



Jaqweshia Earns Her Crown
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I walked into Aluna's room and said, "What's up, Aluna?"

She grabbed a bag, turned around and said, "Hey, I'm going to go to the market then chill out at the Hillside. You wanna come?"

"I wish I could, but I'm hanging out with Hali."

She looks at me with suspicion and asks, "Really, where are you guys going?"

"I think Hali should tell you."

"Oh no, where is she?" She followed me to Hillside, where Hali was waiting for me.

Aluna looks at both of us with suspicion and asks, "What are you up to?"

Hali looks her in the eye and says, "We're going to stop a freighter delivering a shipment of women to Bermuda."

"You're going after human traffickers?"

"Yes."

"Why are you two still doing stuff like this?! I thought we all agreed we'd stop trying to save the world."

"No, you said we should stop trying to help people, because we have our own problems to deal with! Guess what, everyone has problems to deal with, it's called life! Just, because you want to turn your back on the world doesn't mean that the rest of us have to do the same!"

"Our problems aren't like everyone else's! Abeje will be back, I know she will."

Hali got in Aluna's face and said, "You can't just ignore the world until it messes with something you care about."

"Hali, Abeje will kill me for my cross."

"How do you know that?"

Aluna sighs and says, "I know, because I was willing to kill her to get mine back."

"What do you mean you were willing to kill her?"

"I mean I had a chance to kill her and I almost did. It took everything in me not to."

"You would have killed her?"

“If it wasn’t for God telling me not to... yes I would’ve.”

“Aluna you almost killed someone to get your cross back! When we save people no one dies, and you still won’t help us! You would’ve killed her over your necklace, but you won’t fight for the people who live on the same island as you? The very same island you were born on!”

“Hali!”

She interrupts Aluna, “No! You don’t need to speak. Unfortunately I already know the answer.” Hali takes her bag and walks away. I followed, leaving Aluna to watch us walk off.

We get to the Freighter

We swam to the freighter and using the water I propelled us both onto the ship. We quickly ran to the cockpit. I looked through the window and saw the captain smoking ganja on a couch. I turned to Hali and said, “The captain is smoking ganja.”

She replied, “I can take care of him. You watch the door.” She quietly sneaks in while I wait outside. After a minute or two of the sounds of struggle Hali came out. “Okay come on in.”

I walked in to see the captain knocked out on the floor. I dragged him back to the couch and laid him there. Hali asked, “What are you doing?”

“If someone looks through the window or comes in after us. They’ll assume he just fell asleep. They won’t think anyone knocked him out.”

“Good thinking. Now do your thing.” I walked over to the controls and took a look. I switched off the engine, dropped the anchor, and got on the floor. I broke off the wooden plank protecting the circuit board.

I said, “Hali open the door.”

“What? What if someone sees the door open?”

“Just do it really quick, I need the water outside.”

“Fine.” She cracked open the door. I could feel the water climb up the side of the ship, over the railing, and into the room on the floor. I tossed it all over the circuits, causing mini fireworks to spark.

“Okay now that the freighter won’t move. Let’s get these girls off the ship.” We could see all the shipping containers from right outside the door.

“Jaqweshia you take the containers on the left, I’ll get the ones on the right.” We split up, it’s faster this way. The faster the better, because as soon

as someone walks into the cockpit they'll see what we did. When I get to my first container I'm surprised with a lock. How could we not think they put locks on these containers.

Okay hold up got to think... the captain. I ran back to the cockpit to find that the captain's awake and pissed. He charges after me, I run back to the maze of containers. I yelled, "Hali! Hali!"

She comes up after one of the corners I turned. She whispered, "Will you shut up?! It's bad enough that the containers are locked, but yelling our real names isn't going to help anybody."

"We have to go now. We don't have keys to free these girls and the captain is chasing me."

"Wait, what?" She grabs my arm and runs. "Why didn't you say that?" She leads me to the cockpit. "What are we doing here? We need to go."

"There's no way I'm leaving these girls here. There has to be something here that can help us."

"That rude boy could come back here looking for us. Hali we have to go." She starts going through the captain's things and finds keys.

"These must open those crates! Come on." She runs out the door when I join her outside the cockpit, I found out why Hali had stopped. Gunmen with the captain all pointing machine guns at us.

With both our hands up the captain yells, "Well since you wanted to get in those crates so badly you can!" They start walking keeping us cornered. Suddenly I felt the strength of several strong men. I grabbed Hali as the ocean's arm picked us up and into her waters. We traveled to the other side of the freighter where the crates are.

Hali now free to breathe falls to the wet wooden deck, coughing up salt water. Once she's settled enough to talk she says, "Next time warn me when you're gonna do that?!" She looks up to me and says, "I didn't know you could do that."

I responded, "I didn't think I could. All that water would normally be too heavy for me to lift. I just had this huge charge that gave me the strength to pick up all that water. Look we can try to figure all this out later we need to let some of these girls free. You still have the keys?"

"Yeah, lets go." We both ran to the first crate we saw and used the keys to open the lock. When we opened the doors all we saw was boxes of diapers. Hali asked, "Where are the girls?"

“Wait let me see those keys.” I grabbed the keys turned a lock on the side of the metal crate. A door opened through the boxes leading to at least twenty young girls. They all look hungry, tired, and have bruises on their arms and legs.

“Come now, we’re here to get you out of here.” They’re all dead silent when the door opened, but after hearing Hali’s voice they all rushed to the door.

“Hali we don’t have time to free them all. We have to go with the ones we have now.”

“Fine.” She turns to all the frightened girls and says, “Come this way Jaqweshia will get you to safety.”

I took a deep breath getting closer to the edge of the ship. I whispered, “Dear lord Jesus please help me.” I dived into the water. I made the water come up to the freighter’s edge. I felt each little girl slide down the slide all the way back to the shore.

I felt 20 girls slide down the water slide. There’s a problem I only felt 20 girls get to shore. What’s Hali waiting for? I let the water fall back to the sea. I swim back to the surface to see what’s happening.

I climbed up the ship with some help from the ocean. Hali’s being taken by the captain’s men. They have machine guns, Hali can’t get out. She sees me and shakes her head. I shimmy to an area with no gunmen.

I travel through the maze of crates to find Hali being interrogated by the captain. I turned with my back to the red crate that’s keeping me hidden and took a deep breath.

Hali’s point of view

Jaqweshia jumped overboard, and within minutes I saw a slide made of water. It just appeared on the side of the ship, it led all the way back to the beach. I stepped on it to make sure it was safe and surprisingly it was. I let all the other girls go in front of me.

Soon men bearing machetes came. I yelled, “Keep going, I’ll distract them.” I ran through the little girls. The men all came at me, one by one I knocked them out. They swung their machetes at me.

Trying my best to dodge them all, one man cut my lower thigh. I screamed out of pain then kicked him in his stomach. I uppercut him in his face

while he was bent down. Took his machete and cut both his back ankles. He roared as the last girl got off the ship.

I was soon to join them when more men came with guns. With the machete in my right hand and 4 of their men knocked out. One man yelling out of pain, they all could guess what happened. They aim their guns for my heart. Jah is this it?

Will the ocean give Jaqweshia my blown up body? The men surround me and see the water slide keeping me far from it. I think I'm about to die, I wish I had told Aluna one last rasclat thing before this happens. Jaqweshia's head is barely visible. I know that look in her eyes she wants to try and save me.

I shook my head no, I don't want her to be in my situation. Even with both of our powers we're not bulletproof. The captain walks up to me with his glock still aimed for my heart. He lands it on my chest asking, "Tell me little girl, who the hell are you? You took down four of my men and left the fifth in agonizing pain.

With nothing to show for it, but a cut on your leg."

With a moment of silence, I said, "What does it matter to you? You're going to kill me anyway."

He laughed and looked back at his men then back at me. He hit me across the face with his handgun and said, "Listen here little girl you answer the questions I ask you! Now who the hell are you? How'd you find out about this shipment?" I got up from the ground and spit in his face.

What was left of his smile instantly disappears, he wipes the spit off his face, and pulls at his glock ready to shoot. One of his men yells, "Sir tsunami!" I looked behind him to find it wasn't a wave, but what looked like a growing lake in the sky. It's right above the freighter.

I smiled and said, "That's not a tsunami, that's Jaqweshia."

Jaqweshia's point of view

I know what I have to do. I looked at Hali again and ran back through the craters to the edge of the boat. I dived head first to seek help from the ocean. I swam to Hali's side of the ship, and heard that same voice again. "Jah has given you access."

I search for someone, anyone but I still don't see anybody. I took a deep breath and took all the water around me. I felt the currents and the moon's



control over the waters. I took its place for a second, I lifted a lake's worth of water and hovered it over the ship. The sea took me, it's as if I was dancing, and I rose up from the water.

I picked up Hali and sent her to a white sand coast. I turn back to the captain with his glock pointed at me. I moved my fingers to make handguns and started shooting them with my own bullets. Mine may be made of water, but they'll hurt like metal. It was as if I was dancing to dancehall music. I moved up, down, left to right. Anywhere I could go to dodge their bullets.

Some of them started running through the maze of craters. I sank in the lake I made in the sky. It's like I couldn't fall out, but I could stick my hands out. I followed them looking over the maze so I could see everything. One by one I shot them all, just before I returned back to the ocean. I picked up the craters and sent them all back to shore. Once it was all set and done, I landed back in the water, and started swimming to join them. Just minutes in the water, I felt this strike of unbelievable pain, right through my back.

When I looked down to my stomach I found the head of what looked like a... harpoon. I I... I got shot through my back with a harpoon. The water turned red all around me as I felt the harpoon pull me from the water to the deck of the freighter. I'm screaming in pain at the only thing that could listen... the Caribbean waters.

"I don't think so!" Wait I know that voice, as if this night couldn't be any worse.

It's him, he's here to finish me off. I saw him swimming this way, I closed my eyes and started to pray. Jah if this is it, please let this be quick. Take me home now. He swims up and jumps out of the water, I expected to be chomped any second, but I splash back into the sea instead.

The pain I feel keeps me from moving anything except for my mouth. I asked, "Why did you do that?! Why did you free me?! I thought you wanted me dead!"

"I want you as my trophy, no way am I going to let them take you when I've been hunting you for so long!" He starts swimming this way with his mouth open ready to finish me.

I hear the mysterious voice yell, "You gotta keep pushing! Don't you dare give up!" I take a deep breath and pull the head of the harpoon out from my stomach. I wait for him to get closer when I push the waters around me to the

side and I stab his back with the harpoon as hard as I can. I used the water around us to push it in further.

The water is stained with both his and my blood. I hate to do this, but it's my only choice. I rise myself up with the little strength I have, back up to the deck. I climbed onto the freighter and said, "I don't want to die here. Please help me?"

One of the captain's henchmen came with towels to help stop the bleeding. The rest of them pick me up and carry me somewhere. I try to stay up, but my eyes get heavier and heavier for every second I push. I finally close my eyes for just a second.

Hali's point of view

Jaqweshia didn't just send me home while trying to fight a whole crew by herself. I have to get out there and help her. Woah she's giving off this huge blue light. Seeing her shoot the freighter with water bullets makes me suddenly feel like she doesn't need my help. I run through town to find someone out about to go Jah knows where.

I cry as I beg her, "Please I need your phone! Someone just took my cousin! Please call one, one, two!" She reluctantly hands me her phone. "Thank you!" I dial one, one, two.

The operator answers, "Yes, hello?" I told the woman on the phone about the freighter and that they took Jaqweshia. She says, "Okay please stay calm, miss. Police are on the way, they should be there in the next ten to fifteen minutes."

"Thank you." I hung up the phone and asked, "Could I please call one more person please?"

She answers, "Of course little girl gwaan (go on)."

I called the house phone, thank Jah Aluna answered. "Hello?"

I yelled, "Aluna! Jaqweshia has been kidnapped!"

