm pretty sure you were…" She imitated explosion noises and cool sounds that sounded something out of a movie. "And I bet Veridia was all." She made choking noises and pretended to faint.

Kimi who was dry already thanks to Helen who was also dry walked over to the defeated ex mermaid. "So...did you.. You know...finish the job?"

"I'm still here you know." Veridia snapped cruelly.

Kimi stepped back a little afraid.

"I learned another way to defeat her without killing her." I said. "I took her magic away."

The rest looked at me stunned. "Wow." Helen remarked. "Who taught you that?"

I shrugged. "My dead uncle."

"Your family is really crazy." Helen said laughing.

And at that moment, I remembered my brother. "Zac!"

End of flashback…

"And that's how I defeated Veridia." I said.

"Wow." Evie said in amazement.

"I gotta say you're doing much better than." I said before stopping to blink out a few tears. "Sirena."
"Wait Sirena?" Evie asked.

I looked at my brother, who was using his hand motions to beg me not to tell her. "You didn't tell her?"

"Tell me what?" Evie asked.

"Sirena is.." I trailed off. "It's better if you just come and see for yourself."

So we led her to Thalie's room, slowly opened the door, and rolled Evie in. On the bed, dressed in a white gown, lying as if asleep, was Sirena.

"Sirena?" Evie asked horrified.

"She's not dead." Zac said quickly. "She's...comatose."

"She's in a coma?" Evie asked, disbelieving it.

"It was Ondina who found her." Zac said.

Flashback…

I rushed over to help Zac help Evie when I heard Ondina scream, "GUYS!" She ran to the beach, carrying an unconscious Sirena. "It's Sirena. She's not waking up."

End of Flashback…

"While you were out." I said. "My father agreed to take her back to Ko Ban where she will be safe...until she wakes up. Dad will be back in a month but he let all of us say goodbye to her. You should have seen David. He was weeping like a newborn manatee. But he's kind of over it."

"Wait." Evie said. "Where's Rita?"

"Rita and Thalie are in the grotto, dealing with their grief." Zac said. "They too lost someone."

I blew away some hair in my face, bringing my hand up to my face. "How are we gonna explain Aquata to Sirena?"

"How does Sirena's sister fit in this?" Evie asked.

"Because Aquata's dead." Zac said.

Thalie's POV

In the grotto

Me and mom were crying but staying strong. We had lost someone in the battle, Aunt Nerida. My awesome aunt who risked everything for me and Mom.

"It's ok Mom." I said, bringing in the weeping mermaid in my arms. Mom must have been going through intense pain, losing a sister. "It's ok. Everything's gonna be ok."

No one's POV
At Mako Island….

On the island and sea, mermaids and mermen were helping each other, instead of fighting. People were healing, fixing things, and talking with each other. It had been 3 days since the battle ended and during one of those days, there had been a huge debate on the mermaids and mermen.

What had happened 2 days ago?

Flashback…

The mermaids and mermen did stop the fighting, but they didn't stop yelling at each other. In the sea there was a huge argument. The five Omegas stood at the beach each of them standing side by side.

"Hey!" Raiden yelled.

"I got this." Rose said. "Oh and you might want to cover your ears." They did so and Rose channeled her wind in her voice and screamed at an inhuman level, "SHUT UP!" The sonic scream carried for miles and she almost got a few merpeople deaf. "Everybody listen up! You all need to stop fighting! I mean come on, we're the same! We're friends here!"

"Friends?" A mermaid asked. "As if! These savages have hunted us!"

"Yeah well these bitches have bullied us!" A merman shouted. "And for what? Because we have dicks and you don't?" This again started an uproar among the merpeople. Helen stepping forward, fired a blast of fire into the sea.

"SHUT UP YOU MORONS!" Helen yelled. "Or the next shot goes on someone's arm!" Everyone got quiet. "Look, we all have our differences and we all have our quarrels. But we have our similarities and compromises! We all have one home; The sea! You've shared it before, you can do it again."

"With them?" A mermaid and merman shouted together.

