

7/16/21 Prompt: The Weight of Memory

“You are not serious. Why would I ask that of you?”

The Faerie Queen shrugs, her thin shoulders slicing through the thick fog enveloping our ship. The crew scurries, jockeying for the coveted crow’s nest. What they expect to see, I know not. I have no interest in their inane affairs. The sooner I finish my quest, the sooner I return home. Hence my gall to challenge her.

“Tell me why...now.”

Meeting my tired eyes with cerulean, she touches my hand, burdened from travel. Her ethereal caress addles – so distracting, so tempting.

“She will never know. It will be...”

“As if I never existed.”

Leaning on the gunwale, I recall my love like clockwork. Her hand in mine, soft hair brushing my face, the taste of her lips...like sunlight on the water. I would return. I would.

“Again, why?”

“Time is fickle. She will find happiness in her own...as you will in mine.”

“I shall never be happy here.” But doubts assail. *Perhaps, I’m selfish.* I shake off the gossamer. “No.”

Like a butterfly is her hand on my shoulder. Her whisper, a feather.

“It would be a mercy.”

The pull is so strong, I falter. The fog thickens, trapping us alone. All is quiet. Then...

“Storm’s a brewin’, men!”

“How’s we supposed to see in this blasted fog?”

The deck tilts as unseen waves swell, ringing the ship’s bell...one day, two, three...how long have I been away?

My stomach roils but not from the sea. “A mercy?”

“A mercy.” Her fingertips kiss my cheek, my beard, but her words bind me. “To her, you are a shadow...but to this crew, you are life and death.”

The sea calms. The bell stills. The fog lifts.

I am left to my thoughts. They are no longer memories.

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Continued from Kings & Queens and The Solar Eclipse.

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