

CERTIFIED DREAMVALE

A movie poster for 'Lyra: The Downfall of Nightmare'. The background is a vibrant, fantastical landscape with a large, glowing blue dragon in the sky, a full moon, and a castle. In the foreground, three characters are shown: a man with curly hair, a woman with long, curly brown hair, and a woman with long, blonde hair. They are standing in a field of glowing flowers. The title 'LYRA' is written in large, golden letters, and 'THE DOWNFALL OF NIGHTMARE' is written in smaller, purple letters below it.

LYRA

THE DOWNFALL OF

NIGHTMARE

A DREAMVALE STORY BY NORAH MCHUGH

Name: Serena

Age: 17

Species: Siren / Shape Shifter

Gender: Female

Home Planet: Lyra



Personality Traits

- Witty / very smart
- Creative
- Fast
- Lawful
- Leader
- Attractive
- Selfless

Abilities

- Can breathe underwater
- Flying
- Control water
- Shape Shift from Siren to human and eventually dragon.
- Can talk to Animals.

Moral Alignment

Neutral Good and Lawful

Dream(s)

To one day take her parents place and rule the seas kingdom

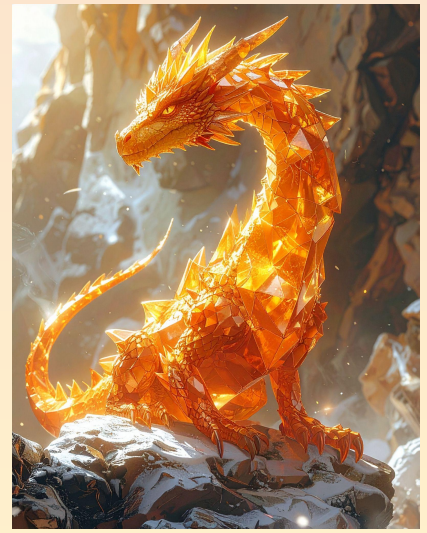
Fear(s)

Failing / letting others down

Backstory: I was born, July 15th, Serena princess of the Ivory Islands, To the King and Queen. My mother, Queen Elaine a siren and my father, King Cornelius a water dragon. We come from Lyra a planet far from Earth. Within my 16 years of existence I have been training to fulfill my destiny, to one day rule all of the Ivory Islands and to serve my people of the Lyra Reefs and the Calamari kingdom, to the best of my abilities.



Lyra



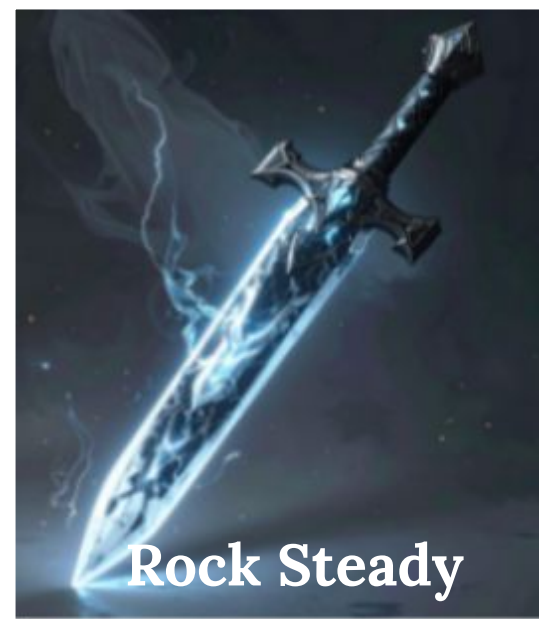
Water Crystal Dragons



Lyraki fruit

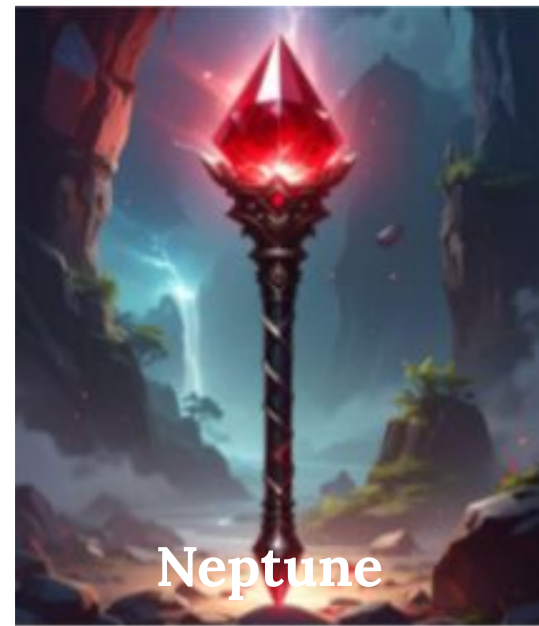
Coordinates (x, y)	15,000, 13,000	Government Type	One monarchy. The rest is communism.
Population	5,000,000,	Intergalactic Disposition	Very peaceful and friendly.
Terrain	Water kingdoms, Beaches, Tropical Islands.	Primary Races	Sirens and Water Crystal Dragons.
Climate	Tropical, Warm, Beautiful.	Primary Resource/ Technology	Lyra's 5 Islands all contain different purposes. The most important for the community is there Lyraki fruit that provides healing, refreshness, vibrant colors and an appealing taste.
Size	0.5	Description	Lyra is a tropical oasis straight out of a dream it is beautiful, just as the creatures living there. It has 4 separate Islands that all connect at the main Lyra islands in the center. The Islands are all peaceful, and clean. Lyra consists of series of reefs, creatures, delicious food, and the underwater Calamari kingdom.
Planetary Wildlife	Water Crystal Dragons- Typically male beings that serve as protectors, but happen to be very friendly. They began living on planet Lyra when our ancestors met while their planet had been destroyed. They have the ability to shapeshift, fly, and swim very fast.		

The Crown of Calamari



Rock Steady

Shovelsored



Neptune

Magic Staff

Origin Story: After long journeys to complete, crafted from the planets Rock Steady and Neptune along with items from Lyra, special made for the Calamari rulers, is The Crown of Calamari. It is a tradition for every new ruler to get crafted new item gifted from their people and the senior rulers that fits their personality that also gives them ability to complete their final mission to be a ruler.

