

# In Between

Von Sinystra

Feet were strange. That was Nami's first thought when she encountered humans. Of course she didn't know what those land-fins were called back then.

But since she wandered those lands and met more humans, she got used to the sight of their bodies. Sometimes, when she tried to fall asleep in her magic water-bubble she created because there was no lake or river nearby, silently doubting if she would ever be successful in her quest, so far from home, she started to feel strange about her own body.

It was not easy to travel when she got stares - in the best - and fearful attacks - in the worst cases. She was so different from them... Nami kept asking herself how the so-called aspect of the moon would react to her.

Would she be afraid, too? Would she be aggressive? Interested? Or maybe even... happy? It would be nice to meet someone who would actually be happy to see her, she thought. It has been a while since she left the sea...

Rolled in like a polliwog in its egg she closed her eyes, breathed the water of the bubble around her and continued searching for sleep.

Her dreams were strange, too, lately. It happens more often that she dreamed of herself without the strong, scaled fin, but with legs and feet. She walked on the ground, not swimming with her own tide, and humans everywhere greeted and smiled at her, wished her luck for her journey and success for her quest.

She woke up and felt ashamed of those dreams... wasn't she the Tidecaller, the savior of her people? Wasn't that what she always wanted to be? What she fought for? How could she silently wish to be someone... something else?

It was a fullmoon-night when she decided that it was time for her to rest again. The gentle rippling noise of water guided her to a little lake with a small waterfall, and thankfully she let her own tide rest and let herself sink into the chilly waves.

Nami was tired, but she couldn't find sleep soon. Playing calmly with some little fishes that swam around her fingers, she waited for her eyes to close and her body to relax, when she heard a noise.

Steps.

Slowly, to avoid making waves, she surfaced a bit. Just the eyes above the surface she looked around, until she saw something at the shore. A human?

Regardless of everything she experienced so far, Nami did not lose her curiosity. With a slight movement of her fins she swam closer to the edge of the pond. Apparently she still was too loud - the person on the land looked up.

"Is there someone?"

Nami hesitated. The moon's light fell through the trees surrounding the little lake and exposed the person as they moved. They seemed to be human... a woman, if Nami recognized it right. The woman - pretty young, maybe still a girl - still looked around, but not in fear - she seemed to be... curious?

Nami looked up to the moon. Then she rose a bit more from the water and swam closer to the shore.

"I am here." she answered the question. The young woman looked at her and her eyes widened in... amazement?

"...are you a goddess?" the young woman asked after she examined Nami for a few seconds. Nami blinked in surprise.

"No, I am from the Marai. I'm a traveler... and the Tidecaller. Who are you?"

Staring at her, the woman came closer to the water, sank down to her knees and looked directly into Nami's crimson eyes that were only two steps away now.

"You are so beautiful!" "Beauti... ful?" No one had ever called her that. "You are calling me beautiful? Aren't you afraid?" The young woman smiled brightly. "Why should I be? Water-gods are usually friendly... though you said you aren't one... could it be that you are..." she looked at Nami's slowly moving tail, "...a vastayan? I've heard of them..."

Nami frowned. "I think, a long time ago... when we had more contact to the humans... we might have been called that... yes." The woman nod slowly and a bit lost in thoughts. "I've never seen a vastayan... they usually tend to avoid humans... I even heard of some fighting us... but my grandmother told me stories..." She remained silent for a few moments.

"You are travelling?" she then asked curiously. "Uhm, yes. I am indeed." Nami hesitated, then proceeded: "I am searching for... the moonstone. I was told that someone called an aspect has it..."

The young woman shrugged. "Never heard of that, I'm sorry. But... if you don't mind, could you tell me a story of... places you travelled?"

Nami was surprised again. "You are... very different from the humans I've met before, girl." she said. The woman snickered. "My parents always said that I am very... curious... and that it would put me into danger one day." She sat down, put her shoes off and held her feet into the water.

"I think the secondary is not the case today, so... please, tell me a story! I was never far away from my village - roaming around in these woods is the only bold thing I ever did."

And so Nami started to narrate.

She told the young woman about her first encounter with humans at the shore where she left the ocean... how afraid they were... so afraid they set their own village on fire

accidentally. And then she told her more...

While talking, she sometimes looked at the woman's feet in the water next to her. As she thought before, they didn't look as strange anymore, but... she caught the woman's gaze when she looked at Nami's fins, and... it was no horrified look at all...

When the sun rose, Nami and the young woman bid farewell and the Tidecaller left the little lake and soon after the forest.

She had to think about a lot of things. After meeting that curious woman who was so different from the other humans she had met before... maybe... there was another way to succeed in her quest and get along with the humans, without changing herself too much. If one young human could accept Nami as she was... others could for sure, too.

Or maybe... the humans and she could meet... in between.

(...)

Thank you for reading! <3