"What how? It's almost impossible to kidnap her, she can control the water around her."

"Yes, I know we were walking and some men came and knocked me out then took her."

"Are you near someone?"

"Yes I am."

“So you’re just telling this story to sound normal. Wait but what’s wrong with Jaqweshia?”

“I told you she’s been taken!”

“Oh my Jah I’m coming!”

“Okay see you soon, bye.”

I turned back to the lady and gave her phone back. “Thank you, thank you so much.”

She responds back, “Oh of course. Do you want me to stay with you until Aluna or someone gets here?”

“She’s meeting me by the shores. We have this special spot that we go to in case something like this happens.”

“I can come with you.”

“Oh you don’t have to do that.”

“I’m coming with you. You don’t want to be alone here defenseless. Unless you want to be kidnapped like your cousin.”

“Fair enough let's go.” I walked her to the white sand beach Jaqweshia pushed me to. Wait where is she? I see Aluna wearing her nguo. She rolls up her sleeves and pant legs then says.

“Hali oh my Jah thank Jah you’re okay!” I run to her like I’m really scared. She whispers in my ear, “Tell me everything.” She lets go and says, “Thank you so much for staying with her.”

“You’re welcome, it was the least I could do after I heard what happened. Do you need me to walk you both home or?”

Aluna interrupted and said, “Oh no I got it taken care of.” She shows her swords, and waves goodbye as the lady walks back home. “Okay now what happened?”

I answered, “We could only let one crate of girls go. After they all were safely back on land I was going to get off the ship, but I was compromised.”

“The crew found you.”

“Yes, but I fought them off until the gunmen came. Jaqweshia saved me. She picked me up and pushed me to this spot right here.”

“What do you mean picked you up?”

“I mean water from the giant lake she made in the sky picked me up, put me in the water. Then pushed me to shore. She was shooting them with water and this big blue light came out of nowhere. I went to call one, one, two and you. I came back here and she was gone.”

“Alright come on.” I grabbed her hand and she flew us to the freighter. As we get closer we see the captain’s crew taking Jaqweshia inside a room. We land near the cockpit and get to a hiding spot close enough for us to see if the crew leaves. I asked, “Why are we just sitting out here hiding? We need to get her out of there.”

Aluna’s point of view

“We’re waiting for the crew to leave so we can go in. If we go in now all three of us could be caught. Also you don’t have my kind of vision, it looked like she was injured.”

“Why would they hurt her then take her inside? Wouldn’t they just kill her?”

“Do I look like I’m a crew member here? How the hell am I so post to know? We have to wait.” We waited about ten minutes until crew members started to leave. There had to be about five men still in there.

I whispered, “This is exactly why I told both of you to stop trying to be heros. One of these days you were going to get in over your heads.”

“Are you really saying this right now? We weren’t trying to be heros. We were trying to help people, something you of all people should try.”

“What’s that so post to mean?”

“Are you serious?”

“How many times have I helped you? You don’t even know the things I did for people in Uganda. I’m the reason why your bruise is gone along with that obeah woman.”

“Aluna you only help the people you care about.”

“What’s wrong with helping the people I care about?”

“That’s fine, but you *only* help people you care about. If someone else is in trouble then you turn the other way. I can’t imagine Jah would want you to let hundreds of girls... children to be sold off to Jah knows who. They could be used for slavery if they’re lucky, worse case sinerio they get raped, and later on get killed.”

I never thought of what could happen to those girls.

Hali continues, “You’re right though we should do the same as you. Just look the other way right? Sucks for them, right? All that matters is that it

doesn't happen to my family. You think after living your whole life without Mom and Dad would give you some compassion for others."

"Shhh."

"Don't tell me to shhh."

"No, shut up. Don't you hear that?" What I heard was a police siren.

"No, what do you hear?"

"It's police sirens, maybe seven minutes away."

"We need to get Jaqweshia off this boat now."

"Alright let's go, it's only gonna be a matter of time until the rest of the crew comes back." We turn the corner, quickly and quietly sneak into the room Jaqweshia is in. There were four men in here, I was ready to fight them after I saw Jaqweshia wrapped in towels stained in blood.

One man sees this and says, "I don't know who the hell you are, but you need to help us help her. She's losing a lot of blood and I don't know her blood type."

I asked, "Did you do this?" He looks at me quietly as he puts pressure on Jaqweshia's wound. I yell, "DID YOU DO THIS?!!"

He stands up and says, "Yeah we did, but I'm not gonna let her die." I got down on my knees and checked her pulse. It's very weak, I applied a lot of pressure on her wounded stomach.

I said, "You can stop pushing trust me, I'm applying more than enough pressure. I need surgical wire, NOW!" The men next to me looked at me like I'm retarded. I pulled out one of my scimitar swords to his beard and asked, "Did I stutter?" He shook his head no, then I yelled, "So go get it then!"

I continued, "What did you shoot her with? It went straight through."

The man was hesitant to speak, then said, "It was a harpoon."

I looked at him with the full intent to kill him, but I couldn't leave Jaqweshia. I said, "A damn harpoon?! I'm gonna beat you to a pulp when this is all done." I turned back to Jaqweshia, I put my ear to her chest. I heard her heartbeat, and her breathing is calm enough to show no internal bleeding.

The man comes back with a long piece of wire, and scissors. While I'm stitching up the outside wounds, I ask, "You tried to save her after she attacked this freighter with the wrath of God. Why?"

He sighed and said, "I'm not the captain here. I'm the ship's engineer, I help keep this freighter going so we can ship *special* cargo to different places."

I interrupt him, “You ship humans more specifically little girls that've been stripped from their families. To be sold, raped, enslaved, or killed.”

“I just fix the ship, I don't take part in any of that. I don't kill, and I don't rape, that's why I tried to save her. I don't let anyone die while I can do something about it.”

“Ironic seeing that you're worker on a freighter for human trafficking.”

When I'm done stitching up her back Hali says, “GGA we have to get out of here.” I gently picked up Jaqweshia and started heading for the door.

The engineer blocks the door and asks, “Where do you think you both are going? You're not going anywhere.”

“We have to get her to a hospital.”

“She seems fine now that you stitched her up.”

“The police are coming and we would rather not be here when they start arresting people.”

“Well this is going to be a lot easier.” He grabs Hali and puts a knife to her throat. “You both will be our hostigase.” Jaqweshia slowly wakes up.

She says, “No don't worry, you both can go, and I'll stay.”

I gently put her down and ask, “What the hell did you just say? No I'm not leaving you here with these people.”

She crawls to the controls of the ship. I said, “Hey, hey take it easy. Jaqweshia take it easy.” She pulls all the water that she originally fried the circuit boards with.

“There now you can move again.” The engineer turned on the engine and started leaving the docks.

The men grab Hali and I as the engineer calls the captain back to the cockpit. They didn't bother to grab Jaqweshia she was too weak to even get away from the engineer's feet. She tried to crawl back to us she whispered, “Just go, better you two get away than all three of us get taken.”

I looked at Hali as she shook her head no. I used my talons to scratch the man holding my arms. When he let me go I punched him in his stomach. I scratched Hali's guard in the face leaving him screaming in pain. I grabbed Hali and kicked open the door.

She screamed, “No! Stop Aluna, stop! Let me go! I'm not leaving without her! No, no, no!”

I whispered, “I'm sorry.” I picked her up and flew her back to the island. This reminds me of when Abejide took me away from Mom and Dad.

I know if I say this Hali won't want to leave. I looked at both Aluna and Hali, I know the only reason they haven't escaped yet is because of me. I can't go anywhere in this condition, with the little strength I had left. I crawled away from the controls and whispered, "Just go, better you two get away than all three of us get taken." Hali shook her head no, but Aluna still broke both of them free.

Just like that they disappeared and I don't know when I'll ever see them again. I passed out to the sound of the injured men screaming. I woke up on a couch with a man sitting next to me. I keep the appearance that I'm asleep for as long as I can.

Maybe twenty minutes later another man takes his place. I turn on my other side while a bottle of water catches my eye. I reach for it on the floor, but it's grown a challenge, because of my harpoon injury. The man notices this, he takes the bottle, opens it, then hands the bottle to me. I took small sips of water staring at him as he stared right back at me.

When I put it down, I ask, "Are you the one who saved me?"

His frown tells me he has no interest in talking to me. I lay back down when he says, "No... Marcus saved you. I shot you with the harpoon." After hearing that I didn't say or ask him anything else. Around half an hour later the captain came in and took the harpoon man's place in watching.

He asks, "Can you sit up?" I slowly sit up slouching, I can't sit all the way up. I can still feel the pain screaming in my back and stomach. He picks up my bottle of water and pores some in my mouth. My eyes are on him like a hawk just like his.

He said, "You put on quite the show out there. Your siblings injured a lot of my men, and you by yourself terrified my men. Quite a few of them say I should kill you and the others say we should keep you alive. See how much we can get for you. Now everyone is looking to me for an answer.

Which begs the questions. Who the hell are you and what should I do with you?"

I opened my mouth expecting to beg for my life, but I realized that my life is in Jah's hands. I don't need to beg for it, because it's in good hands. With what little strength I have I said, "If Jah tells you to kill me, then kill me. If he says to sell me then sell me. If he says to keep me then keep me."

"Do you have a death wish? I could kill you right now, my men could kill you at any point in time. You don't want to beg me for your life?"

“You don’t hold my life, God does.”

“Really?” He pulls his glock out and points it at my head. He asks, “Are you sure your life isn’t in my hands?”

“Did you help me shower this freighter with the ocean waters only using my hands? If not then my life is far from yours.” I laid back on my left side. The captain stormed out of the room.

When I wake up I take a huge sigh of relief. When I turn around I see some men talking outside the door. I try very hard to listen to their conversation. Times like this when I wish I had Aluna’s ears.

Crew member, “Do you really think this little girl is some kind of queen over the seas?”

Another crew member, “Did you forget what that bloodclaat girl did last night?! Do you really want to be the sailor who killed the ocean’s queen?”

“She’s just a girl, she isn’t anyone’s queen. We’ve shipped and sold many girls. I can promise you that this girl is no different from the others.”

“Yeah cause the others were able to shoot us with water.”

“You know what, I’ll show you that she is just like all the others.” He storms inside the room. He gets closer and grabs my hair. He whispers, “This is for what you did to our men in the infirmary.”

I asked, “Are you going to kill me?”

“No, I’m not.” He opened my legs and sat in between them. He unzips his pants then pulls me closer.

I yell, “No, no, no!” I try to push him away but my stomach and back are still in agonizing pain. I push away as hard as I can, but he’s too strong.

He yells, “Stop struggling or you’ll only make it worse for yourself!”

“Leave me alone! Get away from me!” I cried as I smacked him across his face. He looks at me with what looks like a combination of anger and determination. I feel something poking my crotch when I look down.

I see a tent in his pants. I quickly try to crawl away, but he grabs me and pulls me closer. Even though I’m fighting back I’m starting to lose feeling in my limbs. I feel like I’m trying to escape a sneer. I never felt this before... like I want to aim a harpoon straight to my head just to make it stop.

He slowly strokes and whispered, “If you scream, yell, or shout for help. I will come back every day just to see you.” He kisses me on my cheek and down my neck. He just keeps going down until he reaches my wound.

I can feel his fingers lingering my stomach and back wounds. I beg him, “Please, I know this is punishment, but please. Don’t reopen my wounds, don’t. Please spare me from the little pain you could still inflict on me.”

“Oh no, you’re in pain?” He stops and zips his pants back up. He whispers, “Tell the captain about this and I’ll be back. I won’t be as nice the next time.” He kisses me on my cheek, gets off the couch, and leaves. He left me with a wish I never thought I would have... the wish of death.

I wish I could think of something, anything except what that piece of shit did to me. I don’t know how long I’ll be here or how long I’ll stay alive here. I’m not sure if I can get off this ship even if I get better. I don’t think they’re going to let me go freely. Either they kill me or sell me, but I’m a damaged product.