Appearance: The Calamari Crown appears to be a crown with red jewels handmade a perfectly fit into a delicate twine of gold that has the ability to turn into a sword.

● Descended Sword

The crown of Calamari has the ability to transform from a crown into a sword but it can only be activated from the true bloodline descendent from the ruler of the Calamari Kingdom and Lyra Islands.

◆ Silent Protection

The crown has the ability of invisible protection to the descendent when wearing the crown or caring the sword. This protects them in battle without telling the enemy.

★ Crystal Dragon

The crown grants the ability for the descendant to turn from a siren into a crystal dragon when wearing the crown. The crystal dragon is able to produce crystal shards to the problem.

Cove

Age: 15 in Lyracora years

Species: Lyracora turtle

Gender: Male

Home Planet: Lyra

How we Met

Cove and I met back on the Ivory Islands back when I was gaining my tail. He hatched just a few months after and we have been inseparable ever since. Cove and Kai met around the same time and we've all been attacked at the tails since.



Healing Waters

Cove is able to heal coral, polluted water, and provide healing to endangered creatures, by using the crystals on his shell.

Crystal Tide Shield

Cove has the ability to provide a Tide shield to prevent dangerous enemies from attacking loved ones. Along with this Cove is able to control water.



Chapter 1: The Beginning



Have you ever dreamed about leaving Earth and traveling far into space? Maybe to a place that only exists in your imagination? Far beyond Earth, hidden deep in the galaxy, there is a planet called Lyra.

From far away, Lyra looks dark, broken, and destroyed. Huge storms cover the planet, making it seem dangerous and empty. But this is only an illusion created long ago by the Great Siren Ancestors. They wanted to protect Lyra from intruders who might try to ruin its beauty and steal its secrets.

In reality, Lyra is one of the most beautiful planets in the Dreamvale universe.

The planet is small and peaceful, almost like something from a fantasy dream. It has four tropical islands connected to a larger island in the center. The oceans are bright aquamarine, and waterfalls pour into the sea. Palm trees sway in the warm breeze, and glowing flowers bloom at night under the stars.

But the most amazing part of Lyra is hidden under the water.

Deep beneath the ocean is the sacred Calamari Kingdom. The kingdom is filled with colorful coral reefs, glowing pearls, and all kinds of sea creatures. Fish swim through giant coral towers while sea turtles glide through the water. The sirens who live there protect the kingdom. In the Calamari Kingdom there lies the Coralspire Palace the palace of the rulers.

Long ago, very few creatures ever found Lyra, and nobody who arrived ever left again. The planet slowly became a legend told across Dreamvale.

Everything changed when the Great Siren Ancestors heard about a planet called Cropaz. Cropaz was in danger and close to being destroyed. It was home to the crystal dragons, powerful creatures covered in shining crystal scales. These dragons had the special ability to change their shape to protect the things they cared about most.

Wanting to help, the ancestors traveled to Cropaz and saved as many dragons as they could. Afterward, many of the crystal dragons returned to Lyra with them and began a new life there. Over time, the sirens and dragons became close allies and helped Lyra grow even stronger.

Centuries later, the Great Siren Ancestors created something called the Dire Quest. This was a sacred test that every future ruler of Lyra had to complete when they turned eighteen years old. Every Dire Quest was different. Some were easy, while others were dangerous and difficult. The quest was meant to prove whether the future ruler was

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truly worthy of leading Lyra.

The ancestors also built the sacred Calamari Kingdom during this time, making it the center of Lyra's power and magic.

Years later, a siren descended from the ancestors, named Elaine, completed her Dire Quest, and became queen of Lyra. She ruled alongside the Crystal Dragon leader, Cornelius, who was brave, loyal, and wise. Together, they brought peace and happiness to the islands and the underwater kingdom.

Not long after, Elaine discovered that she was going to have a child. News quickly spread across Lyra because the child would one day become the next heir to the throne. Someday, the child would also have to complete the mysterious Dire Quest and continue the future of Lyra.

Many months later, on the calm evening of July 15th, the future heir to the throne was finally born to King Cornelius and Queen Elaine. All across Lyra, people gathered with excitement to hear the news. The baby was healthy, beautiful, and, to everyone's joy, a girl.

"Her name shall be Sirena. Essence and calmness to the sea," Queen Elaine announced proudly to the people gathered outside the palace.

"Future heir to the throne of Lyra," King Cornelius added as cheers echoed through the kingdom.

For the first three years of their lives, Lyra shapeshifter sirens are not born with tails. As they grow older, their tails slowly appear, showing their connection to the sea. Even without tails, young sirens are still able to breathe underwater and adapt easily to life around the Ivory Islands. Unlike humans, sirens mature mentally at a young age, allowing them to learn quickly and form friendships early in life.

That baby born to the king and queen was me.

My name is Sirena, princess of Lyra, future ruler of the Calamari Kingdom, and heir to the Ivory Islands.

From the moment I was little, I never liked being treated differently because I was royalty. Most people bowed when they saw me or acted nervous around me. But one person never did.

Kai.

Kai and I bonded almost instantly. We met during my first few days exploring the islands, and ever since then, we've been inseparable, like two pieces of coral tied together by the ocean currents. He never cared that I was the future ruler of Lyra. To him, I was just Sirena.

For the past seventeen years, I have spent my life training to fulfill my destiny and one day rule all of Lyra. Since I recently turned seventeen, that means I only have one year left before I must prove myself worthy of the throne.

Before dawn on the day I turn eighteen, I will have to complete the Dire Quest.

The Dire Quest is the most important tradition in Lyra's history. Every future ruler must complete it, and every quest is different. Some are simple, while others are dangerous enough to change a person forever. Nobody knows what their quest will be until the moment it begins.

I come from the Calamari Kingdom, where most of the people are shapeshifter sirens like me. Alongside us live the crystal dragons and countless forms of marine life that fill the oceans surrounding Lyra.

You're probably wondering what abilities the people of Lyra have.

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Sirens, unlike the stories humans tell, no longer lure sailors into the deep ocean. Instead, we are protectors of the sea and the islands. We can shapeshift into humans whenever needed, allowing us to travel both on land and in water freely. Our voices are powerful and beautiful, giving us the rare ability to communicate with animals across Lyra, whether they live in the sea or on land. Sirens also help grow and protect the sacred Lyraki fruit found across the Ivory Islands, which is one of the planet's most important resources.

