

The Lighthouse Curator

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It was three days till the September full moon. Marisa, a reddish brown timber wolf, could always tell when the full moon was near by the wildness she felt stirring deep inside of her. Marisa had decided to go for a walk on the beach after she'd had yet another fight with her parents earlier that day. It seemed as though her parents were always after her about something, her appearance, grades, friends or lack there of, attitude, anything and everything. She often heard her parents fighting about her and saying she was going through a "phase". Marisa never understood how her parents could call everything in her life a "phase", they didn't seem to get it that this *was* her. But at the beach none of that seemed to matter, it was as if the ocean waves not only washed over the sand but also over her mind, clearing it and calming her.

Marisa slipped off her sandals and walked close to the waters edge, allowing the salty water to wash over her feet and wet her fur. To Marisa the beach at night was a perfect painting and orchestra all in one. The sound of the waves crashing against the rocks at the base of the cliff, the whistle of the wind, the cry of the gulls and sandpipers all seemed to sing a beautiful and haunting melody. When Marisa was at the beach it made her feel as though there was a whole wide world out there just waiting to be explored.

Eventually Marisa left the waters edge and climbed up the hillside towards the old lighthouse. When Marisa reached the top of the hill she turned and walked parallel to the lighthouse, along the edge of the cliff out to the tip of the bluff over looking the water. With a sigh she sat down at the edge of the cliff and closed her eyes, allowing the breeze coming off the ocean, to wash over her, ruffling her fur. After a few minutes of sitting there quietly Marisa suddenly thought she heard someone talking, she quickly

opened her eyes and peered through the darkness behind her. She saw nothing moving anywhere, but the talking continued. Finally Marisa peered over the edge of the cliff and was surprised to see an older looking lynx standing on the rocks down below at the base of the cliff. The lynx was wearing a long black trench coat that flapped in the breeze, and he appeared to be talking to someone, but there was no one in sight. Marisa laid down on her stomach with her head sticking out over the cliff and listened closely, willing her ears to pick up on the words floating on the wind.

“You know, you weren’t always here.” The lynx was saying as he pointed toward the ocean. “The earth used to be all land no water in sight, oh it rained of course but the water never stuck around. No sir, oceans, lakes, rivers none of it was here, it all started because of the goddess Deirdre. I know everyone says the gods and goddesses of legend are all fake, and most of them were, but some of them really did exist. Deirdre was real, she was most known for her constant sadness, I mean she’d start crying at the smallest things. There was one thing that always made her happy though, she was deeply in love with a warrior tiger named Ochen. Deirdre and Ochen were madly in love and planned to be married, then one day a demon named Ghidora came to their town and began destroying everything in sight. Ochen went with the other warriors to try to defeat Ghidora. The battle raged on for what seemed like forever, but finally Ghidora was beaten, but Ochen had sustained many injuries. His injuries were treated and he was sent home to Deirdre but unfortunately Ochen died in Deirdre’s arms just a few days after returning home. Deirdre’s heart was broken and she began to cry. She cried for days and days, without realizing it more than a month had gone by with her crying never ceasing. When Deirdre finally stopped crying she looked around and realized her tears had not just dried up, instead they had gathered into large bodies of water. Deirdre was so exhausted from crying for so long that she collapsed and fell into the water and was never heard from again. That’s how you got your name; you were named in memory of the great warrior tiger, Ochen.”

Marisa continued to watch the lynx down below; he seemed to still be talking but had lowered his voice to what appeared to be an intimate whisper. Before long Marisa heard a shrill whistling sound coming from the dark night behind her. She was straining so hard to hear what the lynx was saying that the whistle caught her off guard causing her to sit up and spin around. Marisa knew what the whistle meant, it was her parents, whenever she was out of the house her parents blew the whistle to call her home, it was

much easier than just yelling. Marisa stood and took a few steps toward home then remembered the lynx below and turned back to the cliff. By the time Marisa returned to the edge of the cliff the lynx was gone. Marisa looked up and down the beach hoping to see a retreating figure, but there was no movement in sight. She continued peering around in hopes of catching sight of the lynx, but a few minutes passed and still nothing, and soon she heard her parents whistle again meaning they were growing impatient. Marisa gave up her fruitless search for the lynx and turned and hurried home to bed.

Marisa tossed and turned, unable to sleep, wondering where the lynx had come from, or for that matter where he had gone. She'd lived in this house near the beach for most of her life, but she didn't remember ever seeing this lynx around. Marisa didn't believe in ghosts but this made her wonder. She finally drifted off to sleep with the plan to return the next night.

The next day Marisa could hardly concentrate in school. Her mind kept wondering back to the ocean and the story the lynx had told. She kept wondering why the lynx seemed to be telling bedtime stories to the ocean. None of it made any sense to Marisa. School finally let out for the day and Marisa rushed home hoping to go straight to the rocks to look for signs of the lynx. Unfortunately Marisa's mother was still upset about their fight the night before and was still in "punishment" mode. She greeted Marisa at the front door with a list of chores with orders to do every chore on the list before she could do anything else. It was nearly night fall when Marisa finally made it away from the house and out to the cliffs. Just as she sat down on the edge of the cliff the lynx appeared from behind a large boulder. The lynx quickly climbed up onto a rock and sat down. For a long time all was quiet and Marisa began to wonder if she should get closer. Finally, in a voice that sounded heavy with tears, the sound of the lynx's voice floated up to where Marisa perched on the cliffs edge.