What are they gonna do with a damaged product that’s gonna be hard to sell? They’re going to kill me, but I don’t think they know when. I’m too weak to use my powers, and I can’t get up from this sofa. Jah knows when my wounds will heal... I’m gonna die here. I’m never gonna see Hali or Aluna ever again.

Uncle Akintola warned us, he told us to be careful. I never thought that I’d die here when I snuck onto this damn freighter. Jah I’m here, my life, my spirit is in your hands. If I’m to be thrown in the ocean after these men realize what must happen, then I’m ready. I just pray that Aluna and Hali don’t blame themselves for this.

Please help them come closer together. Hali refuses to be Aluna’s sister. Don’t let this drive them even further apart, please. The Captain comes in and sits down near me. He asks, “Do you know what my men are saying about you?”

I shake my head no. What does he think? That I’ve been out socializing with the same crew that shot me with a harpoon. He continues, “Some of my men are saying you are the queen of the caribbean seas. Others are saying you’re just a girl, of course they were asleep when you attacked.”

He pauses looking me up and down. He resumes, “Then there are the few that said, one of my men raped you.” I’m immediately reminded of that moment when that rassclaat came in. I remember what he did to me, and what he said he’d do if I told the captain what he did to me. He snaps his fingers in my face to gain my attention.

He looks into my eyes and says, “So it’s true one of my men raped you.” He takes a deep breath, then says, “Let me tell you something about myself. I know this may seem ironic, but I have rules. One of them is that there is no raping on my ship. We trade our goods at top condition, whatever the buyer wants to do with them has nothing to do with me.”

I look away for a second, he gently turns my head back to him. He says, “Who raped you?”

I asked, “Do you really think I’m stupid enough to think you’re gonna keep me alive long enough to sell me?”

“I’m not gonna kill you.”

“Then you will lose your crew’s loyalty. You can’t sell me, I’m injured. My siblings injured your men... are you telling me that you don’t want revenge for that?”

“I do, but I’m not going to rape or kill you.”

“You’re gonna find a mutiny on your hands. You can’t protect me for long. I honestly don’t know why you’re trying to protect me now. Just a minute ago you had a gun pointed to my head.”

“I’m trying to protect you for two reasons. One you’re not the first girl, there were more girls who had the exact same person raping them. Two I believe you’re *her* daughter.”

“Who?”

“I don’t know who she is, but I saw her. She did something just like you twenty years ago. She stopped the floods that came in from our beaches during a hurricane. I believe you’re her daughter, if it wasn’t for your mother I wouldn’t be alive. The least I can do to repay her is to protect her daughter to a certain extent.”

“How long do you think you can protect me before your crew decides to take matters into their own hands?”

“Do you want to die?”

“I was raped so I’m a bit conflicted.”

“Who raped you?”

“He said that if I told you then he’d be back and he’d be rougher with me next time.”

“You think he’s not going to come back anyway?” I don’t know, but I can’t afford to take that chance. I don’t say anything, he lifts my water up to

my lips, and pours some in my mouth. He says, "You don't need to trust me, but you need to survive."

"What happens then? Are you going to sell me? Trade me off? Even if your men don't try to kill me. You're still going to give me away to Jah knows who."

"I'll protect you from my men, but you can't stay here forever. Whatever happens to you after you leave isn't on me." I nod my head in understanding. The longest I think I can stay here is one more day before his men start to plan a mutiny. I'm not risking that bomboclat man coming back to rape me again.

Just staying here for one more day is a risk. He asks, "Are you gonna tell me or not?"

I sit up and demand, "Get me something to eat, and I'll tell you what I know." He takes in a deep breath before he nods his head. I wait maybe a little over an hour before he comes in with the bomboclat man from before. I immediately tense up and try not to make any eye contact with him. The captain brings in two patties.

I can't tell if they're beef or curry chicken and right now I don't care. He puts the plate right in front of my face and says, "You'll eat when you answer my questions." I nod my head with my eyes glued to those patties. He asks, "Were you raped?" I avoid looking at the gunman at the door.

My eyes abandon the plate and meet the captain's. I answer, "No."

He looks at me with confusion and looks at the plate. He asks, "Are you sure?"

"Yes." He hands me the plate and I immediately start eating. The captain sends his gunman out to guard the door outside. I stopped eating and said, "That was him. That was the... the bomboclat that raped me."

I look at the door, the guard is wording, "I warned you, I'm not gonna be nice this time." I kept eating, then I looked away from the door and back at the captain. I said, "You can't let him guard the door. He saw me tell you just now."

He says, "I'll have my men detain him."

"You do that and you lose your crew. What are you going to do with him? Fire him? Turn him in for rape? Kill him?"

"How I handle the situation is none of your concern."

"What happened to you wanting to protect me?"

“You told me I’ll lose my crew, so I got to figure out how to deal with it. It just so happens the man outside guarding this door is my brother.” I shouldn’t have said shit, he’s not gonna do anything against his own blood. His brother is gonna come back and I don’t know if I can live through that again. I finished eating and didn’t say another thing.

I can tell he saw my silent acceptance. He said, “We’re docking in Nan Digo tomorrow, where we can get you more medicine.”

“Am I so post to pretend I know where that is?”

“It’s a town off the northern shore of Haiti.”

“Please just get me some more water.” He pauses shocked that I want him to leave.

He says, “He won’t touch you I promise.”

I ask, “Please don’t promise anything you can’t guarantee? Please go and get me water.” He nods his head and leaves. I waited for his brother to return. While I was alone I prayed, “Father, please don’t let him back in here.

Jah I don’t beg anybody for anything, but I beg you Jah... don’t let him back in here. I can’t go through that again, please let the captain’s words be fruitful.”

I heard his voice say, “Stay faithful my daughter, and I will give you what you desire most.” I then heard the door open and it was him. He looked angry, I knew there was no amount of begging I could do that would spare me from his wrath. He unzips his pants, grabs my forearms no matter how much I fight back. He still dragged me on the floor, I panicked and punched him in the face.

That just made things worse, he pinned me to the ground and said, “You did this.” He started to lift my shirt when the captain burst through the door. He pulls him off me and socks him in the face. He practically tosses him overboard. I’m shocked with a sudden wave of immense pain that shocks me back to reality.

Once he feels he’s done with me, he forces me up on my feet despite my injuries. He practically throws me back on the couch. He picks up my clothes from the floor and tosses them to me. I said, “You will pay dearly for this bombaclat.”

He smiles and asks, “Eh does the queen of the sea want her boat rocked again?” I couldn’t have shaken my head faster. He said, “Then shut up.” I reached for the bottle of water, he snatched it and held it in front of me. He said, “Say the word “rape” to the captain again, and I’ll be back.

I'll come back every night you're here, and next time I'll slap you too." I nodded my head in understanding.

I asked, "What keeps you from coming back anyway?"

He chuckles and says, "We're on a ship filled with more full women that I could be screwing right now. I only come back if you make me." He hands me the bottle and asks, "Do you want me to come back?"

I shook my head and said, "No no no no no no no."

"Then keep your mouth shut. Okay?" I slowly nod my head yes as I try to open the bottle. He snatches it out of my hand again, opens it, and gives it to me. I keep my eyes on him while I sip the rest of the little water left in the bottle.

He looks behind him and says, "Put your clothes on before the captain comes back. Unless you want to have more fun?" I put the bottle down and slip my sport bra on as fast as I can. He chuckles and guards the room from the outside.

While I'm putting my clothes on I started crying. I prayed, "Jah why? Why is this happening to me? I should've never come here with Hali. We should've left when we found out that we needed the captain's keys to free the girls.

Jah I can't, I can't stay here. When can you send Death my way?" I passed out right after I zipped up my pants. I woke up in Jamaica. I was sooo happy to feel the grass again.

I hugged the ground and realized my wounds were gone. I got up from the ground and found a star apple tree. I climbed up one of the branches and started eating. It felt like it had been weeks since I ate a fruit. I later heard, "Jaqweshia!"

I looked down to see a man looking at me. I asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm Jah." I jumped down from the tree, stared him in the eyes, and frustratedly threw my hands at his chest until I broke down into tears. He holds me and continues, "I'm sorry I have to put you through this."

"Jah why am I going through this?"

"Jaqweshia you are different from the others. On the waters you have more power than anyone on the ship. When earning the most power, you have to go through the most pain."

“Jah I’m literally living in my worst nightmare. How much power do I supposedly have? Jah I can’t, I’m begging you to... to let me die. Let me die, so I can be here... so I can be with you. Please don’t take me back down there!”

I felt his tears land on my hair, I looked up to see him crying. He said, “I know how much you want to stay here with me.”

“But I can’t?”

“It’s not your time yet. Hang in there Jaqweshia, you’re almost there.” I laid my head back on his chest as tears fell from my eyes.

I begged, “Please just don’t let him touch me again.”

“I will rip up every shred of that man for what he did to you. Don’t worry he’ll never touch you again.” Things started glowing and disappearing. When I woke up I was back on that damn couch. I wipe the tears off my face before the captain can see them.

Jah said that he’d never touch me again. He said he’s never going to touch me again. The captain turns around and notices I’m awake. He pushed some buttons and left the controls. He asks, “How was your night?”

I answered, “You know he came to see me last night. How do you think my night was?”

“I talked to him, he’s not going to touch you ever again.”

“He’ll ra... he’ll hurt others though? Won’t he?”

“Just not you.” Jah said I was almost there. Does that mean I’m going to die soon? My pain will be over, and I’ll never have to worry about anyone hurting me again. He continues, “I have my men getting you medicine.”

“Thank you?”

“Or I could just let you sit here in pain.”

“Isn’t that what you did last night? I’m sorry, you laid down and slept while I was getting...” I remembered what his brother said to me. I continued, “You slept while your brother raped me last night. It’s hard for me to believe that you can’t sit aside while I feel the holes in my core heal.”

“I’m not going to kill, turn in, or punish my brother for some damaged product!”

“Well then, stop trying to make me feel better by doing a simple human thing.”

“Do I need to tell my brother that you’ve gotten an attitude since last I spoke to you?” Did he just threaten to have his brother rape me? I stayed quiet

and looked to the ceiling. He shakes his head and says, “Yeah I didn’t think so.” I turn away towards the couches’ cushions.

When can I leave this hell on earth? Jah knows how much I hate it here. I said, “Thank you for the medicine.”

“That’s more like it, I know that you’ve been getting stronger. Keep quiet until I get back... my brother will be guarding the door. If you plan on trying to escape from this ship.” Yep my situation just keeps getting better and better. It was maybe three hours before his brother came in.

He asked, “You remember last night?” I nodded in silence. He continued, “Good, remember that. It’ll keep you from doing anything stupid.” I turned away from him just like I did the captain.

I pretended to fall asleep while I waited for the captain to return. He’s no safe haven, but he’s all I’ve got to protect me from his brother. I can hear him venting off to himself. He says, “I didn’t agree to babysit the one girl on this freighter that is built like an apple tree. She has the least amount of fun.

All she does is try to fight back, she doesn’t try to enjoy the moment.” Why the hell would I enjoy him rapping me? It’s two more hours before the captain returns.

I can hear him ask, “You didn’t touch her right?”

He answers, “No I didn’t. Why the hell do you care if I did or not? She’s one girl that we won’t be able to sell for months.”

“You wouldn’t understand, you were just a baby when the flood waters came in. Her mother saved our lives.”

“Few minutes ago she was shooting us down while glowing in the sky. Her friends or sisters or whoever they were, injured quite a few of our men.”

“That’s why you raped her?”

“Yes, and I should’ve done more. You need to stop trying to protect her, you look weak.”

“I will sell her once she can walk. I don’t know if that’s gonna be possible if you keep drilling in her like she’s wood.”

“I’m the reason you even still have your crew.”