Then there are the crystal dragons.

Strong, intelligent, and fiercely protective, the crystal dragons originated in Cropaz before their world was destroyed. After the Great Siren Ancestors saved them, they made Lyra their new home and have protected it ever since. Just like sirens, crystal dragons can also shapeshift into humans. This ability helps them guard both the islands above the sea and the hidden kingdoms below it.

Together, the sirens and crystal dragons have kept Lyra safe for centuries.

But now, with my eighteenth birthday getting closer and the Dire Quest waiting ahead of me, I can't help but wonder what kind of ruler I will become... and whether I am truly ready for what the future holds.

Chapter 2: Intruder Disruption



Kai leaned against the smooth coral wall of the sparkling cove, folding his arms with a grin. The glowing tide pools reflected soft shades of blue and violet across his face as the evening sun dipped lower over the Ivory Islands.

“I’ve been looking for you, I should have known you would be here. What are you doing by yourself?”

“I was just trying to write but with the Dire quest so near, that’s all I’ve been thinking about. What happens if I fail?”

“Well,” Kai replied, “if anyone can welcome all of Lyra, it’s you.”

I smiled faintly, though worry still lingered. I closed the shellbound journal resting in my lap and looked out across the sea. Far beneath the surface, the lights of the Calamari Kingdom shimmered like stars trapped underwater.

“You say that now,” she said softly, “but the Dire Quest changes everything. What if I fail?”

Kai’s expression immediately turned serious.

“You won’t.”

“You don’t know that,” Sirena answered. “Every ruler’s quest is different. Some never speak about what happened during theirs. My mother barely tells stories about hers at all.”

Then Kai crouched beside her.

“My father once told me something about the Dire Quest,” he said quietly. “He said the test isn’t about strength.”

Sirena looked at him curiously. “Then what is it about?”

“He said Lyra chooses rulers based on their heart.”

Sirena stared out toward the horizon again. In the distance, the illusion surrounding Lyra flickered faintly. To outsiders, the planet appeared ruined and lifeless. But beneath the barrier Lyra was full of ocean, and life.

Sometimes I wondered if the illusion also hid dangers even the ancestors feared.

Suddenly, a loud cry echoed from above.

Both of them looked up just as a massive crystal dragon swooped across the darkening sky. Its scales glimmered turquoise and gold in the fading sunlight. The dragon circled once before descending rapidly toward the palace towers.

Kai stood immediately. “That’s Aurion.”

I quickly rose to my feet, with concern washing over my face. Aurion belonged to the royal guard and never returned in such haste unless something was wrong.

Chapter 2

The dragon landed hard near the palace bridge, scattering glowing sand into the air. Even from the cove, Sirena could see several guards rushing toward him.

Then the palace alarm horns began to sound.

Low.

Deep.

Ancient.

Sirena's heart dropped.

"That's impossible..." she whispered.

The horns only rang for one reason.

Danger had reached Lyra.

Kai looked toward her. "Sirena..."

Without another word, I sprinted from the cove toward the palace cliffs, Kai racing beside me. As they climbed the glowing pearlstone steps, more sirens emerged from the kingdom below, their tails shimmering beneath the water as they gathered in confusion.

When I finally reached the upper bridge, Queen Elaine already stood there, her expression pale.

Aurion had shifted into human form, though cracks of crystal still glowed faintly across his arms from exhaustion.

"What happened?" I asked breathlessly.

Aurion looked directly at me.

"The illusion barrier has been breached."

Silence fell across the bridge.

"That can't happen," Kai said. "No outsider has crossed it in centuries."

Aurion nodded grimly.

"This one did."

King Cornelius stepped forward slowly.

"Who entered Lyra?"

Aurion hesitated.

Then he spoke words that made the entire bridge freeze.

"A human."

The word echoed through my mind long after Aurion said it.

A human.

No one spoke. Not even the waves below us seemed to move. I could hear my own heartbeat pounding in my ears as I stared at Aurion in disbelief.

Chapter 2

Humans were stories. Ancient warnings. Legends from before the Great Siren Ancestors cast the illusion around Lyra.

And somehow... one had crossed it.

My father's voice broke the silence.

"Where is the intruder now?"

Aurion lowered his head slightly. "We lost sight of them near the eastern reefs."

Immediately the guards began speaking over one another, preparing patrols and defense routes. Kai glanced at me, already knowing exactly what I was thinking.

Absolutely not.

That was the look he gave me.

Unfortunately for him, I was already planning it.

I'm going after them," I announced.

Both my parents turned toward me instantly.

"Sirena—" my mother began.

"If a human found a way through the barrier, then something is wrong with Lyra's protection," I argued. "If I'm going to rule someday, I need to understand what happened."

"You are not ready for unknown dangers," my father replied firmly.

I hated when he used that tone.

"With all respect, Father, how am I supposed to become ready if everyone keeps protecting me from everything?"

The words came out sharper than I intended.

The bridge fell quiet again.

My mother exchanged a look with my father before sighing softly. "You may investigate the eastern reefs at sunrise," she said carefully. "But only with Kai and a royal guardian."

I nodded quickly before either of them could change their minds.

"Thank you."

Kai leaned closer to me and muttered under his breath, "You already planned to go out anyway, didn't you?"

"...Maybe," I replied.

He groaned.

Chapter 3 : Departure



The next morning, sunlight poured across the Ivory Islands in ribbons of gold and pink. I stood near the water's edge, fastening my moonstone satchel while Kai gathered supplies beside me.

"You packed enough fruit for an entire migration," he complained.

"You packed three daggers."

"That's called being prepared."

Before I could answer, the ocean beside us exploded upward with a massive splash.

A familiar green sea turtle surfaced dramatically, spinning once before paddling toward shore.

"There you two are!" he boomed proudly.

I laughed instantly. "Cove!"

Cove was enormous for a lyracora turtle, with bright teal markings across his shell that glowed faintly underwater. Tiny bits of coral and shells were tangled across his back like decorations he forgot to remove. He claimed they made him look "legendary."

Kai called them seaweed.

"I heard there was danger," Cove said, lowering his voice dramatically. "Naturally, you'll need the bravest turtle in all seven tides."