"A long time ago there was an extremely beautiful mermaid. She had long brown hair that would float around her face in the ocean currents, and green eyes that seemed to see right into your heart. Mind you no one could ever match up to my Sandy but they said this mermaid was very pretty. She was also very kind; she would nurse any sick animal back to health, hardly leaving their side. Every mermaid is blessed with an amazing voice and this one was no exception, only difference was she only sang to lift the spirits of those around her. One day the mermaid heard the sound of a hurt animal and

followed the noise in hopes of finding and helping the hurt creature. As the mermaid swam around a large underwater rock hill, she realized too late that it was a trap. It was not a hurt creature calling out but a large water dragon known for his horrible greed and meanness. The dragon grabbed the mermaid and pulled her into his cave nearby where he tied her to the wall and told her because she was the most beautiful sea creature, he planned to have her for his bride. Before long the mermaid's best friend, a kind and handsome merman began to wonder where she had gone to and began to search for her. After a while of searching for her the merman happened upon the dragons cave and noticed his best friend tied up inside. The merman raced inside and quickly untied his friend, grabbed her by the hand and hurried outside just as the dragon returned to the main room and saw the couple retreating from the cave. The dragon roared in anger, throwing his head back and spitting fire. When he roared though he caused a rock slide which proceeded to block the entrance to the cave, trapping the dragon inside. All the dragon could do was sit and wait for his death to come. Every now and then the dragon gets angry all over again at the fate he has been given and he spews fire forth from his mouth again. That is what caused the Hawaiian volcano, Mauna Loa.

Upon finishing this story the lynx again started quietly talking and Marisa laid back to stare at the night sky and think about the love in both stories. It seemed to Marisa that the lynx wanted to convey love in his stories as if it was his way of telling someone that he loved them. Without realizing it Marisa drifted off to sleep and woke again a while later to find the lynx already gone. Marisa slowly got to her feet and headed home.

The next morning Marisa woke up suddenly from a disturbing dream involving the lynx. She couldn't remember what happened in the dream, only that it scared her and that she needed to go to the cliff immediately. Marisa hurried out of bed got dressed and nearly ran to the cliff by the lighthouse. As soon as she reached the edge of the cliff Marisa looked out over the ocean but saw nothing. After a few minutes of scanning the skyline Marisa looked down to the waters edge and saw the lynx floating face down in the water. Marisa gasped and ran down to the water and waded into the ocean she then grabbed the lynx and flipped him over onto his back and pulled him onto the shore. Marisa looked at the lynx and noticed many cuts and bruises making it look like he had fallen from the cliff into the water. She made sure the lynx was breathing then raced up the hill to the nearest house and banged on the door as soon as they answered she begged them to

call an ambulance then ran back to the beach. Marisa stayed with the lynx till the medics came and as they loaded him into the ambulance she overheard them say that the lynx was the one who ran the lighthouse and that he hardly ever left the lighthouse anymore. Before long the ambulance was gone and with it the lynx, Leaving Marisa alone on the beach feeling like she was completely left out of the “loop” on everything that happened anymore.

The days passed with the lynx still in the hospital, Marisa still went to the beach often and sat on the cliff waiting for the lynx to return. Finally one night about two weeks after the lynx went to the hospital, Marisa was sitting on the cliff watching a ship way out on the ocean when she heard a voice behind her ask, “Mind if I join you?” Marisa spun around to find the lynx standing behind her with his arm in a sling. Upon seeing her shocked expression the lynx laughed and sat down beside Marisa. “I’m Lucius, I’ve ran the lighthouse for twenty years. I heard that you’re the one who found me and pulled me out of the ocean. You saved my life.”

“Yeah, I guess that would be me. I’m Marisa. I live on the other side of that hill over there. How come I’ve never seen you around here before?”

“Well, shortly after I moved into the lighthouse I got married and spent a lot of the time in the lighthouse just enjoying the company of my bride. Then about a year ago my wife, Sandy was her name, was out on the ocean in our little boat, trying to help a family whose boat had run out of gas. She was not very far out but a storm rolled in very fast and in trying to help this other family, my wife was knocked over by the waves, and she drowned. The other family was able to get back to shore but I never saw my wife again. I went into a deep depression and before long I felt like there was no reason to go on in this life. My only connection with my life was to come to the beach and tell “bedtime” stories like I used to tell my wife before her death.

“That must be what you were doing when I first saw you, there at the base of the cliff.” Marisa said.

“Yeah, probably.” Lucius responded, and then with a deep sigh he continued talking. “Well, the day you found me was the one year anniversary of the death of my wife. I gave up I guess. I wanted to be with her and saw no reason to stick around and I... Well I jumped off the cliff. I

just felt alone and unneeded and the pain of missing her was so great I felt like I could literally die of a broken heart... But then you came along and stopped my attempt to kill myself. While I was in the hospital they told me what had happened, about how you pulled me out and got help, and well I had a lot of time to think while I was stuck in that hospital bed and I realized that you did for me what my wife always tried to do for others. She always wanted to help people, to make their life better. I guess what I'm saying is you renewed in me the desire to help others, yes it still hurts that my wife is gone but her work does not have to stop, she can live on through me. I want to thank you for helping me, you really saved me. Why *were* you out here so early?"

"I don't know, I just woke up with the feeling that I had to come out here. I had been coming out here every night for a few days and listening to your stories. I don't know where you got them but I really enjoy hearing you tell them." Marisa said.

"Well, they are called myths, and if you like them that much let me tell you about where the icebergs came from." Lucius said with a smile.