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t think thoughts of a mutiny haven’t risen already? I tell them what you have me do to her, that keeps their lust for revenge at bay. Keeping their loyalty... you’re welcome Tyrese.”

“Guard the door from the outside... and thank you.” He thanked his brother for raping me? I really need to get off this damn freighter. Jah when can I please die? I felt the captain’s hand tap my shoulder to wake me up.

I pretend to wake up and turn facing him. He hands me a white plastic bag. When I opened it I saw a bottle of aspirin, and another with tylenol. Underneath both of them was a foam container. When I took it out I smelled something good.

He says, “I know it’s not jamaican food, but it’s something other than water.” I opened it to well cooked and seasoned meat. He continues, “It's cooked pork, they call it “griot.” I nod my head in understanding. He asks, “No thank you?”

I sat up and said, “Thank you Tyrese.” He sat there and hung his head as I started eating.

He says, “You heard us talking.”

“You thanked him for raping me. Yeah I heard you two.” I continued eating while I left the room in silence.

“I thanked him for having my back.”

“Whatever. Thanks for the food.” I kept on eating while he left me alone to steer the ship. When I finished eating I slipped into a deep sleep on the couch. Even in my sleep I can’t escape my horrible reality.

I need to get off this freighter somehow. My only chance was when we were in Haiti, but I’m too weak to stand. The closest thing I had to a safe haven is gone. Jah when will I die and leave this hell on earth? How much longer will I have to stay here?

I heard her say. “You can’t give up! I can help you Jaqweshia, but only if you let me. You’re the only one who can hear me. Please let me help you.” Who are you?

How can you help me? She said, “Submerge yourself in my waters and feel my current.” Wait are you? I was suddenly woken by Tyrese’s brother.

I asked, “What did I do? I kept my mouth shut just like you told me to. What did I do? Why are you here?”

He chuckles and says, “Relax I’m just here to change your bandage.”

“Without the Captain here?”

“Well thought I better do it alone than for anyone else. After all I know you better than anyone else here.” I just nodded my head. Better for him to just

get it over with than to act like I can argue in my situation. He gently slides his hand under my back and sits me up.

He lifts my shirt above my head, cuts off my old bandage and rubs in some kind of cream on my stomach. He starts to rub the cream on my back as well. He asks, "Has my brother even asked you how you heard of our little shipping operation?"

I answer softly, "No, he hasn't."

"Ughh, what would my brother do without me?" His hands leave my abdomen to reach into a bag next to him. He says, "You're gonna have to sit up on your own for a little while." He takes out a new bandage. He asks while bandaging my back, "How did you know we were going to be on that dock in Jamaica?"

"A source told my cousin and I."

"A source? Really? Do you mind being a little specific about that source or are things going to get unpleasant?"

"I don't know who or how my cousin knew about your freighter."

"You said a source told you and your cousin, so obviously you know who." He stops rolling the bandage around my core. He shoots me with a terrifying stare and says, "Don't lie to me."

I shook my head and begged, "Please no. You have to believe me. I don't know who it was. My cousin and I got a blank letter that had information on your freighter. Please please don't... don't rape me again please."

"Hmm, and how do I know you're telling me the truth?" He grabs his belt buckle staring at me.

"I promise you I'm telling you the truth. Please you have to believe me." He finishes bandaging my wounds with a smile on his face.

He stands up and opens the door wide open. He says, "If you can walk outside of this door. I'll let you sleep in peace, but if you so much as trip. Lets just say you're not going to have a pleasant night." I slowly sat up and for the first time since I was shot.

My feet touched the floor and I slowly stood up. You never know how important your core is to stand until you've been shot through the back with a harpoon. I work hard with each and every step I take. First step is the hardest one, I try to not make the second step too big so I don't bend my knees. Not too small so I can be doing this for hours.

The ship's rocking is my greatest enemy in this battle I'm fighting. I'm halfway there and I stumble to the doorframe. I hugged it like my life depended on it. He picks me up and guides me back to the couch. I don't lay down at first I stay sitting up.

He says, "You can lay down and sleep. You made it to the door, that's all I needed you to do." I slowly start to lay down on my back when he jumps on top of me.

I yelled, "No no! I did what you asked! Please no!" I start trying to push and kick him off of me.

He grabs both of my arms and says, "Relax, I'm not gonna touch you. Just want to give you a reminder."

"To remind me what will happen if I tell the captain about this?"

"No, you're going to show the captain that you can walk tomorrow. The day before we dock at Hog Bay. Am I clear?"

"Yes sir."

"Alright, now go to sleep." He gets off me and leaves the room in a terrifying silence. I should've ran out that door and jumped overboard. I know I'm too weak to swim, at least I could've tried to get away.

I heard Jah say, "You're almost there Jaqweshia just keep pushing." Jah's going to take me soon... that thought alone was the only thing that helped me sleep. The next day I woke up to see the captain steering again. He left a full bottle of water for me to drink. I revved my hands to open it, but when I twisted the top it was already open.

He opened it for me so that I wouldn't have to struggle to do it myself. Oh how nice of him, out of everything he's done at least he let me drink some water. I drank some water and set the bottle down. I screwed the top back on and laid down. When will it come?

When will this end? When will it be over? I can't help but wonder if it will hurt. I hope Aluna and Hali don't come looking for me. They'll only find a cold body floating in the sea.

Hali will have to depend on Aluna to help her recover over my death. Aluna will need Hali to stand after I am gone. Jah will have to pick the next Guardian of The Ocean. I wonder who it'll be, and where they are. He'll probably pick someone in Florida to be the next GGO.

Someone opens the door and starts talking to the captain. I can tell from his voice that it's his brother. He says, "When do you think we'll get to Bermuda?"

The captain answers, "We'll arrive the day after tomorrow."

"Okay good, so we can start selling some of our stock. Especially the piece of trouble sleeping on your couch."

"Does she look like she's well enough to walk let alone stand in front of clients to be sold?"

"She can walk, I saw her walking last night."

"Really? Why exactly were you with her last night?"

"Relax I didn't touch her, but you need to get rid of her. I just gave her some inspiration to help her walk. The mind can get over any obstacle including injuries."

"I'll believe you when I see her walk for myself."

"You can watch her walk right now."

"She's sleeping, leave her to her dreams." His brother ignores Tyrese and taps on my arm to wake me up. I act like I didn't hear a word they said. I turn around with my eyes slightly closed. He says, "Wake up, show the captain what you did last night."

He gets out of my face and I set up. He walks to the door and opens it wide open. I can see the side railing, and I thought about what that woman's voice said. Submerge yourself in my waters and feel my current... that was the ocean talking to me. I need to get off this ship and I think I know how.

I slowly stood up and I could finally feel the water under the freighter rocking the boat. I rocked the boat in my favor, instead of it fighting me it's going to help free me. I start walking at a slow paste to the door. I hear her voice again and she says, "Jah has given you strength, come to me Jaqweshia. I can help heal you, feel my waters.

Jah is still with you, don't give up." I have a sudden burst of strength to my core and my legs. I stop walking and I just stand there.

Tyrese's brother yells, "What are you doing?! Walk to the door!" I look straight out the door ignoring him.

I whispered, "I'm coming Bahari."

Tyrese asks, "Who is she talking to? Who is Bahari?" I take off running and jump overboard. I submerged myself in the Caribbean Sea. To feel the strength of the current again is a blessing.

I feel the water all around me and I feel my wound heal itself. The water from all around starts to circle me. The freighter is drawn to me and I soon realize that I've created a whirlpool. I'd love to give what I owe to Tyrese's brother... but I can't. Jah knows how many girls are on that ship.

I can't kill them, because of him. I stopped the whirlpool and made a waterspout with me in the center. I saw the crew all in a fright aiming their guns at me. I announced, "I will not fight you today!"

Leaving them with that I used the water spout to take me far away. Once I know I'm out of eye sight, I lay in the water. I rest in peace once again, with no fear of that rasclaat coming to pay me a visit. I hear her say, "You're safe now Jaqweshia. You can sleep, I'll take it from here."

I close my eyes and I let the current take me wherever it wishes. I open my eyes on an island on the beach. I see Jah waiting for me, I burst out running to him, and give him the biggest hug I could give him. I yell, "THANK YOU!"

I begin to cry when he says, "You're safe now Jaqweshia, no one will ever touch you like that ever again."

"I'm finally going to be with you forever."

"Jaqweshia you are not dead."

"What, but I jumped. I thought you said I was going to die?"

"I never said that. I said I would give you what you desire most."

"I wanted to die."

"Yes you did, but that's not what you want most." He starts walking in the forest of the island. I ran to catch up with him.

I asked, "What do you mean? I wanted to die, you said you'd give me what I wanted most."

He explained, "Yes you wanted to die and yes I said I would give you what you wanted most. What you wanted most was not death. You just wanted it all to stop." We start walking up a very rough hill. He continues, "You wanted the fear, worry, the rape, and the pain to stop.

You wanted freedom, that is what you wanted most. I didn't need Death to grant you that."

I asked, "Where are we going?"

"We're going to go meet someone on the other side of the island. I'm going to give you something that you've wanted for the longest time. Way longer than you've been on that freighter."

I stopped and asked, "Wait are you giving me... my cross?" He looks back, answering me with his smile. I ran to catch up with him when he suddenly stopped. I slide off the edge, he grabs my arm before I fall into the water.

He laughs and says, "Calm down now, you got to be careful."

I laugh and say, "Thanks Jah, I just wanted this for years." I look around and I ask, "Who were we so post to meet here?"

"They're here."

"They?"

A man's voice says, "I'm right here Jaqweshia." I turn around and I'm confused as to who this is.

I ask, "Who are you?" Jah places his hand on my shoulder and gestures to him. I ask, "Wait is this my dad?" He nods his head. Tears fall down my cheeks as I run to him. I'm granted with the hug I've wanted my whole life.

He says, "Oh my baby girl, I'm so happy to see you again. It's been a pleasure watching you grow up even if I didn't get to physically be there. I was always watching you through the good and bad times."

I let go and asked, "Even while I was, was?"

"Yes, even then. I wanted to kill him for what he was doing to you. Jesus came to me and so did Jah here. They told me how you were getting out along with what you'd be blessed with." He kisses me on my forehead.

I asked, "Who else was so post to be here? Jesus?"

A man comes walking from the wilderness and asks, "Did someone say my name?" My mouth falls wide open and I take a look at everyone. I start jumping up and down, clapping my hands in happiness.

I stopped and said, "Jesus!" I hugged him and didn't let go.

He chuckled and said, "I'm happy to see you too Jaqweshia. I know you've been through a lot, but it's over. You know we have a present for you."

I let go and asked, "Really? I'm free, both my earthly and heavenly father are here. You're telling me there's more?"

He chuckles and says, "Yes there is."

Dad says, "You see this rock?" I turn around to see this smooth rock the size of his hand. I nodded my head. He continues, "Jump in the hole in the water, then swim in a small cave. You'll find this rock, and follow it."

I asked, "Follow it?" It started glowing blue, the glow grew into a shine in seconds.

He says, "I'll see you again soon Jaqweshia."

“Wait what? No Dad! Jesus! Jah!” I wake up on the beach again. I get up from the sand. I walked back in the water and asked, “Bahari how long have I been drifting? Where am I?”

She answers, “Get to the other side of the island.”

“I will, but first answer me.”

“Go now.”

I sighed and said, “Fine, I’m on my way.” When I got to the other side, I took a deep breath, and jumped into the hole. It didn’t wait to suck me in, I sank deeper and deeper.

Bahari says, “Jaqweshia you’re in a blue hole. One of the deepest blue holes that lies in my waters it’s known as Dean’s Blue Hole.” I wonder how I’m so post to talk back to her if I can’t open my mouth. She said, “I can hear your thoughts.” Really?

She answered, “Yes, just like you can hear mine.”

I asked, “I can hear your thoughts?”

“Well I’m not talking, I can’t talk nor can the creatures who live in me. We all communicate in a way that humans can’t understand. The difference between me and them is they can’t hear me.