"You mean the only turtle willing to ram sharks headfirst," Kai corrected.

"That happened one time."

"It happened six times."

Cove ignored him completely and looked at me instead. "Where are we going?"

"The eastern reefs," I answered. "Something crossed Lyra's barrier."

Cove's eyes widened. "Wait... seriously?"

I nodded.

For the first time all morning, his cheerful expression faded slightly.

"That's not good," he muttered.

Kai crossed his arms. "You know something?"

Cove hesitated before looking out toward the sea.

"My grandmother used to tell stories," he said quietly. "Stories about something hidden beyond the reefs. Old ruins beneath the water, older than the Calamari Kingdom itself."

I exchanged a glance with Kai.

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“What kind of ruins?” I asked.

“No idea,” Cove admitted. “But she always said if the barrier ever failed... the ruins would awaken.”

A chill crept through me despite the warm morning air.

“Well,” Kai said after a moment, “that definitely sounds ominous.”

Cove suddenly brightened again. “Adventure usually is!”

Before either of us could stop him, Cove spun around and dove underwater.

“Last one to the eastern reefs smells like rotten kelp!” he shouted.

Kai sighed deeply.

“I cannot believe I’m risking my life with a turtle.”

I grinned before diving into the glowing sea after Cove.

The water wrapped around me instantly, cool and familiar. My legs shimmered beneath the surface as scales of silver-gold spread across my skin, forming my tail.

Kai transformed immediately; his emerald eyes pierced into a pearl, foggy, iridescent dragon figure.

Together, we swam deeper beneath the shining waves toward the eastern edge of Lyra.

Toward whatever had found us.

The farther we swam from the Calamari Kingdom, the darker the water became.

Usually the reefs near Lyra glowed with color and life. Schools of silver fish darted between coral towers while crystal dragons occasionally soared overhead. But near the eastern reefs, the ocean felt... quieter.

Too quiet.

Even Cove noticed.

“I don’t like this,” he muttered, slowing beside me. “The current feels wrong.”

Kai swam ahead slightly, scanning the shadows.

“Stay alert.”

I tightened my grip on the moonstone pendant around my neck. The deeper we ventured, the more nervous I became. Part of me wondered if we should have brought royal guards after all.

But another part of me felt something else.

Curiosity.

As future ruler, I needed to see Lyra beyond palace walls.

Suddenly Cove froze.

“Uh... guys?”

I looked up.

Directly ahead of us stood a massive wall of twisting black coral stretching across the ocean floor like a maze. Dark vines curled around the coral spikes, pulsing faintly purple.

Chapter 3

“The Shadow Reef,” Kai whispered.

I stared at it in awe. I had only heard stories about this place. Ancient siren maps warned travelers to avoid it because the reef constantly shifted paths to trap explorers inside.

Cove slowly backed away. “Absolutely not.”

“We have to cross,” I said.

Kai raised an eyebrow. “And how exactly do you plan on doing that?”

Before I could answer, the reef moved.

Entire walls of coral groaned and twisted, sealing off one pathway while opening another.

Cove made a distressed noise. “The reef is alive.”

“Not alive,” Kai corrected quietly. “Protected.”

I looked carefully at the moving coral. Then I noticed something strange.

Music.

Very faintly, the reef hummed.

A melody.

“The sirens built this,” I realized aloud. “It reacts to sound.”

Kai’s eyes widened slightly. “Sirena...”

I nodded.

Taking a deep breath, I began to sing softly.

The water vibrated around us as my voice echoed through the reef. Slowly, glowing lines spread across the black coral like moonlight. The maze shifted again, revealing a narrow passage.

“The sirens built this,” I realized aloud.

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Kai’s eyes widened slightly. “Sirena...”

I nodded.

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The water vibrated around us as my voice echoed through the reef. Slowly, glowing lines spread across the black coral like moonlight. The maze shifted again, revealing a narrow passage forward.

Cove blinked at me. “Okay, that was impressive.”

I smiled a little. “Come on.”

We swam carefully through the opening while the reef groaned around us. More than once the walls nearly closed on Cove’s shell, causing him to yelp dramatically.

“I’m too majestic to be crushed by coral!”

Kai snorted. “Keep moving, majestic.”

Chapter 3

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After what felt like forever, we finally burst out of the maze into open water again.

But waiting ahead was something even worse.

A trench.

The ocean floor suddenly dropped into darkness so deep I couldn't see the bottom. Cold water rushed upward from below, carrying strange glowing particles through the current.

“The Abyssal Divide,” Kai whispered.

Even Cove looked pale now.

“We are definitely not supposed to be here.”

I drifted closer to the edge carefully. Ancient ruins lined the sides of the trench, almost hidden beneath coral and stone. Symbols glowed faintly across broken pillars.

Then I saw it.

A light.

Far below us.

Someone was down there.

“I think the human went into the trench,” I said quietly.

Kai looked at me like I had lost my mind. “Sirena, people disappear in there.”

“Which is exactly why we can't leave someone alone down there.”

Kai groaned. “Your future queen instincts are exhausting.”

Cove pointed one flipper downward nervously. “Before we decide anything... what is that?”

A deep growl echoed through the trench.

Then two enormous glowing eyes opened beneath us.

I froze.

A massive serpent-like creature emerged slowly from the darkness, its body covered in jagged crystal scales. Chains of ancient gold hung from its neck like armor.

Kai immediately pulled out one of his daggers.

“The trench guardian,” he breathed.

The creature circled beneath us slowly, watching.

Then, in a voice like rumbling thunder, it spoke.

“No traveler may enter the Abyssal Divide.”

My heart pounded.

This adventure had officially become far more dangerous than I expected.

The guardian's glowing eyes locked onto mine as it circled beneath us.

Chapter 3

Its body was enormous — longer than the palace bridge itself — and every movement sent cold currents spiraling through the trench. Crystal shards jutted from its scales, reflecting eerie blue light across the dark water.

Cove slowly moved behind me.

“Sirena,” he whispered, “I vote we leave.”

“Seconded,” Kai muttered, gripping his dagger tighter.

But I couldn’t leave.

Not when someone — even a human — might be trapped below.

I forced myself to swim forward slightly, trying not to show fear.

“We mean no harm,” I called carefully. “We’re searching for someone who entered the trench.”