"Here's a little newsflash!" Kimi yelled. "You are the other sides of the sand dollar, but you're still a sand dollar. You both act brave but cutting yourselves from each other was cowardly! Not to mention, illogical! Yes, mermen have committed horrible crimes, but mermaids all have as well. Them, us. Look at yourselves. They are us, we are them. What difference do you see other than gender?"

"Let me tell you guys something." Raiden said stepping forward. "Merman to you all. I know what it's like to feel like you want to prove yourself. We all had almost the same leader. We all know what it's like to try to please someone who is never gonna give two fishcrap about you. I fought my battles, completed our missions. I used every chick in this place twice for my goals. And you know what? None of that made me a man. What made me a merman was giving up what I raised in and making friends with the biggest collection of dweebs and twerps you would ever see. Them and these girls made us Blade Boys men. If it made us men, it can make you mermen and mermaids men and women."

"So…" A mermaid trailed off. "They're not going to hurt us?"

"No!" Thalie said. "And you're not going to hurt them. We're all just people, sometimes people who should have known better. I almost had Veridia's blood on my hands because I was blinded by my own rage and pain. The same thing is happening to all of you! But now, after 1,000 years, it has to stop! For good. Tell me, do you all really hate each other, or do you all just want a home?"
They all stayed silent before they all dropped their weapons and shook their hands, hesitating but it seemed to work until Veridia shouted, from her chains, "Mako Pod. Now!"

"No Veridia!" A mermaid shouted, getting everyone's look of surprise. "The omegas are right." She moved among the mermen. "Enough!"

"You're a fool then." Veridia snarled. The other mermaids took her example and started flinging themselves with mermen."What are you doing?!"

"Let it go Veridia." Kimi said.

"It's time to put the past behind us." Helen agreed.

"I'll never let it go!" Veridia shouted.

Veridia was then sent to The Boiling Bay Prison and the funerals were held. 54 mermen and 25 mermaids had died in the battle, including Aquata, her best friend Maya, and the Pod Leader, Nerida, Rita's own sister. It was difficult saying goodbye but they had to move on and start fresh.

End of flashback...


Zac's POV…

At the docks…

Dad had boosters for his foster care. And by boosters, I mean the mermen who work in the companies that also sponsor the safety of merchildren. Now we were all the docks watching him leave with Sirena. He offered to watch over her until she woke up. She was on a stretcher, the roll on kind, about to board a helicopter. Dad had gotten the helicopter from one of his boosters, he was borrowing it actually.

All of us were there, saying goodbye to Sirena. Even David. He was leaning over Sirena. At least she was still alive...ish. The rest of us said our goodbyes.

"David." I said to him. "It's time to let her go."

"You're right." He nodded, as we watched some men put her up. "I'm gonna miss her though."

Jacob jumped off the copter and looked at us. My cousins, sisters and I ran to him and all gave him a group hug.

"I heard what you all did." He said. "I am the proudest father in the world. Caesar and Nerissa would be proud of you four too." We all laughed at this, blinking tears.

"You'll come back right?" Zoe asked.

"Of course." He said. "Only after a week."

"Goodbye Sirena." I said, watching the helicopter leave, and Dad smiling at us from the cockpit.

"Avveredci." Erik and Raiden said in unison.

Thalie's POV

In the cafe…

Sirena was gone, my aunt was gone. Life wasn't going to be the same without them. We had defeated Slade and Veridia, but the price was too high. My guilt ate away in me because I never got to apologize to my aunt after all she had done for me. I had asked for some space to grieve and the others completely understood. My thoughts were then interrupted by David sliding a black and white milkshake on my table.

"I didn't order that." I said confused.

"It's on the house." He said sincerely. "I heard about your aunt. I'm sorry."

"Thanks." I said.

And just when he left, he whispered in my ear, "I know what you are."

I turned around quickly. I hadn't David of people to say the sentence we all feared. "What are you talking about?"

"It's ok." David said to me. "You and the other's secret is completely safe with me. I'll be on the lookout for anyone wet."