It doesn’t matter how loud I am or which one I choose. None of them can hear me, only God could hear me. One day he birthed his Guardian of the Ocean and for the first time in your family I was heard by a man.”

“Wait so the first GGO in my family was a man?”

“Yes, he was what you might call a pirate. He didn’t steal treasure to keep it though.”

“Why did he steal treasure then?”

She continues as I sink lower and lower in the water. “God had told him not to steal for greed, but to bring back to others and he would always be rewarded. That’s exactly what he did, he would return their plunder to the poor of the islands. When it came to treasure cursed with evil spirits, instead of giving it away, he returned it to whom they stole it from.

After he returned what was stolen, four days later he’d find a barrel filled with doubloons, golden jewels, and riches just floating in the water.”

“He was rewarded like that every time?”

“Every time he was rewarded, until one day a member on his crew kept a piece of the cursed treasure they found. He kept twenty gold coins... Aztec gold coins. When they returned it, they weren’t rewarded four days later.”

“What happened?”

“They waited for weeks, but every week that went by I had to be harsher to them.”

“What do you mean?”

“My waters grew rougher rather than the smooth ride they were used to. Storms went by week by week angrier than the last.”

“Did you sink them?”

“Yes I did.”

“You finally get someone who can hear you and you kill him?”

“I didn’t kill him, I sunk his ship.”

“What happened to him after you sunk his ship?”

“His ship was attacked by a whirlpool in the dead of night. Most of the crew that knew about the gold died. The others were badly injured, but found their way to floating debris. Agwe saw the bodies and asked why we were doing this. God told him that his crew kept their latest discovery.

He searched his sunken ship, then all his crew members. He found the pouch that contained the aztek gold on his right hand man.”

“How was he so post to return it? He just kept drifting off until he got to Mexico or what?”

“He started that way at first, but God saw what he was trying to do. God showed Agwe how to move like an eel, then how to run in water.”

“I’m sorry, did you say run in water?”

“Yes, the same way a man can run on land, he could run in water. Agwe ran to return the coins back to their rightful owner. He didn’t get a barrel of diamond jewels or golden treasures. No, God gave him something that he didn’t even know he was longing for... a wife and family. I saw the sons and daughters of Agwe grow to be just like him in ways.”

“You sound like you really cared about him.”

“Agwe was the first man I ever talked to, I watched him fall in love, raise his children, he even lived long enough to meet his great grandchildren. He was my best friend.”

“A sailor can fall in love with the sea, but does the sea also love the sailor?”

“Yes.”

“If you loved him, how could you sink his ship? Did you know he could breathe underwater?”

“I did not know he could breath in my waters. Nor did I want to sink his ship.”

“You could’ve killed him!”

“I do not make decisions based on my emotions. I do only what God wants me to do... even if it’s something I don’t want to do.”

“You don’t have a choice?”

“No, I’m a neutral element. I have opinions and feelings, but I do not act on them.”

“Why?”

“God made me that way.”

“Why? Shouldn’t you be able to do what you want. Everyone does.”

“Not me, I shouldn’t be able to act on emotions. Man have done it since God first formed them from the dirt in Bustani ya Edeni. Look what the world has been like because of it. Most of the animals that I saw swim in the rivers that used to travel the lands have been extinct for thousands of years. They looked at each other and used their jealousy of each other’s appearances to create a generational feud.

Man are literally damaging the world they live in, because of greed. The creatures of my seas flee to my depths just to avoid being discovered by man. They know if they’re discovered, they’ll put their kind in danger. Man has been given one of the most powerful elements in this world. The power of free will, to choose what you want to do based on however you feel.

Man has something that I don’t... you have humanity.”

“That’s why you’re able to flood innocent people’s homes without thinking twice.”

“God sent meteors that held small drops of water on the earth so that I may be here today. I was in the world a long time before Adam and Eve were brought from the soil of God’s image. I was there to be a witness to everything that happened. I give man water to drink, so they wouldn’t thirst to death. How do they treat me, the very thing they need to survive?

They pollute my waters with their trash. They turn my water in the sky into acid to hurt the lands they sleep on. If I had the power to act on my emotions Jaqweshia... there would be chaos everywhere. I’d want to get revenge on man for what they’ve done to me, to the creatures that depend on me to live, and to those I’ve seen that’ve been wronged.”

“What about me? If one of my ancestors did something deeply wrong to somebody. You kill them then I would’ve never been born.”

“That’s why I must stay neutral, because no matter how vast I am... I do not decide who lives and who dies.”

I looked to what looked like a bottomless pit and asked, “How much farther do I just keep sinking?”

“Not much farther... look into that small cave.”

“Which one?”

“The one with a blue glow.”

“What blue...” Blue light starts to shine from one of the caves. When I got closer, I could tell it’s big enough for me to travel through. I tunneled down to find the rock I saw in my dream, it was glowing. I picked it up and asked, “What now?”

“Follow the light.” The rock stops glowing and a light shines at the end of the tunnel. I continue to go further and further into the cave.

I asked, “You were here through it all right?”

“Yes.”

“That means you saw everything?”

“Yes, I have.”

“Can you tell me about my ancestors? My african ancestors?”

“I remember them all, they had small glimmers of Agwe in all of them.”

“Do I look like him?”

“You have his eyes.”

“Why did he become a pirate anyway?”

“Piracy was better than bondage.”

“He didn’t want to be a slave, so he chose to be a pirate instead.”

“Agwe was a slave, his owner was captain of the British ship Great Allen. It was a merchant ship that was looted, burned, and sunk off the coast of Cape St. Vincent. Agwe didn’t try to fight the pirates that came onto the ship. He snuck into the pirates ship, God saw him and he turned Agwe from swabs to captain of his own vessel. Sailing my seas was the first time he felt free since he was taken from Ghana.”

“He was born in Ghana?”

“Yes and his wife was from The Gambia. She was a slave in Jamaica, but after Agwe freed her. They lived in the Blue Mountains, to live their lives with the Maroons.”

“What about his cross? How did he get his cross? How was he a chrstrain?”

“While on the Great Allen he was taught of God’s words by his slave master. He earned his cross when he freed his wife. His wife whittled him a cross from a branch in the Blue Mountains. She became a believer a few months before, so she knew that Agwe would love it. She used shells that I would place ashore on the beaches.”

“It was the first GGO cross... that’s unbelievable.”

She chuckles and continues, “Agwe was one of the blessed ones. Not all children were like him... some didn’t even get a chance to take their first breath. Men who would’ve been fathers and women who would’ve been mothers... some didn’t make the journey to the new world.” It sounds as if Bahari wants to cry. “I watched as men and women would rot on ships.

There were some that jumped off their ships like you did in search of Death. It broke my heart to think that you’d be like them. I couldn’t let a descendant of Agwe kill herself and meet Death. The thought of it broke my heart.”

“You don’t know what it’s like to be raped. You don’t know what it was like laying awake at night afraid he’d come by. The only person I thought could even be a little bit useful, did nothing to stop it! I just wanted the pain to stop. I wanted the pain, rape, and horior to all stop.”

“I know. God, knowing how you felt told me to talk to you while you slept at night. He said that’s all I needed to do, so that’s all I did.” She paused and said, “You know I could tell you where the bones of those who jumped in my Atlantic are. Man want to know what I’ve hidden from them, but they never stop to consider that they shouldn’t discover what I keep from them. Just as I stay neutral, Jaqweshia you must be neutral too.”

“I have to be neutral, why?”

“You are the exception that God has blessed. You’ll get to see everything that many can only dream of seeing. You can’t show or tell anyone what you’ll see.”

“Like what?” I finally get to the end of the tunnel. I’m in another blue hole, but this one is smaller than Dean’s Blue Hole. I can see the bottom, the light shines again from inside what looks like a sunken wreckage. I asked, “What kind of ship is this?”

Bahari answers, "This is one of the original wooden Spanish ships I've hidden from Man."

"Wooden ship? Really?" I fly through the water as I get closer, I can feel myself getting stronger. I asked, "Why did you keep it hidden?"

"It holds a present God wants you to have."

"A wooden cross wouldn't be able to survive being underwater all these years."

"It's not made of wood." Swimming through the wreckage I followed the blue light to a small chest. When I opened it a golden necklace with four layers of jewels, and in the middle was a blue crystal like cross. Bahari says, "It's made of gold, diamond, and the cross is volcanic glass."

"Oh my Jah! It's beautiful." I touched the cross, when it shot itself at my neck shining brightly. I could feel my eyes glow... I feel completely in sink with Bahari. I asked, "What's happened?"

"Jaqweisha you were only half of a queen, now you are the queen of my waters."

"Queen?"

A man's voice, "Yes, you are a queen now."

"Wait, I've heard that voice... Dad! Where are you?!" I look around, but I don't see him.

Bahari says, "He's above the water." I look up, and shoot like a bullet through the water. A waterspout forms under me lifting me up high. I saw him in the clouds, I got high up and hugged him.

He said, "I am so proud of you, baby." He let's go of me and says, "You've been hurt in one of the worst ways, so you've been blessed in one of the best. You are the queen of the Ocean now... the only condition is that you send no soul to God unless he instructs it."

I thought about the ship I was on and what I wanted to do to Tyrese's brother. I looked at Bahari then back at Dad. I took a deep breath and said, "Okay." He tapped my cross and I started to slowly sink into the waterspout. My clothes were changing with the water splashing on me.

I felt my hair being cornrowed into braids. I was lifted back up to the top of the spout and had on a completely different look. I lowered myself back to Bahari and touched my hair and the new clothes I'm wearing. Bahari says, "Jaqweshia."

I answered, "Yes?"

“You need to rest, there’s an island near you can sleep on. I can take you there.” Bahari took me to a small island, I walked up a hill and layed down in a tree.

Bahari tells me, “The freighter you were on is near.”

“Take me there.” Bahari shoots me through the water like I’m a bullet flying through the air.

I don’t know where in the Caribbean I am, but I know there’s no land in sight. I made a waterspout circle the ship, I saw the whole crew flee to the main deck. I made a huge lake in the sky again with ease. I poured all of it on the main deck to flush them out of sorts. I hopped from one of the sprouts to a stacked crate.

I heard shouts and cries as I ran to the cockpit. Before I went in, I grabbed all the water I could and busted through the door. Inside I saw Tyrees and said, “Give me the keys to the crates.”

He says, “I knew you’d be back, but not like this.”

I slowly strutted to him and asked, “You thought you’d see my dead body floating in the sea? I might show up in another human traffickers stock? Or that I’d come back crawling to you cause I couldn’t survive the harsh ocean waters?”

“My brother is not here.” I got a flashback of what he did to me and I stepped back while holding my head.

I stood back up straight and said, “I’m not here for him. I told you what I want, so give it to me.”

“Revenge will not help you feel any better. I did my best to protect you from him”

I dragged more water from Bahari and said, “Need I remind you, that I begged you not to tell him I told you and because you did. He visited me again that night and you told me you’d protect me from him. You didn’t do shit to protect me from that rassclaat!” I took a deep breath and said, “Give me the keys to the crates. Now!”

A man’s voice, “They’re right here.” I turned around and he was standing there. I started to tremble as he said, “If you want them though... you gonna have to take them.”

My voice shook as I said, “I’m not afraid of you.”

“Doesn’t sound like it, but I mean I understand if you’re scared. I saw what you did outside, you’ve been acting up! You know there’s a consequence when you act up!”

He started walking towards me as I said, “Stay the hell away from me!” I shot him with water and it went right through him. I shoot him with water like I’m using a machine gun and every shot goes right through him.

“Thought you wanted the keys?” He grabs my arms, holds them with one hand. He punched me in my stomach and turned me around. I suddenly woke up screaming in a patch of grass.

I started hyperventilating saying, “No! No! No, stay away!” I got up and started running, I don’t know where I’m going, but I just need to get away from here. He’s gonna catch me, I know he will!