The creature’s deep growl vibrated through the water.

“The outsider has disturbed what was meant to remain forgotten.”

Forgotten?

Before I could ask, the guardian suddenly lunged upward.

“MOVE!” Kai shouted.

We scattered just as the creature crashed through the space where we had been seconds earlier. The force of the current spun me sideways into the trench wall.

Pain shot through my shoulder.

“Sirena!” Kai swam toward me, but the guardian swung its tail between us, separating him from me instantly.

Cove panicked. “THIS IS BAD! THIS IS VERY BAD!”

The guardian rose directly in front of me now, its glowing eyes narrowing.

“You carry the blood of the Ancestors,” it rumbled.

I froze.

“How do you know that?”

The creature leaned closer.

“Because I was created by them.”

My heart skipped.

Created... by the Great Siren Ancestors?

Before I could process that, the trench suddenly shook violently.

Cracks of glowing purple light spread along the ancient ruins below us. The water trembled as loose stones drifted upward from the trench floor.

The guardian turned sharply toward the depths.

“No...” it growled.

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Then came a scream.

Human.

Every part of me jolted.

“They’re alive!” I shouted.

Without thinking, I dove downward into the trench.

“Sirena!” Kai yelled after me.

Cold darkness surrounded me instantly as I descended deeper and deeper. The glowing ruins became clearer now — towering arches covered in ancient siren symbols, broken statues, and massive crystal pillars.

Then I saw the human.

A girl.

She looked about my age, tangled in glowing vines near a collapsed stone archway. Her dark hair floated wildly around her face as she struggled underwater in panic.

Humans couldn’t breathe underwater.

How was she still alive?

The vines tightened around her arm as the ruins continued shaking.

I swam faster.

Behind me, Kai and Cove finally caught up.

“You seriously need to stop diving into danger first!” Kai snapped.

“No time,” I answered quickly. “Help me!”

Kai sliced at the glowing vines while I pulled the girl free. Her eyes widened the moment she saw my tail.

She looked absolutely terrified.

“It’s okay,” I tried to say gently, though underwater it came out muffled.

The ruins shook again.

Suddenly a massive crack split across the trench floor.

Purple light burst upward.

And something inside the ruins began to wake up.

The guardian roared from above.

“YOU MUST LEAVE NOW!”

A deafening sound echoed through the trench as a gigantic stone doorway slowly opened beneath us.

Ancient energy pulsed from within.

Then a voice echoed from the darkness beyond the door.

“At last...”

Chapter 3

Everything around us went still.

Humans couldn't breathe underwater.

How was she still alive?

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"At last..."

Everything around us went still.

Even the water itself seemed frozen.

Kai stared downward in horror. "Sirena..."

I could barely breathe.

Because glowing inside the ruins...

...was another siren.

Chapter 4 : The Challenge



The farther we swam from the Calamari Kingdom, the darker the water became.

Usually the reefs near Lyra glowed with color and life. Schools of silver fish darted between coral towers while crystal dragons once, and a while soared overhead. But near the eastern reefs, the ocean felt... quieter.

Too quiet.

Even Cove noticed.

“I don’t like this,” he muttered, slowing beside me. “The current feels wrong.”

The siren slowly rose from the ancient doorway, surrounded by swirling purple light.

At first, I thought she was a statue.

Her silver hair drifted through the water like strands of moonlight, and her tail shimmered black and violet instead of the usual ocean colors of Lyra. Cracks of glowing energy spread across her skin like lightning trapped beneath glass.

But then her eyes opened.

Bright gold.

Ancient.

Powerful.

Every instinct in my body screamed at me to swim away.

Beside me, Kai whispered, “That’s impossible...”

The mysterious siren looked directly at me.

“You carry Elaine’s blood,” she said calmly.

Her voice echoed strangely through the water, almost inside my mind rather than around me.

I tightened my grip on the frightened human girl beside me. “Who are you?”

The siren’s expression darkened slightly.

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“I was once called Seraphine.”

The guardian above us let out a low growl. Kai swam ahead slightly, scanning the shadows. “Stay alert.”

I tightened my grip on the moonstone pendant around my neck. The deeper we ventured, the more nervous I became. Part of me wondered if we should have brought royal guards after all.

But another part of me felt something else.

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Chapter 4

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After what felt like forever, we finally burst out of the maze into open water again.

But waiting ahead was something even worse.

A trench.

"She was forbidden."

Forbidden?

I glanced toward the guardian in confusion, but Seraphine spoke again before it could answer.

"The Ancestors buried truth beneath these waters," she said. "And now their illusion weakens." The trench shook violently again.

Large pieces of stone collapsed from the ruins overhead.

"We really don't have time for mysterious speeches!"

Cove shouted nervously, ducking a falling rock.

Kai moved protectively beside me. "Sirena, we need to go. Now."

But I couldn't stop staring at Seraphine.

Something about her felt familiar.

Not in the way friends or family felt familiar.

More like... destiny.

Then the human girl suddenly coughed weakly in my arms.

I blinked, snapping back to reality.

Right. Human. Danger. Escaping.

"Can you swim?" I asked her quickly.

The girl nodded shakily, though her eyes remained wide with fear.

"H-how are you breathing underwater?" she stammered.

"That's a long story."

Another tremor shook the trench.

Seraphine slowly lifted one hand toward the glowing doorway behind her.

"The seal is breaking," she warned. "If the darkness beneath Lyra awakens fully, your kingdom will fall."

"What darkness?" I demanded.

But before she could answer, the guardian suddenly surged downward between us with a roar.

"ENOUGH."

Chapter 4

Its massive crystal body slammed into the ruins, causing the doorway to begin closing again.

Purple energy exploded through the trench.

“GO!” the guardian thundered.

Kai grabbed my wrist instantly. “Sirena!”

For once, I didn’t argue.

We turned and swam upward as fast as we could.

Behind us, the trench erupted into chaos. The ruins collapsed inward while waves of purple light burst through the water. I heard Seraphine calling something after me, but the roaring currents drowned her out.

Cove paddled furiously beside us. “WHY DOES EVERY ADVENTURE WITH YOU END IN DISASTER?!”

“I’m starting to notice that pattern too!” Kai yelled back.

The human girl struggled to keep up, so I grabbed her hand and pulled her beside me.