"H-how?" I asked.

"Before she left, Sirena left me this." David said to me, putting down a blue USB. "I'll get you a computer."

While I waited, I slurped my shake, slightly freaking out because David had apparently known. A sleek grey laptop and David left, smiling knowingly.

I opened the computer and plugged in the USB. I put on my headphones and listened to Sirena's last message. It showed Sirena being frustrated in handling a video camera. But the date on it showed the day before we went to battle.

Is this on? Hang on, I think I got the hang of this stupid contraption. Hello David. I hope you're well. And I hope you're safe. There's something I need to come clean about, but it's better this way. I...have been lying to you. And as your girlfriend, I had no right. A relationship is about inclusion, it's about leaning on your partner when things get complicated. I have failed to do that for you. And now I'm gonna tell you why. I'm a mermaid David. And my life is very risky and dangerous. There are others, and the reason why I have kept this secret is because I had to protect the others...because they are my clan. I can't keep lying to you, because I love you. It's why I added a list of the other merpeople in this video and even some photos and vlogs of them for proof. But I am asking you to understand that you cannot tell anyone about this, even your parents. It's also why I've waited to show you this message until I felt you were ready. I love you David, with all my heart and now you are open to a whole new world. Goodbye David Sullivan. I sure hope it's not forever.

I closed the computer, with tears in my eyes. Yep, Sirena was gone but not forgotten.


Tiraken's POV

We were packing things in our house where Carlos hosted. Speaking of Carlos, he died in the battle.
It was a pretty bad time getting over his death, but we were all used to it, losing someone close.

Suddenly, our phones beeped and Xhiva picked them up and used his technopathic powers to make a holographic screen. The man speaking, was none other than our father.

"Hello boys." He said kindly. "I hope you're safe and alive. I am long gone and in hiding. I couldn't meet with you face to face, so I hope this is ok. I know I stepped in it when I made that deal with Slade but I had no idea he was gonna use the chamber like that. But I will still operate in the Kanhoji. But not in the Gold Coast anymore. I may not show it, and I may be hard, but I have never been more proud to call you two my sons. Yes, I will admit it, I missed you. But I also miss your sister. Speaking of whom, I have no idea where she is. Believe me, I searched for her but she's covered her tracks. My name is Agni Tiraken, and I hereby release all the prisoners of Kuroda Industries, every last one, I also have added bank accounts to your files and I worked with the social workers to let you keep this house. You still need to finish your education, and the lives you have been desperately craving. I have to go now, but know this boys, thieves or mermen, you two are my sons."

The video ended and there was a pause before we, as brothers cried into each others arms in pure happiness. We finally got the lives we wanted so badly. No more following father, but we were part of the family again.


No one's POV

At Mako…

Both societies were gathered at the sea, awaiting the big announcement.

In the woods, The Consorzios and Khathas were talking, preparing to go out. Erik kept looking out in the distance with a thoughtful look on his face.

"Hey Erik what's up?" Zoe asked.

"I can't believe that a year ago my purpose in life was being a lapdolphin." He said. "And now.."

"And now we're friends." Zoe said.

"Yeah." He said.

"I can't believe a year ago I was a land guy." Zac said. "The world's so different now."

"And it's gonna be even more different." Raiden said. "It's just like I said, "Someday things are gonna change. We'll be rich, live in a palace, and never have any problems at all."

We all laughed at this while hugging and Persephone said, "It's time."

We all walked out onto the beach and everyone started cheering for them. Evie then joined them too.

"Please." Persephone said. "The real heroes are these people." The Khathas and Consorzios walked out, and there was a silence before a merman cheered and everyone else followed. "Today, here, this feud is finally over! I will help all of you restore the honor of mermaids and mermen, and we all will. The road ahead of us is challenging. 1,000 years of fighting has left the world scarred and divided. But with the help of one another, we can get it on the right path and begin a new era of love and peace. It's why this island, Mako will not be one home. It will be one of 5, using the other
uninhabited islands near Mako. It's also why I am dedicating this new nation as the Bauman-Con sorzio Clan! But there is one girl who rose to the challenge, who sacrificed a limb and who defied all laws. And that girl is Evangeline McLaren." Said girl walked up and Persephone slipped on a moon ring and kneeled down.