I slipped and slid down this hill. I finally reached the beach and jumped in the waves. I started swimming deeper and deeper into the teal blue waters. Bahari says, “Jaqweshia, Jaqweshia you’re okay. You’re safe, you don’t have to worry about him anymore.

You’re safe and far away from him. Breathe Jaqweshia, breathe. Take in a deep breath and exhale, breathe, exhale... you’re safe.”

“I thought he was right behind me, I... I thought he was.” I started breathing deeply and said, “I thought he was chasing me.”

“No, you’re safe and far away from him. Trust me I know where both of you are.”

“Oh okay.”

“Are you good now?”

“Yeah, I’m okay now.”

“Go back to the island, you need to eat.”

“Yeah right food... I’m not really hungry.”

“Jaqweshia I’m older than the land, humans, and animals that live on it. I know you need to eat.”

“Bahari I’m fine really I am.”

Bahari pushes me to the island and says, “Jaqweshia go eat something.”

“You want to play that game Bahari? We can play this game.” I lifted myself up and threw myself deep into the sea.

“You do know that you’re fighting with the ocean, right?” She pushes me all the back to the island.

I walked on the beach and said, “Are you serious?! I thought I was so post to be some sort of queen of the seas?!”

She laughs and says, “Yeah, go eat.”

“You’re really not gonna let me leave until I eat something?”

“Nope.”

I sighed loudly and said, “Fine!” I walked further in the forest, to find some way to find food. I saw some birds flying above my head. Where there’s birds there’s bird eggs. I climbed a tree and found a nest with three small eggs.

I took one and left the other two there, I don’t need to eat much anyway. I started a small fire and placed the egg in the middle. I started climbing a tree, grabbed a small vine of guineps, and I jumped down. I returned to my fire, peeling the skin off, and eating the fleshy fruit inside. After the egg was done cooking, I picked up a leaf, used it to grab the egg, and let the waves cool it down.

I crushed the shell and ate the egg inside. I put out the fire with sand and ran back to the ocean. She asked, “Did you eat?”

I sighed and said, “Yes I did, please don’t push me back to the island this time.”

“Why don’t you want to stay? Isn’t it nice?”

“It reminds me of Jamaica, so I’m not really excited to stay.”

“Why haven’t you gone home? Don’t you want to see your family again?”

“I can’t see my family again... not after what’s happened to me. They’d never see me the same way again, instead of the cousin who’s like a sister, I’d be the girl who was raped.”

“They’re your family, they deserve the right to know that you’re okay, safe, alive even.”

“Bahari, that's the thing... I’m not okay, I was raped and begged God for death. You say I’m alive but just barely, I was shot through my core center with a harpoon, and was given off the shelves headache medicine to treat the pain.” I start swimming deeper and deeper underwater.

“You know my waters cover most of the earth, land doesn’t even touch the percentage of the world I have.”

“What’s your point?”

“My point is you have the world in your hands, leaving only one question.”

“Which is?”

“If you’re not going home... where are you going?”

“I don’t know, but the Caribbean reminds me too much of home, I can’t stay here.”

“At least let them know you're alive.”

“I’ll think about it.”

“What are you gonna do now? Where are you even going?”

“I’m thinking maybe I might go to an island in Europe.”

“Europe? Why Europe?”

“I don’t know, I could start over there.”

“Maybe before you needed paperwork for everything. Jaqweshia you can’t just appear somewhere with no money, no papers, and nothing. You need to go home.”

“You know where all the remaining treasures under the sea are, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“There’s my money, right there.”

“Even if you did have the money, the journey to Europe is a long one. You’d need enough food for weeks, and you need rest stops at night. You’re not a fish or a dolphin and especially not a whale.”

“I can sleep a drift in the water like before, can't I?”

“It’s not healthy for you to sleep among all this salt water... Jaqweshia why won’t you really go home?”

“Why didn’t Agwe go home after he became captain of his own ship?”

“That’s different.”

“How? He was taken on a ship to be sold. I was taken, put on a ship, raped, and was about to be sold just like him. If I go home they’ll want to take revenge, they’ll want to go back to that freighter. I can’t let them get anywhere near that ship, I can’t even think of that damn thing.”

“You know they’ll go looking for it in search of you. Just go home.” I start to feel this queasy feeling in my stomach and after a minute I stop swimming. Bahari asks, “Jaqweshia why are you stopping?”

“I don’t feel good all of a sudden... Bahari take me back to that island now!!” She pushed me back to the sandy beach. I run to the first tree I see and I throw up everything I just ate. When I finally stop vomiting I put my hand into the water so I could hear Bahari.

She asked, “Jaqweshia are you okay?”

“I think I am yeah wait.” I ran back to the trees and hurled more than I had. I catch my breath and crawl back to the water.

I sit down as the waves crash against me with the sand. Bahari says, “Jaqweshia... I think you’re.”

I interrupt, “No don’t you dare finish that sentence! I’m fine!”

“Jaqweshia if you are.”

“Stop! Don’t say it!”

“If you are pregnant Jaqweshia then you really need to go back home. The baby wouldn’t do well with you floating in water for months.”

“So what? With everything that rasclaat did to me, along with this. Why the hell should I keep his baby?”

“You can’t take it out on the baby. He or she never did anything to anyone.”

I pause for a minute and say, “How am I so post to look them in the eye? I come back pregnant with some piece of shit’s child!”

“You didn’t ask to get pregnant, I understand... but your family should at least know they deserve that much.”

I sigh and say, “Fine, I’ll go back to tell them. I am not keeping this baby though.” I stand up and walk into Bahari’s waves and swim deeper and deeper. “Also if I have to throw up again, I won’t bother going to an island next time.”

She laughs and says, “Do you know how many people get seasick? As if I haven’t had someone puke in my waters.”

“Fair point. You’re just gonna have one more person to count in on that. Where am I anyway?”

“You’re leaving an island in the Northern Dominican Republic.”

“Okay any chance you can be a little more specific?”

“I’m not a map, I don’t remember what the town is called.”

“Perfect thank you so much. Where can I find someone who can tell me?”

“You’re going the right way, keep going you should find a little family sailing on a boat. You can ask them where you are.”

“Wait? Am I so post to appear out of nowhere looking like a soaked goddess and say “Hey can you tell me where I am?”

“Your idea, not mine. You wanted me to tell you where the nearest person is and I told you.”

“Well this is about to get interesting. Is there any way I can get there faster than swimming there?”

“Ahh there is a way.”

“Great, what is it?”

“You can fly there.”

“Fly? As in flying above water?”

“You could, or fly in water.”

I asked, “How do I fly in water?”

“First step is easy, you did it all the time. Feel my current, meld with the flow and move with it... move within it.”

“Okay, okay let me try.” I felt the flow of Bahari’s current, I started melding my rhythm with it, and waved my arms with ease. I started moving as if I was on dry land. I quickly started sinking to the bottom of the sea. I yelled, “Bahari! I’m sinking!!”

“You can breathe, why are you panicking?”

“I don’t want to be crushed under the pressure!”

“You won’t be, you melded with the current. You are with the current and the current can’t get crushed by it’s own waters.”

“Okay? That doesn’t mean I want to keep sinking!”

She sighs and says, “Move the water that will change the current and fly you wherever you want.” I pushed the water under me to go straight up and just like that I flew like a torpedo several feet above the water.

“Damn!” I landed back in the water and started to float again.

“As soon as you leave the water, you’ll go back to normal.”

“Oh okay, good to know. Where’s the boat?”

“Really? It’s literally to your right.”

“Oh.” I traveled through the current all the way to the boat. I hung back to listen to the people on board.

There’s a little boy playing with his parents. The sound of the boy yelling makes something in my stomach stir.

Bahari whispers, “Jaqweshia, you’re pregnant. Get out of the water!”

I whisper yelled, “Shut up!” I waved my arms yelling, “Help! Help me!” I could see them panicking as they were trying to figure out where I was yelling from.

The man yells, “Hold on!” He put on a life jacket, and jumped in the water. He grabbed me by my waist, his arms reminded me of my time on the freighter. I saw *his* face and started fighting back on instinct. He yelled, “Stop fighting me I’m trying to help you!”

He let go of my side and grabbed my arms. He used my arms to oust me to the boat, where I was able to climb onboard. I coughed up salt water back into Bahari, I stuck my arm in the water.

She said, "That was really good acting, pretending to panic."

I whispered, "I wasn't pretending." I felt the woman pat my back to get the rest of the water out of my system. I put my hand back into the boat when they turned me around to sit on my butt.

The woman asked me, "Where did you come from?"

The little boy asks, "Are you okay?"

I coughed one last time and said, "I'm fine, where am I?"

The lady said, "You're in the Samana Bay near Punta Balandra. Do you remember anything?"

"No, I don't." And I just realized that I can't just jump back into the water.

The man says, "Zoe get her inside, we need to go back to tierra (land)." Well, I did not think this through properly. What am I so post to do just get up and say thanks, then jump back in the water? Actually... maybe I can do that.

I stood up and said, "Gracias, no por favor. (Thanks, no please)."

He looked at me crazy and asked, "¿Qué!? (What)."

"Umm me Español es muy mal. (Umm my Spanish is very bad)."

"So why are you trying?"

"I don't know, I guess because I'm in the Dominican Republic. I have to go, thank you for telling me where I am though."

"What?! No, you're not going back out there!" He grabbed my arm and tried to bring me away from the edge. Just like that anxiety and panic ran through every ounce of my body.

I yelled, "Let go of me!!!"

I started hitting his arm, once free from his grip, he puts up his hands, and says, "Okay." I backed myself into the railing of the boat, I turned around and realized the fear they could see in my face.

I turned back to the confused family and said, "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come here."

The little boy says, "We just want to help you." I shut my eyes and turn away.

"You helped more than you know." I climbed the railing and jumped back into the ocean. I calmed down as soon as Bahari surrounded me again.

She says, “Jaqweshia, I think it’s time for you to go back home.”

“Yeah, yeah you’re right.” I didn’t realize how scarred I am, until just now. I flew out of the bay and headed out for the open ocean. After a whole day the furthest I get, is to a small island just outside of the bay. While I was searching for some food on the island, I heard angry thunder rolling in.

I ran to the shore and touched Bahari. I asked, “Bahari, what’s with the storm?”

She answered in a irie way, “Jehova wants the storm.”

“He does? Why?”

“I don’t know, I don’t ask. No point when it’s what he wants.”

“That’s true, but why so angry?” I walked off the beach as I saw the lightning take over the sky, with the help of the dominating thunder. I felt the winds pick up too, for whatever reason Jah wants this storm, he really wants it to be harsh.

I climbed a tree for some shelter and I heard a voice say, “Jaqweshia, you can make a coverage of water over the tree.”

I flicked around and asked, “Who said that?”

“Really? You were just talking to me, on the shore.”

“Bahari?”

“Yep.”

I laughed out of amazement and said, “I can hear you through the rain. This means I can hear you even on land.”

“Yeah, so coverage. Water. Now.”

“Right.” I held out my hand to hold the rain droplets, with them I formed a shield.

Then a different voice said, “Go to the shore.” Who said that? “Go to the shore.”

“Wait, I know that voice. Jah you want me to go to the shore?” I just remembered what Bahari said there’s no point in asking why God wants me to do something. All that matters is that he wants it done and he wants me to do it. I took my water shield with me to the beach.

Okay, what am I so post to be doing out here? Suddenly a flare was shot into the sky, but quickly put out by the rain. Oh well, I guess that’s why I’m out here. I threw my shield to the already wet sand, ran to the harsh ocean, and stopped. I can’t just go out there, if I try to fly in these waters I’m gonna be flinged around like the sand in the waves.

“Walk on the water.”

“Can I even do that Jah?”

“Yes, you can. Walk in the water like it’s solid earth.” I closed my eyes, took in two deep breaths, and started walking. After I took at least twenty steps, I opened my eyes and found myself standing on the water. “Now go.”

