

They all told me to stay away. To not venture too deep. To stay away from grasping hands with smiling eyes. To avoid lush shores with tides consumed.

But her waters were so sweet. The smell of her perfume, how could I deny? She called to me every night! Every night! To me!

Everyone else despised her green shores and trampled bays. Everyone else hated her hands cold with slime. But not me! No, I am her sacred knight. A prince in disguise. But much better, her loyal captain. A voyager never deterred.

Mother told me not to venture far. Father told me not to live boldly. Sister told me not to go alone. Brother told me not to lie.

But I wasn't lying, no, she was real! And how could I not go alone when you teased her so! And how could I not be bold in this race of reality! Tell me! How could I not leave in the face of freedom?

Only grandfather knew! He patted my head, smiling at me with wrinkles abound. He folded my captain's hat, ordering me to wait for him at the shores. He promised to take the boat with me, and we'd see the princess of the lake. But grandfather never came. I waited by the skiff. I waited a very long time. But it's just me and my captain's hat now.