"All hail Queen Persephone Bauman-Con sorzio!" A crown was slipped on and everyone cheered wildly.


Raiden's POV

At the cafe…

I sat at the cafe with my cousins, brother, Cam and Carly, just chatting away.

"So I heard you guys saved the world last night." Carly said to us.

"Oh I wouldn't go that far." Zac said.

"But yeah." Evie said proudly. "We kind of did."

"Hey Raiden." Erik said. "How are you feeling now that you've got your natural gifts back?"

"Back and better than ever." I said proudly. "And for the record, I don't got my lightning back, I got myself back."

"That's my little brother." He said proudly, ruffling my hair, but I swatted it away.

"Not the hair!" I said. "I need the hair!"

"Ugh enough already." Cam said sarcastically, that got us laughing. "Where's a menu around when you need one?" Zac concentrated and a menu came flying into Cam's hand. "You've got your magic back."

"Good as new."


Thalie's POV

In the secret Sanctum…

Us girls were busy cleaning up the lair. It looked like crime in the city would quiet down for a while now. And trust me, we needed it.

We heard the door opening and I ran to it to see who it was. It was Xhiva, Xandou, Diablo and Raiden.

"Xhiva?" I asked. "What are you doing? You promised you wouldn't tell anyone."

"I know." He said. "Look Thals, after all that's happened, we want to use our skills not for stealing but for something better."

"We want to be like you." Diablo said.
"What are you saying?" I asked.

"We want to join the Sirens Creed." Raiden said. I couldn't even control the giant smile on my face.

Erik's POV

In his room...

I packed all of my things in the cardboard boxes. I guess that my room would be a guest room. God I was gonna miss that place. It was the one place where I felt like I had a family.

"How come they got a visit from Dad and I didn't?" I asked quietly.

"Because I saved the best for last." I heard a deep Italian accent said.

I turned around and I saw a man who looked exactly like me across the room, smiling at me. "Ciao figlio." (Hello son.)

I ran into his arms. Well at least I tried to. I ended up going through him.

"Dad!" I yelled exasperated and blinking out tears.

"Questo è il lato negativo di essere un fantasma." (That's the downside of being a ghost.) He said. "Sei davvero mancherà questo posto eh?" (You're really gonna miss this place huh?)

I looked at him wide eyed. "Come?" (How?)

He only chuckled. "Sono tuo padre Erik. Io tendo a sapere queste cose. Ma lasciate che vi dia un consiglio. Essere un leader, essere un uomo. Ci vuole una cosa. Interiora." (I'm your father Erik. I tend to know these things. But let me give you some advice. Being a leader, being a man. It takes one thing. Guts.)

"Papà, per dire la verità, sono un po’ terrorizzato." (Dad, to tell you the truth, I'm a bit terrified.) I said.

"Per dire anche la verità, ognuno dei vostri antenati era nervoso troppo." (To also tell you the truth, every one of your forefathers was nervous too.) He said. "Erik, non ti preoccupare. Se ho avuto il coraggio di uscire dalla mia casa per 5 anni, si può fare questo. Ti amo tanto. Tu e Raiden." (Erik, don't you worry. If I had the guts to get out of my home for 5 years, you can do this. I love you, so much. You and Raiden.)

I cried even more, my father placing a ghostly hand on my shoulder. "Io sono il padre orgoglioso nel mondo. Addio figlio." (I am the proudest father in the world. Goodbye son.)

"Avveredci." (Goodbye.) I said, sadly, wiping my tears. "E graci.

Esmeralda's POV

In the moon pool...

"So Jacob's gone?" I asked.

"Temporarily." said Persephone.
"Will Raiden be visiting you?" Rita asked. "I mean he still needs to attend junior and senior year."