Above us, the faint sunlight of the surface finally came into view.

We burst from the trench just as a shockwave exploded beneath the ocean.

The force launched all of us through the water.

I crashed onto a stretch of shallow reef near the eastern islands, gasping for breath as my tail shifted back into legs.

For several seconds, none of us moved.

Then Cove slowly lifted his head.

“...Are we alive?”

Kai groaned from nearby. “Unfortunately.”

The human girl sat up suddenly, coughing seawater before staring at all of us in complete disbelief.

“You’re real,” she whispered.

I brushed wet hair from my face carefully.

“And you crossed an ancient magical barrier surrounding an entire hidden planet,” I replied. “So I think we’re both confused.”

For the first time since meeting her, the girl gave a small nervous laugh.

“My name’s Rue.”

I stared at her for a moment.

A human had reached Lyra.

An ancient siren had awakened beneath the sea.

And somehow I knew this was only the beginning of my Dire Quest.

Chapter 5 : Beyond the Barrier



I had never seen fear in my mother's eyes before.

Not truly.

Not until I told my parents everything.

The trench. The ruins. Seraphine.

The darkness beneath Lyra.

And the human girl sitting quietly beside me in the palace throne room, trying very hard not to touch anything.

The royal council had erupted into craziness almost immediately.

"A human crossing the barrier is impossible!"

"The ancient seal should never have weakened!"

"Who is Seraphine?!"

Questions flew through the chamber faster than storm currents. Crystal dragons stood guard near the entrances while sirens whispered nervously among themselves.

But through all the noise, my mother remained silent.

That scared me more than anything.

Finally, she stood.

"Leave us."

The entire throne room froze.

Even the council obeyed without argument.

Later, only Kai, Cove, Maya, my parents, Aurion, and I remained.

The moment the doors closed, my father turned toward my mother.

"You knew," he said quietly.

Chapter 5

Queen Elaine lowered her gaze.

“There are stories the rulers of Lyra do not pass to their children unless necessary.”

I stared at her. “Mother?”

She walked slowly toward the giant window overlooking the Calamari Kingdom below.

“Long ago,” she began softly, “before the illusion barrier protected Lyra, our ancestors discovered something drifting between worlds.”

The room grew colder somehow.

“It was not a Cove immediately looked horrified.

“I already hate this story.”

My mother continued.

“The Ancestors called it the Nightmare.”

The name alone made my chest tighten.

“They trapped a part of it beneath the Abyssal Divide using ancient siren magic,” she explained. “Seraphine was one of the guardians chosen to maintain the seal.”

“Was?” Kai repeated carefully.

A shadow crossed my mother’s face.

“She believed the Nightmare’s power could be controlled.”

Silence.

“And the Ancestors sealed her away too,” I realized.

My mother nodded once.

creature. Not entirely. It was a force. A living nightmare capable of feeding on fear, sorrow, and anger.”

I looked toward the floor, trying to process everything.

“So the barrier weakening...” I whispered.

“Means the Nightmare is waking,” Aurion finished grimly.

Maya suddenly spoke up from beside me.

“Wait... if this thing was trapped on Lyra... then how did I find the planet at all?”

Everyone looked toward her.

“That,” my father said quietly, “is the question.”

Before anyone could continue, the palace suddenly shook violently.

Chapter 5

The windows rattled.

Outside, alarm horns blared once more.

Aurion rushed toward the balcony instantly.

“What now?” Kai groaned.

But when Aurion looked upward into the sky... his expression changed completely.

“It’s outside the barrier.”

I ran to the balcony beside him.

Far above Lyra’s atmosphere, beyond the illusion clouds surrounding our planet, a massive shadow moved through space itself.

At first it looked like smoke.

Then I realized the darkness was alive. And inside the darkness...

I saw evil.

Watching Dreamvale.

Watching Lyra.

The Nightmare had found us.

Three hours later:

I stood at the base of the star vessel, trying to calm my racing heart while dozens of royal workers prepared the ship for departure. Crystal dragons moved carefully across the platform carrying glowing energy cores while sirens adjusted the tide sails lining the vessel’s wings.

Everything suddenly felt real.

We were actually leaving Lyra.

Leaving the only world I had ever known.

Rue stood beside the ship, staring upward in amazement. “I still can’t believe this thing flies through space.”

Kai crossed his arms. “I still can’t believe we agreed to this.”

“You agreed?” Cove laughed loudly. “I distinctly remember you complaining the entire time.”

“I’m still complaining.”

I smiled faintly, but inside I felt sick with worry.

Above us, through the open ceiling of the chamber, the illusion barrier surrounding Lyra flickered weakly against the stars. Beyond it, shadows moved in the distance.

Chapter 5

Watching.

Waiting.

The Nightmare. Then suddenly I heard footsteps behind me.

I turned to see my mother approaching slowly.

But this time... she wasn't dressed as queen.

She wore the ancient ceremonial armor of Lyra's first rulers — silver-blue armor shaped like flowing waves with glowing pearls woven into the design. Across her shoulders rested a long ocean-colored cape that shimmered like water itself.

And in her hands...

Was the Calamari Crown.

My breath caught instantly.

The crown was unlike anything else in Lyra. Delicate silver coral curved upward around glowing moonpearls, while ancient blue crystals rested at its center. Every future ruler of Lyra wore it upon their official coronation.

But I wasn't ruler yet.

"Mother..." I whispered.

The entire chamber slowly fell silent as she stopped in front of me.

"You are leaving the protection of Lyra," she said softly. "And though your coronation has not yet come... the sea already recognizes your heart."

Carefully, she lifted the crown.

"For generations, crowns have been worn by rulers who protected our people through darkness and war," she continued. "Now I ask it to guide you."

My eyes stung suddenly.

"I'm not ready," I admitted quietly.

She smiled sadly.

"No ruler ever truly is." Then she placed the Calamari Crown gently upon my head.

The moment it touched me, warmth spread through my entire body.

The glowing crystals lit instantly.

And suddenly—

Voices.

Ancient whispers echoed faintly in my mind like distant songs beneath the ocean.

Chapter 5

The Ancestors.

I gasped softly as flashes of memories not my own flickered across my vision: endless oceans, glowing kingdoms, crystal dragons soaring between stars...

