

The Fishman

Now he was standing before me, a tall fish-like figure with rotting teeth. I was told that creatures like this only real in old folk tales or in the stories that Joe the fisherman used to tell me – that is until he disappeared in an expedition a few years back. Joe wanted to prove that Fishmen were real and gave his life for this research, now there was one standing right before my feet. The wrenching fish smell reminded me of the fish market where people would even bargain for half rotten fish just to be able to feed their families.

He takes a step as I hold my breath, the sound of flopping like a fish on dry land echoed in the small alleyway. Adrenaline was now rushing through me and out of nowhere I find myself ignoring all the signs and put my hand out. The slimy to the touch monster was now centimetres away from me, there was no escaping him, and it was up to him what was going to happen to the both of us.

Standing there for a few minutes felt like hours but I couldn't dare to scream, I knew that if somebody else saw him he would get shot down, tied to a table surrounded by a group of cruel scientists. Now I was feeling an urge to help him but I needed a safe place to take him, but where? I'm rushing things too much, first I need him to trust me. Didn't have much time to think because somebody walked in to the alleyway and screamed at the fright of seeing a real Fishman, out of nowhere I find myself grabbing his scaly wrist and I start running out of the alleyway and into the dark tunnel that led to Joe's secret study hideout in hope of finding something useful in there.

Running through the grass and bushes I didn't even realise that I wasn't holding anything in my hand anymore, my heart skips a beat. I prepare myself to turn around and see him shot and wrapped in a net, how I could be so reckless, I failed Joe. As I took a deep breath and turned around I saw a young man dressed in scale like suit with a fish like tattoo on his neck.

"Professor Joe did tell me not to introduce myself like that but I couldn't help myself" he chuckled,

"Now will you stop running away and come with me, he wants to see you again". There is no way that it is true, Joe is dead. The wind is howling in my ears like the wolves on a full moon, putting his hand on my shoulder – I retract and start running for the nearest hiding place. I never ran so fast in my life but still he kept up, the muddy road seemed endless.

Either side of me there was tall towering grass and stinging nettles, there were no shortcuts this time - there was only the road ahead. My heart was racing like a wild rabbit on a sugar high, the bottom of the shoes accumulated a cloud of mud – I wasn't going to stop now, I was too close to the main street. Just a few more steps and I will be safe but he grabs my arm and pulls me around one of the corners.

There we were again in yet another dark alleyway, the towering buildings made it seem like the walls were closing in on me. The shadows were hugging us, embracing us in their darkness. Cold air was blowing my hair covering my face, blocking my vision I couldn't help but ask myself how could this happen. How could he just turn human? Running back to the alleyway was a bad idea, he had me cornered – there was no escaping him now. What made me run away from him, was it the thought that he told me that Joe was still alive or the fact that Joe's stories were real and these creatures existed? He is the one that needs to gain my trust now, as he grabbed my wrist I felt comfort – he just nodded and I nodded back. That reminded me of something Joe used to do, he would nod at me but as he would do that his left eye would twitch a little.

Walking out of the alleyway and onto the enlightened busy street I can't help but think the people would be looking at him like an intruder but it was just my thoughts playing tricks because I saw him in his true form. The little kids running after each other made him smirk as we passed by the park, couples walking hand in hand as the sun reflected off their tinted glasses. Grandparents and their grandchildren sitting on benches reading stories together, reminding me of the times that Joe would show me his analysis books and tell me stories about the different creatures hiding in the deep blue sea. Suddenly a biker passes through a puddle and some water splashes on us, a look of horror appears on his face and he diverts and runs down the footpath leading to the river.

Running after him was like trying to catch a toddler with chocolate on their hands from ruining your furniture. Running through the muddy footpath I couldn't help but slip a few times, why was he running to the water? Remembering one of Joe's stories I remember that Fishmen are very sensitive to water, that made me run faster I couldn't let anybody see him turn to a Fishman.

"I see that is your weakness" I said sarcastically.

"Well we are not all resistant to water" he says as he pokes his fish-like head out of the water. I chuckled as I handed him my jumper to pat himself dry. The sun shone on him gills making him a disco ball. The bright lights turned into fire-fly pieces of dust that melted the gills of him like an ice cream on a hot summer day.

"Now that I am not a fish anymore, should we get going?" he questioned as he started to make his way back up the footpath. I nodded, following him back up the slip n slide like hill.

This was the first time in months that I laughed, this creature was now my friend, my guide that will lead me to Joe. We made our way to the study so that he can tell me how I will get there.

"This is the part that I am least excited for" he said disgustedly. As the firefly like lights appeared again before me, he turned back to a Fishman.

"I don't mean to scare you but I will need to swallow you whole so you don't drown on the journey" as he said his last words, his mouth extended to a round shape. I hop onto a table to be able to get in and slide down, then everything went black.

As I start to wake up, I can feel the hot sand burning my skin. "It is nice to finally see you again", said Joe.