"I couldn't agree more," said Persephone. "My son needs a normal life, he needs to have freedom and fun. So he can visit me whenever school does not interfere."

"Well at least we finally defeated the people we have been fighting for over 25 years." Phoebus said optimistically.

"Hello." A mystical airy voice sounded. They looked in the direction of the voice and it was Sybil.

"Sybil?" I asked. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to thank you and congratulate you." She said. "The mermaid council is broken, the people are getting along and spreading out to the other islands. The Order has fought well together once again. Savor your victory for now. For soon you will have further business to discuss. The kind that involves a familiar face from your past."

"Will Nerissa return?" Persephone asked. "Nerissa, my sister?"

"I am aware of who she is," Sybil said. "And I'm not talking about her. I'm talking about someone else. Someone whose name you don't even mention much."

"You don't mean…" Phoebus said fearfully watching Sybil dive into the sea, swimming far away from Australia.

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**Ondina's POV**

In the cafe…

I was helping the party being set up. Erik had rented out the cafe to throw a private party, just for all of us. Well technically everyone who knew about us.

I heard a sharp cry of pain in the corner and I saw Erik clutching his ribs in pain. He did sustain injuries but there was still pain from what I was told.

"Precisa de alguma ajuda?" I asked in Portuguese. (Need some help?)

"Ondina." He said happily as I took his box of confetti and wrappings. "Você está vindo para a festa?" (You're coming to the party?)

"Bem, eu preciso o alívio do estresse." (Well I need the stress relief.) I said. "E não faz mal quando seu namorado sobrevive." (And it doesn't hurt when your boyfriend survives.)

"Então isso significa que você não me odeia?" (So that means you do not hate me?) Erik asked me.

I brushed his tanned cheek as he smiled his handsome smile. "Eu acho que isso significa ... Eu também te amo." (I think it means...I love you too.) He was about to kiss me when I pushed him back a bit. "Mas nunca ser um pau deitado novamente." (But don't ever be a lying dick again.)

We laughed at this and we became enveloped in a passionate kiss. Yep, I was officially un-single.

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That night was proving to be an effective one. A night full of festivities in the cafe. Music was...
playing on the speakers, food was being eaten and the dancefloor was alive with merpeople. There was one incident of a water spillage but it was taken care of. Everyone was in pairs dancing together. Diablo, Zac, and Thalie showed off their dancing skills on the floor and they got a standing O. Even David, Carly and Cam came to the party. Evie was doing pretty well with her new metal leg. Speaking of which, Diablo gave her a nickname of her own. 'MetalLeg.'

"This is an amazing party Erik." Cam said in a mouthful of goodies. "But what are you celebrating exactly?"

"Well it's kind of an ending actually." He said sadly. "But it deserves to go out with a bang."

"Wait what ended?" Evie asked confused.

Erik sighed. It was time to tell them the truth. "My time on land. I'm leaving."

"WHAT?!" The people in front of them shouted and the music stopped on cue.

"Alright alright." Erik said stopping all the commotion. "Time you all knew. You know how my mom is ruling over the future clan right? Well actually, it's only temporary. I'm supposed to be king but I will have to go a period of classes and training."

"How long?" Zoe asked.

"Uhh.." Erik trailed off.

"How. Long?" Raiden spat out, with tears welling up.

"21 months." Erik said. "But don't worry, I will come visit."

"How?" Zoe choked out. "First Sirena, then Dad and now you? Who else is leaving?" She then stormed out of the cafe.

"I'll go talk to her." Zac offered with Thalie following him but Erik stopped them.

"I'll go talk to her." He said going outside.

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Zoe's POV

In the cool room…

I wanted to stay outside but the sun was too annoying for me so I just transported to the cool room and shut down some of the lights. As a Goth I needed the dark and quiet.

"Zoe?" The door opened and it was Erik.

"Go away." I said.

"Zoe this is tough I know." He said comfortably.

"Tough?" I squaked out. "You're not the one whose mother abandoned her when she was a little girl!"