...and a shadow swallowing worlds whole.

I stumbled slightly, and Kai quickly steadied me.

“You okay?”

I looked up slowly.

The crown's crystals were still glowing.

“Yes,” I whispered. “I think so.”

But deep inside, something had changed.

It felt as though Lyra itself was with me now.

My father stepped forward next, placing one hand over his heart in the royal salute.

“Sirena of Lyra,” he announced proudly, his voice echoing through the chamber, “future ruler of the Calamari Kingdom and protector of the Ivory Islands.”

Around us, every siren and dragon bowed. Even Kai.

Though he muttered, “Don't let it go to your head.”

Cove bowed dramatically enough to nearly fall over.

Rue awkwardly copied everyone else half a second late.

I laughed softly despite the fear twisting inside me.

Then the chamber alarms suddenly pulsed red.

Aurion looked upward sharply. “The Nightmare moves closer by the minute; we need to strike fast.”

The room immediately shifted into motion.

“It's time,” my mother said quietly.

The ship's great crystal doors began opening toward the night sky above Lyra. Stars glittered beyond them endlessly.

I turned toward the vessel.

Its name shimmered across the side in glowing silver letters:

The Crystal Current.

Cove gasped dramatically. “That is the coolest ship name ever.”

Kai pointed toward the boarding ramp. “Inside. Before the nightmare monster reaches us.”

Chapter 5

One by one, we boarded the ship.

The inside glowed with soft blue crystal light. Curved hallways shaped like flowing waves stretched throughout the vessel while enormous windows revealed the stars outside.

Rue immediately pressed herself against the glass. “This is insane.”

“Please stop touching everything,” Kai warned. At the center of the ship rested the control chamber.

A massive crystal sphere floated above the controls, showing glowing maps of space surrounding Lyra.

I slowly approached the captain’s platform.

Then I hesitated.

Could I actually do this?

Fight something ancient enough to terrify the Ancestors themselves?

Before doubt could consume me completely, Cove climbed beside me.

“You know,” he said quietly, “heroes in stories are usually terrified.”

I blinked at him.

“They are?”

“Oh absolutely,” Cove replied. “The brave part is that they still go anyway.”

For once, the goofy turtle actually sounded wise.

Kai rolled his eyes nearby. “I can’t believe the turtle gave the inspirational speech.”

Cove puffed proudly. “I contain many levels of inspiration.”

A faint smile crossed my face.

Then I looked forward toward the stars beyond Lyra.

Then I looked forward toward the stars beyond Lyra.

Toward the darkness waiting outside our world.

I placed both hands on the ship controls.

“Crystal Current,” I whispered, “take us beyond the barrier.”

The ship hummed alive beneath us.

Outside, the great crystal sails unfolded.

And for the very first time in my life...

Chapter 5

I left Lyra.

The moment we crossed beyond Lyra's barrier, everything changed.

I had imagined space would feel empty.

Silent.

But it wasn't.

Stars stretched endlessly around us like oceans of light, swirling in colors I had never seen before — deep violets, shimmering blues, silver clouds glowing in the distance. The Crystal Current, drifted forward smoothly through the darkness.

For a moment, all of us simply stared.

"It's beautiful," Rue whispered.

Lyra behind.

Even Kai looked speechless.

Cove pressed himself dramatically against the viewing glass. "I'm going to cry."

"You cry at everything," Kai muttered.

"I have emotions."

I stood quietly at the front of the control chamber, my fingers resting against the Calamari Crown.

The farther we traveled from Lyra... the colder the crown became.

Like it sensed something. Then suddenly—

The ship alarms screamed.

Red light flooded the chamber.

Rue's voice echoed from the lower deck.

"Shadow movement approaching!"

Outside the windows, the stars began disappearing.

One by one.

Swallowed by darkness.

My chest tightened as massive black fog spread across space ahead of us like ink spilling through water. Giant shallow glowing eyes slowly opened inside the darkness.

The Nightmare.

Cove immediately ducked behind me. "I've changed my mind. Let's go home."

The shadow moved unnaturally fast toward the ship.

Chapter 5

And then the whispers began.

Soft voices filled the chamber from nowhere.

“You will fail...”

“Lyra will fall...”

“You are not strong enough...”

I grabbed the sides of the controls as the voices pressed into my mind.

Fear flooded through me instantly.

The Nightmare wasn't attacking our ship.

It was attacking our thoughts.

Rue suddenly covered her ears. “Make it stop!”

Kai staggered backward, breathing hard. “Don't listen to it!”

But the whispers only grew louder.

Suddenly the darkness outside shifted shape.

And I saw something impossible.

The Calamari Kingdom.

Destroyed.

Coral towers broken apart beneath black water while flames burned across the Ivory Islands above. Crystal dragons fell from the sky like shattered stars.

My parents were gone.

Everyone was gone.

“No...” I whispered.

The Nightmare's voice echoed around us now, deeper than thunder.

“THIS IS YOUR FUTURE.”

Fear nearly crushed me.

Then another vision appeared.

Kai disappearing beneath dark water.

Cove's shell cracked and broken.

Rue screaming as shadows pulled her away.

Chapter 5

I fell to my knees.

The Nightmare fed on fear.

And mine was growing stronger.

The ship began shaking violently as shadow tendrils wrapped around the hull outside.

“We’re losing power!” Aurion shouted from below.

Kai forced himself toward me through the chaos. “Sirena! Look at me!”

I barely heard him.

The visions kept coming.

Failure.

Death.

Darkness swallowing Lyra whole.

Then suddenly—

Warmth.

The Calamari Crown began glowing brightly atop my head.

The ancient whispers of the Ancestors filled my mind once more.

Not fear this time.

Strength.

I saw memories of ancient rulers standing against impossible storms. Sirens protecting their people despite overwhelming darkness. Crystal dragons fighting beside them beneath shattered skies.

And I realized something.

Which meant—

Hope weakened it.

I slowly stood.

Its shadow eyes outside immediately focused on me.

“YOU CANNOT STOP ME.”

My hands trembled around the Crown's sword.

Maybe I couldn’t stop it alone.

But I wasn’t alone.

I looked toward my friends.

The Nightmare wanted us afraid because fear gave it power.

Chapter 5

Kai was still standing despite fear in his eyes.