I went from walking to running, having to jump and climb over the small waves at the beginning. Huge waves began to roll in and I split each one in half to make a pathway for me to keep going uninterrupted. They shot another flare in the dark sky that led me to them. On my way there’s a ginormous wave trying to overtake me. It’s too big for me to cut into like before.

I pushed the water underneath me to launch me directly into it, I shot through it like a torpedo. I was left flying through the air, where I made a waterspout to catch me. From up here I can see the boat lights better, I’m dodging lightning strikes left and right to stay up here. I grabbed one of the rows of swirling water and used its momentum to toss me onto the boat’s deck. Once I landed, I dispersed the spout into water droplets.

I yelled, “Bahari!! Go easy with it will you!!”

She said, “I can’t, I’m sorry.” I sighed loudly and rose up the water under the boat to match the height of the waves attacking it. Blue light started to shine from my neck, when I looked down, I found it coming from my cross. I yelled from frustration while splitting the twenty foot waves and changing the direction of the current back to the island.

I felt the rain falling on my face, I wonder if I can... I reached out and stopped the rain from falling. I jumped up and climbed up the drops like a ladder. With my cross shining brighter and brighter I yelled, “Jah gave me the seas, you’ll calm down. Now!”

Just like that the waters began to rest and I was able to push the boat to the island I was resting on. When the boat and I were safely on the island, I faced the calm seas from the wet sandy beach. I put my hands back in the water and said, “As you were.” Instantly Bahari went back to her rough currents.

I ran back to the boat’s deck and began searching it to see if anyone survived. I went into a kitchen, saw someone and said, “It’s safe now, you can come out.” They followed me out the boat and on solid land. They followed me under the trees and I created a shield of water over us to keep us dry. It’s dark, and I can’t really see them very well, but they kind of look like that family from earlier today.

Lightning strikes showing me their faces and shows mine. I can see them a lot clearer for two seconds and then ask, “Why were you out there?”

The man says, “¿jQue!? (What?!). You jumped in the water like tu es suicidia! (You are suicidal!) We were looking for you!”

I yelled back, “I didn’t ask you to come looking for me! I’m perfectly capable in the water.” Before he says anything else his wife puts her hand on his arm as if to say “stop.”

She says, “We were worried and wanted to make sure you were okay. La tormenta (The storm) came from nowhere. Before we could turn back the olas (waves) we’re too much. Thank you for saving us.”

I replied, “You’re welcome, but I honestly wouldn’t have seen you had you not shot those flares.”

The little boy asked, “How did you save us?” Another lightning strike lit up the sky even brighter, so they could see what was keeping them dry. They stared at the shield for a moment then they looked at me with what looked like a combination of amazement and confusion, but mostly fear.

I looked away from them and said, “It wasn’t easy, Bahari’s waves were really tough out there.” The boy stood up and touched the shield.

He said, “You can control water!” His mother grabbed him as if to protect him from me.

She asked, “How? How is this possible?”

I looked at their fear and said, “You don’t have to be afraid of me. I’m not going to hurt you. It’s a long story how I got my powers, but just know that God gave them to me.”

The man yelled, “You’re a bruja (witch)!”

“I am not a bruja! (witch)!”

“Why did you pretend to drown in the bay?!”

“I needed to know where I was, and that seemed like the best way to find out. I don’t know if they are looking for me or not, so I didn’t want to go into town.”

The wife asked, “Who is looking for you?”

I sat there in silence for a while before I answered, “I don’t know what they’re called exactly, but all I know is they were going to sell me in Bermuda.”

“Sell? Human traffickers?”

“Yeah, it’s a long story I’d rather not remember.” I stared at my fidgeting hands. The little boy slowly got out of his mother’s grip and hugged me.

His dad demanded, “Issac get away from her, we don’t know who she is!”

I looked in his eyes, he could see my pain and trauma without me having to say a word. It’s something about his innocent eyes that makes me break out crying. It’s almost like he wants to help me, without knowing what he’s helping me with. I started venting, “I didn’t ask for it! No one ever asks for that!”

His mother asked, “What do you mean?”

“I didn’t ask to be taken to that damn freighter! I didn’t ask to get pregnant!” I can’t hear anything over my sobbing afterwards. Suddenly I was surprised with both of them hugging me.

“Oh cariña (honey) I’m so sorry.”

“I don’t even want this damn baby!”

“Let’s start this over. Hola me nombre es Zoe y (Hello my name is Zoe and) this is me (my) husband Miguel. This is me miyo (my son) Issac of the Dominican Republic and we want to thank you for saving us.” I wiped the tears from my eyes and the snot from my nose.

“I’m Jaqweshia of Jamaica. You’re welcome, I want to apologize for this burst out. It’s just you have no idea what I’ve been through.”

“You don’t have to tell us if you don’t want to.” I floated the tears from my face along with the snot and threw it to the dirt.

“Try to get some sleep, you should be able to get back home tomorrow.”

Miguel asks, “Will the roof collapse if you fall asleep?”

“It shouldn’t, but I’m still learning how to control my powers, so I don’t know.” They back up and sit on the other side where they were before. I turned around and laid down on my side to try to get some sleep.

I woke up on something soft, almost like a couch. I got up, turned around, and that’s when I noticed. I’m on the freighter again! I yelled, “Nooooo!!! No damn it! I got out!”

“Watch your mouth!” I know that voice it’s... him.

“I’m not afraid of you! You piece of shit!” I struck him with the water in the bottle next to me, but it went right through him. I backed up, saying, “No, no no no no!” I kept throwing water at him until he grabbed my hands and turned me around.

With my hand behind my back he whispers, “Now is that any way to treat your baby’s daddy?”

I started fighting and yelled, “Get off of me!! I’m not pregnant, and I’m definitely not pregnant with your baby!!”

“Oh no? That means I should probably put it in you again to see if I can get someone else to come out.” My yelling and fighting turned into cries and desperate struggle.

I cried, “No! Please! Just leave me alone!! What do you want from me?!!”

“I want you to find me. Find me or I’ll be back each and every night.”

“Find you? Why the hell would I want to see you in my waking life!?”

“Look for me. Don’t look for me, either way I’ll be back in your dreams until I’m found.” His fingers trail off under my pants and he continues to whisper, “Who knows, maybe one night I’ll even get in these and see if I can give you twins.”

“Noooo!! Leave me alone!!” Everything starts getting blurry and all I can do is keep yelling. “Leave me alone!! Get off me!!”

When I come to, I can see Miguel shaking me awake. I jumped up and started running, yelling, “He won’t leave me alone!! I have to get away from him!”

I can hear them in the distance, “Jaqweshia, wait!” I reached Bahari, I fell to the water and yelled, “Bahari!! He keeps appearing in my dreams?! Every night he’s in my dreams!”

She says, “I don’t know what you’re talking about Jaqweshia, but you need to calm down. Calm down okay.”

“No, I can’t!”

Zoe asks, “Who are you talking to?” I turned around to see Zoe and her family coming out from the trees.

“Bahari, she’s the ocean.”

Miguel slowly walks up to me and says, “It’s okay, I’m not going to hurt you. We want you to go back to our boat and maybe we can take you back to our house, possibly get you back home.”

“I don’t know about home, but it’d be nice to be in a building again.”

Bahari yells, “Jaqweshia, go home!” I got off my knees and out of range from the water, so I can’t hear Bahari anymore.

Zoe asked, “You were dreaming about the freighter?”

“Yeah, I was.” Once we were all on board, I stood on top, and surrounded the boat with water. I lifted us, right back in the current. Issac flew off upon impact, Zoe screamed right when I sprouted a small waterspout catching him just before he fell overboard. I lifted him up and he jumped in my arms, I let him down on the deck. “Sorry, I should’ve warned you to hold on to something.”

Zoe hugs Issac and says, “Thank you again. Go rest down stairs, we can sail back home from here.”

Just then I got a flash back of my dream, I shook my head, and said. “No, trust me sleep is the last thing I need right now. Besides, I can get us there faster.”

She puts her hand on my shoulder and says, “You’re tired Jaqweshia, rest.”

Issac tugs my cover up and says, “Rest for us please.”

I closed my eyes and admitted, “Okay, I guess I could shut my eyes for just a few minutes.” I went below deck where I found the kitchen, I smelled the remnants of whatever was cooked in here before. My stomach and the smell began a war stirring up whatever was left in me. Until finally my stomach had one last thing to say. I ran back outside and threw up more than what I had.

With my last dry heave, I collapsed on the deck floor out of breath. Zoe picks me up and takes me to her bedroom. She asks, “Do you throw up like that often?”

I looked down and answered, “It started shortly after I escaped.”

“¿Estás... embarazada? (You’re pregnant)?”

I hung my head while sighing and said, “Sí, I’m pregnant. I’m pregnant with a rassclaat’s baby.” Tears start to roll down my eyes, slowly but still painfully.

“What happened to you?”

“I made a few mistakes, and ended up in hell.”

She sits me down on a bench built into the wall and says, “You shouldn’t be out on the water like that if you’re with child. The baby won’t survive.”

“What if I don’t want it to survive? How am I supposed to come back home pregnant with a low life’s baby? If I lose it, then I could go back home without too much embarrassment.”

“Ohhh cariña (honey). You can’t kill this baby, because of what your family might think of you. That’s not fair.”

“Fair? You think that it’s fair that some man raped me into this? After I was shot in the back with a harpoon, attacked by a great white, and freed twelve girls just like me?! You think it’s fair that I had to get taken so that my cousins could escape?”

Zoe’s face looked horrified and surprised as she shook her head while saying. “No sé qué decir. (I don’t know what to say).”

I leaned back on the wall and said, “Please just don’t tell me what is and isn’t fair.” I placed my hand over my stomach, knowing exactly what’s happening inside and not a clue on what to do about it.

“I don’t know what you went through, and I won’t even try to pretend like I know what it felt like. I have to go help the boys sail the boat, but I’ll leave you with this one last thought. That monster may have gotten you pregnant, but this is your baby too.” After she went back up the deck, I looked around and saw a water bottle on a shelf. I grabbed it, poured the water on my hands and listened for Bahari’s voice.

“She’s right Jaqweshia, this is your kid too. You’ve been asking why you should keep his child, when this is your child too.”

“I know!” I started crying with the thought of killing my own baby. “What am I supposed to do though?! Every time I lay my eyes on that little one, I’ll remember everything that its father took from me. I don’t want my family to treat it any worse than I might unintentionally.”

“That’s why you don’t want to go home. You think your family will be happy to see you, but horrified that you’re pregnant.”

“I don’t know what to think.”

“I’ll tell you this, staying away from home isn’t going to get rid of the worry your family has for you. Ignoring your problems isn’t going to get rid of them.”

“I need to be alone.”

“Jaqweshia!” I grabbed a towel and dried off my hands. I can’t kill this baby, but I’m not having a monster’s kid. What if it’s a boy and ends up being just like his father? The thought of it made tears roll down my eyes.

I’m not ready to be a mother, I can’t be a mother, not to this baby. I know what it’s like to grow up without your parents, at least I had my aunt to raise me. I can’t go through the struggles of child labor though! The pain, emotional unbalance, the hunger, I can’t go through with this! Jah... he can take the baby from me.

I took some time to clear my head, closed my eyes, layed down, and tried my best to fall asleep. I woke up in Jamaica, I looked around and yelled, “Jah! Jah! Jah!” I didn’t see him anywhere, suddenly the grass died around me. I ran to a tree and climbed it; then it turned brown until it also died. I screamed, “Jah! Jesus!”

“Jump off the cliff and into the water!” I turned my head and saw Jesus near the end of a cliff. I smiled with relief, jumped off the branch, and started running towards him.

I suddenly heard someone else yell, “No Jaqweshia!! Don’t listen to him!” I turned around and saw Jesus behind me standing on the only patch of grass that’s still alive. He continued, “Don’t get fooled by Satan so easily!”