"But I am the one who lost his father right before his eyes." He countered. "It wasn't just my father that night. I lose my home, I lost my nation, I lost my culture. Now I'm going to get it back not for me, but for everyone around here. Everything comes with a price, Mimmi but I promise you, I'm
gonna try to do my best to see you. You have Raiden, Zac, Thalie and Ondina. Come here." I ran into his arms and he embraced me in his arms, like a big brother hugging his little sister.

"I'm sorry." I said. "I'm just really gonna miss you."

"I'm gonna miss you too cuz." He said soothingly.

Erik's POV

Once I got Zoe out of her funk, Raiden and his friends pulled me aside.

"Yes?" I asked.

"We've talked about this." Xandou said. "And...we understand why."

"You're not gonna yell at me or something?" I asked confused.

"Erik we've gone through shit." Xhiva said. "But now here we are."

"But I can't let you guys to be all by yourselves." I said.

"Yes you are." said Diablo. "We've got each other and you're still one of us."

"Erik." Raiden said. "I know how you feel about leaving us. We feel the same way too. But this is your big chance to do what you were born to do."

We all hugged each other, brothers to brothers.

"I am so proud of you all." I said. "I may be on my way to 19 but in many ways, you four have shown me...what it's like to be a father to 4 amazing sons."

Erik's POV

Flashback…

It was before the battle that Persephone pulled Erik aside to talk to him.

"What did you want to talk to me about?" Erik asked his mother. "Is this about your place as future queen?"

"No." She said. "This is only for a while. Someone who truly has earned it, must take the throne. An idealist with a pure heart, dynamic morality and unquestionable leadership and honor. It has to be you, Prince Erik."

"Unquestionable honor?" Erik asked trying to process this information. "But I've made so many mistakes!"

"I know." She said to her son. "You've struggled, you suffered. And you survived. You restored your own honor. And now you can restore the honor of a clan. It is your destiny to restore peace and order among the mermaids and mermen."

"What if I fail?" Erik asked.
"Then you fail and succeed." She said, smiling knowingly.


No one's POV

The atmosphere in the cafe was still quiet until Diablo got on a table and shouted, "WAY TO QUIET IN HERE! This is a party!" The music and party life got riled up again and the people got partying. Life had just settled down and everything was good.

"David stop moving!" Cam yelled from his table. "I'm trying to capture the moment! I want to do a picture, so we'll remember the good times together."

"That's very thoughtful of you Cam." Evie said happily. "Wait, why did you give me giant ears?"

"Those are your hair loopies!" Cam exclaimed, the music turning off.

"At least you look like you don't have an afro!" Zac said. "My hair is not that curly!"

"I look like a stiff." Erik muttered.

"And why did you draw me farting fire?" Mimmi asked trying not to laugh.

"I thought it would look more exciting that way." Cam tried to reason. "Oh what, you think you can do a better job David?"

"Wait, I'm not that pale anymore." Carly noticed. "I've really tanned up."

"Well I think we all look equally as stupid in real life." Ondina joked causing everyone to laugh at this.

Outside, Raiden walked outside to see his girlfriend leaning against the railing, looking out into the sea wistfully. Somehow Thalie could sense her boyfriend and turned to smile at him while holding his hand and he held hers in a gentleman's fashion. The two mer teens were right back where they started but they had come so far since then. The setting sun illuminated their silence and yet loud love for each other. No words were needed since they practically knew what the other person was thinking. They smiled at each other before pulling each other into a passionate, fiery kiss, the falling sunlight shining on the two lovers.

For never was a story of more beaux

Than of Juliet and her Romeo

THE END!

Chapter End Notes
That's a wrap guys! Be sure to review! Legacy is finally complete! But don't worry. A third book is being made into the process. That's right! A sequel of the sequel! And be on the lookout for a story following this "Restoration" which may take a year or two but I will work on it! Thank you all so much for sticking with this for all this time! Until then, see you! Oh and for ending credits, listen to "Someday" From the Hunchback of Notre Dame

And I want to thank NAWennerholm1973 for all of his (or her) fantastic insightful comments!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!