I shot my head back at the man I was about to run after and he said, “Don’t listen to him! I am Jesus, jump in the water, you’re safe in the water.”

“No! He’s lying to you! Satan wants you to run away from your problems until they catch up with you! It doesn’t matter if you’re in the water or not... you’re always safe with me.”

I slammed my hands on both my ears while they fought to convince me of who was the real Jesus. I screamed until I woke up back in the master bathroom. Sweat fell off my head like a waterfall. Zoe came inside and said, “Hey we’re here.” She saw my state and asked, “Are you okay? What happened?!”

I looked up to her, wiping the sweat off my forehead and said, “I wish I knew. Maybe it’s the pregnancy?”

“Well then let’s get you on dry land quickly.” I thought that my dreams of that monster were bad enough. Now I have a literal war going on in me. Halfway up to the deck she grabs a towel, and wraps it around me.

I asked, “What is this for?”

“You don’t want people to see your jewelry. They will follow us home. Where did you get something this beautiful anyway?”

I grabbed my cross and answered, “Jah, umm I mean... Jehovah gave it to me after I escaped.” She stares at me with bewildered written all over her face. “What?”

“Oh it’s nothing, it’s just beautiful. I don’t know where you can get anything like that unless you rob a museum.”

When we finally came up to the deck, men walking by the dock started whistling at me saying, “¡Hola Mamacita bonita! ¿De dónde eres?(Hey pretty Mamacita! Where are you from?)”

Zoe rolled her eyes and whispered, “Don’t give them any attention.” She turned back to them and yelled, “Ay! ¡Vete a la mierda! No pussy aqui!(Ay! Go fuck off! No pussy here!)” She walked me off the boat when both those men came back to us angry as they were annoying.

One of them said laughing, “Ella es luchadora, me gusta chicas luchadora. (She is feisty, I like feisty girls.)” They started getting closer and closer. I got flashbacks of my dreams as they got closer, until it meshed into my clear vision. I’m on the dock, but it’s... him who’s approaching me. On instinct I pushed him, and he flew off the dock.

I gasped, “I didn’t think he’d fall in the water... I’m sorry.” I guess fighting that storm made me stronger... but how strong does that make me then?

Zoe grabbed my arm and said, “Come on, he’s fine.” Is he okay? He landed in the water so he should be okay, besides he shouldn’t have come up to me like that. Zoe and her husband took me to their house through their car window. I looked at the road. The people, the country, it reminds me of Jamaica... maybe I should go home.

Aluna would’ve taken all those men on if she had to, she would’ve taken me to shore. I was injured, I probably would’ve died if she tried to take me. I know Hali is probably blaming Aluna for my disappearance. If I go back home she’ll blame her for what I’ve been through too... When it was really her’s, I would’ve never been there if she didn’t convince me to play hero. Aluna warned her about playing hero and she still dragged me into it.

Now because of her I could be... be be; my eyes fill with tears, but I can’t seem to release the dam. I can’t even think of the word, I don’t want to give it any power. That monster did it to me, but Hali exposed me to the monster. The tears finally roll down my face in silence, Issac grabs my hand as if he can feel my pain. It feels like no one can see what I’m going through, but him as if I’m transparent to him only.

He squeezed my hand and said, “You’re going to be okay.” I don’t think he understands what happened to me, but if there was ever a clear message from Jah that was definitely it. A sense of sleepiness came over me, as he guided my head on his lap. With every second my eyes got heavier and heavier until I just stopped fighting it.

I heard Jah’s voice as I was swept to sleep, “Don’t worry Jaqweshia, I will take care of everything. Rest my child.”

Isaac gently woke me up when we got to their house. Zoe asked me through the open car door, “Hey, are you okay? No bad dreams?”

I stood up and out of the car, studying my surroundings. They have a really nice house, it’s huge. I looked back at Zoe and said, “No, I don’t think I had a dream.”

She placed her hand on my forehead and said, “You’re not burning up, that’s good. Let’s get you inside.”

We walked into their house, Zoe took me to a guest bedroom and left me there to rest. I heard God’s voice on the road; what did he say? I sat on the bed and said, “I searched for him and the one time I heard his voice I can’t remember what he said!” My stomach growls loud, so loud I thought it was Aluna’s.

I walked to the door and opened it, and found Miguel standing outside. He stumbled at first and said, “While on the road, we uh bought you this.” He handed me a plastic bag and said, “It’s a uh prueba de embarazo.” He scratches the back of his head and walks away awkwardly.

I closed the door and pulled a box out of the plastic bag. It has a picture of a pregnancy test on the cover. My breath got caught in my throat, I sat back down thinking to myself. I guess “prueba de embarazo” means “test of pregnancy.” My hands begin to tremble holding the box, it has some kind of power against me.

I threw it on the bed, but my hands continue to shake. I rushed them through my braids and said, “Why am I so scared of it?” Sounds coming from the door give me flashbacks of the freighter. The times of hopeless wishes that it wasn’t him who walked through the cockpit door. On instinct I hid behind the bed when the door was opened.

“Jaqweshia? Are you ready to eat?” I don’t know why I can’t get out of this child’s position, I know that’s Zoe’s voice... I still can’t move. Eventually she finds me hiding, and asks, “Que te pasa?(What’s wrong?)”

I manage to whisper, “I can’t move. He might find me.”

She sighs and picks me up and says, “Jaqweshia, you are safe.” Three words that I’ve missed so much, they’re like heavenly music to my ears. She continued, “You are safe, and he’s never going to hurt you again. No one here is going to hurt you.”

I cried, “You’re wrong! He’s still hurting me!” I pointed at the pregnancy test on the bed.

When Zoe sees it, she asks, “Have you taken it?” I shook my head and looked down at the floor. She lifted my head and said, “That’s okay, you can take it when you’re ready. I just thought it would be better if you were sure, and it might be the first step you take in healing.” I got off the ground, took the box and put it back into the plastic bag.

I don’t know if there is any chance for healing from what happened to me. Zoe takes my hands and asks, “I heated up some leftover food from last night’s dinner. You want me to bring it to you?” I nodded my head and she left to go get the food. I sat down on the bed, it’s early in the day, but I feel exhausted.

Issac walks in my room and looks at me confused. He sits next to me and asks, “Do you want my leftovers too?”

His sweet gesture gave me the blessing of a chuckle. I answered, “Thank you, but your mother is getting my food. You are very sweet, but you can hang on to your food.”

“Oh, okay. Is there anything else I can do to help you?”

“You’re a good kid, but unfortunately there isn’t anything you can do for me right now.” Why does it feel like this little boy can see right through me, and see my pain? It’s his innocent eyes, there’s something about them that seems so... untouched. He knows no true pain, or what it is like to have your world ripped away from you. I asked, “Well there is one thing you could do for me.”

“What is it?”

“Could you get me a glass of water?”

“Yeah, sure.” He takes off running on his little legs. Makes me think having a kid wouldn’t be too bad. Having one with the love of my life, not with the man I hate more than anything in this world.

Zoe comes back with a plate of food and says, “I hope you enjoy pollo guisado y mangú. I’ll make sure no one comes into your room, if you need anything don’t be afraid to ask.”

I softly responded, “Thank you, I think Issac wanted to bring me water.”

“Oh, he’s so sweet.”

He came running in handing me a glass of cold water. I took it from him and thanked him. They left me with the steamy food and cold water. I’m hungry. I know that, but I have no desire to eat.

Drinking the water I hear Bahari yelling, “Jaqweshia!” I already know what she’s going to say, ‘I need to eat.’

Ignoring her, Jah's voice echoes through the room, "My child, you must eat."

I threw my hands in the air and said, "Oh come on! You too?"

"Eat." I can't ignore him, like I can her. I picked up the fork and began eating. It tastes good, reminding me why I loved eating in the past. Once I started eating, I couldn't stop.

Never realized how starved my body was. I looked into the glass of water and poured it on my hand. Bahari sounds relieved when she speaks, "Oh thank God, you're eating. How do you feel?"

I licked my fork and said, "I feel hungry, I wonder if I can have some more food."

She laughs and says, "You haven't had a decent meal for a while, it only makes sense."

"Yeah, but it could be something else too." I looked at the plastic bag holding that cursed box.

"I know you're scared, but many of the reasons you believe yourself pregnant are also signs of trauma. Which you definitely are experiencing. Taking this test could help put your worries at ease." It never once came to my mind that all the signs of pregnancy I've been experiencing could just be symptoms of trauma. I reached for the bag... someone opened the door, snapping me back to my original spot.

Zoe walks in and asks, "Sorry, I just wanted to bring you these clothes." She notices the plate she gave me was wiped clean. She asked, "Did you want more? You seem to be hungry."

I looked back down at the plate and said, "If it's not too much? I didn't realize how hungry I was."

She chuckles and says, "I know what you mean." Is she implying that I'm pregnant?

I blurt out, "I don't know if I'm pregnant! I haven't eaten well the past few days, that could be the reason for my appetite." She realizes her mistake in her previous words.

She says taking my plate, "You're right, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...". She pauses and leaves, making the room quiet again. I don't know what to do, I can't go to sleep, but I can't stay here either or go home. My glass of water called out to me, and at that moment I figured out what I could do.

I lifted the water out of the glass cup in a swirl. I always just used my powers in necessity, I never really played around to see what I could do. I formed little bubbles with the water, and flew them all around me. Changing their form from bubbles to stars, hearts, and circling them around me. It feels like I'm seeing the true beauty of my powers for the first time.

I was so swept up in my creation that I didn't notice Zoe come in until she knocked on the door frame. I dropped the water on the carpet by accident when I turned around. I looked at the floor and said, "Sorry, I lost my focus."

She shook her head and said, "Don't worry about it. I'll clean it up, here." She handed me a plate of food and a bottle of water.

"No." She stared at me confused and I finished my thought. "No, I can get it." Placing the plate down, I turned around to the spilled water, and pulled it from the carpet floor.

"Oh right, thank you." She turns around and walks out the door frame. Before completely leaving she turns back and says, "You know I didn't mean anything mal (bad) when I bought the prueba de embarazo (pregnancy test). Yo soy (I am) just trying to help."

"I... I know, I just can't. I uhh, I can't be wrong; I just CAN'T be wrong!" She gives me a side hug. "If I'm wrong, then that makes this even worse."

"Jaqweshia, I have a question for you?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you know how to get home?" I didn't say a word, I honestly don't know how I can go home after all this. Zoe asked, "Don't you want to go home?" Maybe I should, but if I'm preg... *if I'm pregnant* then how am I supposed to look Hali in the eyes. Her heroine journey got me in this mess, and the thought of looking at her after this... seems impossible.

Zoe looks me in the eyes and asks, "Do you have family back in Jamaica?"

That I can answer, "Yes, I do."

"You don't want to see them again?" I honestly don't know, Aluna warned me, Hali encouraged me, Mama would love me, Mjomba... would he hate me?

"I... I don't know."

"I see, you can stay here for as long as you want... but you have to take that prueba (test). I can't help you without knowing, no one here can help without knowing." I looked at the cursed box in terror. She turned my chin facing her and said, "More importantly you can't heal without knowing."



I walked to the bed, grabbing the box from the bag, and opened it. The package is pretty simple, I have to pee on one end and if it's positive, it'll show two red lines. If it's negative, only one red line will appear in the middle. Zoe walked me to the bathroom for me to take the test.

When I walked out the bathroom Zoe's whole family was outside waiting for the result. It took a second for it to come out clearly, I saw one line appear and my heart almost jumped with joy. I've just been going through the symptoms of trauma. My limbs went numb from relieve and I fell to the ground, dropping the test on the floor.

With my eyes shut refusing to come out, I felt someone pick me up. It was Zoe and Miguel, they were lifting me. I could barely stand on my own two feet, tears of joy just took up too much energy for me to stand.