Cove trying to be brave even while terrified.

Rue refusing to give up despite being thrown into a completely unknown world.

Then I looked outward into the darkness.

“You know nothing about Lyra,” I said quietly.

The Nightmare growled.

“We protect each other.”

The crown flared with brilliant Red light.

Suddenly the Crystal Current came alive around us. Ancient symbols across the walls glowed brighter than ever before while the crystal sails expanded outward.

Kai stared upward in shock. “The Ancestor magic...”

I pointed the sword directly toward the Nightmare.

“Full speed ahead.”

Kai blinked. “Wait WHAT?”

Too late.

The Crystal Current surged forward directly into the darkness.

Everything exploded into chaos.

Shadow creatures burst from the Nightmare like living smoke, slamming against the ship while crystal dragons launched from hidden chambers beneath the vessel's wings. Kai transformed midair, his massive crystal dragon form crashing into the shadows with a deafening roar.

Cove grabbed onto a railing, screaming, “THIS WAS A TERRIBLE PLAN!”

Rue somehow grabbed a glowing spear from the wall. “WHY ARE THERE WEAPONS EVERYWHERE?!”

I stood at the center of the storm, crown blazing with light as the Nightmare towered before us like an endless nightmare.

Then the darkness opened.

And from within it...

A giant creature emerged.

Its body was formed entirely from shadow and broken stars, with enormous wings stretching across space itself. Glowing white eyes burned from its skull-like face.

The true form of the Nightmare. .

And it was looking directly at me.

Chapter 5

The Nightmare screamed.

The sound shook the Crystal Current so violently that I nearly lost my balance.. Cracks spread across the crystal floor while shadow creatures slammed against the ship from every direction.

Outside the windows, the giant nightmare creature spread its wings across the stars themselves.

It was massive.

Far bigger than I imagined.

And somehow... it was getting closer.

“Sirena!” Kai shouted from outside the ship, “Do something!”

“I’m trying!”

The Calamari Crown burned brightly against my head as I gripped the sword tighter. Ancient magic surged through the ship, but the Nightmare’s darkness kept pushing back harder.

The monster opened its jaws.

A beam of black energy exploded toward us.

Everything happened too fast.

Aurion roared outside as he tried to shield the ship, but the blast tore through one of the crystal sails instantly. The Crystal Current spun violently sideways.

I was thrown across the control chamber.

Pain exploded through my side as I slammed into the wall.
The crown slipped from my head.

Suddenly the whispers returned.

Stronger.

Meaner.

“You cannot save them...”

“You will destroy Lyra...”

“Everyone you love will fall...”

My vision blurred.

The darkness began creeping across the chamber floor like smoke, reaching toward me.

I tried to stand.

I couldn’t.

Fear wrapped around my chest so tightly I could barely breathe.

Chapter 5

Then the Nightmare itself appeared inside the chamber.

Not fully.

Just part of it.

A towering shadow figure with glowing eyes.

It reached toward me slowly.

And for the first time since leaving Lyra...

I truly believed I might die.

“Sirena!”

Kai’s voice cut through the darkness.

Suddenly he crashed between me and the Nightmare, one of his daggers glowing bright orange as he slashed through the shadow reaching for me.

The Nightmare shrieked violently.

Kai grabbed my arm immediately. “Get up!”

“I can’t—”

“Yes you can!”

Another blast rocked the ship.

The ceiling above us cracked open as shadow energy poured inside.

Kai looked around once, panicked.

Then at me.

And I realized exactly what he was about to do.

“No,” I whispered.

“Trust me.”

“Kai—”

The ship lurched again.

Without another second to hesitate, Kai grabbed the emergency crystal beside the wall and slammed his fist into it.

Instantly, a glowing escape pod opened nearby.

“Kai, wait!”

He pushed me toward it.

Chapter 5

“You’re the future ruler of Lyra,” he said firmly. “That means you survive.”

“I’m not leaving you!”

“You’re not.”

He smiled faintly despite everything falling apart around us.

“I’ll find you.”

Then the Nightmare roared again. The entire chamber shattered.

Kai shoved me into the escape pod just as darkness exploded toward us.

The last thing I saw was Kai standing between the Nightmare and I while the pod doors sealed shut.

Then everything went white.

Chapter 6: Resolution



Voices.

Soft.

Distant.

“...stable now...”

“...crown energy protected her...”

“...still unconscious...”

My head hurt.

Every part of my body felt heavy.

Slowly, I opened my eyes.

Bright lights blurred above me.

For a moment I thought I was still dreaming.

Then the smell hit me.

Saltwater.

Medicinal herbs.

The Calamari Kingdom hospital.

I blinked slowly, trying to sit up.

“Easy there.”

I turned weakly toward the voice.

Chapter 6

Queen Elaine sat beside my bed instantly, relief flooding her face the moment she saw me awake.

“Mother...” My voice cracked painfully.

She hugged me carefully before I could say anything else.

For a second she wasn't Queen Elaine.

She was just my mom.

“You're safe,” she whispered.

Memories suddenly slammed back into me.

The Nightmare.

The battle.

Kai.

I pulled away quickly. “Where's Kai?”

“He's in the other room.”

And fear immediately gripped my chest.

“The rescue dragons found your escape pod drifting near Lyra's barrier,” she explained softly. “But the Crystal Current”
Her silence said enough.

My breathing quickened.

“No no no— is he alright?”

“Sirena—”

Tears burned my eyes as I looked around desperately, like somehow he would just walk through the door smiling and sarcastic as usual.

But he didn't.

The room stayed silent.

Cove suddenly appeared hesitantly near the doorway, his shell scratched and cracked in places.

Rue stood beside him quietly.

Both looked devastated.

And that terrified me even more.

Cove lowered his head.

I need to go see him.

Chapter 6

The Calamari Kingdom hospital was quieter at night.

Soft glowing pearls lined the ceilings, casting blue light across the curved coral walls while healers moved silently between rooms. Outside the tall glass windows, I could see the underwater city shimmering peacefully beneath the sea.

Peaceful.

At least on the outside.

Inside, Lyra was still afraid.

But I'm hopeful.

Because Kai was alive.

I stood outside the healer's chamber gripping the edge of my sleeves nervously while Cove waited beside me.

"You've fought sea monsters and cosmic nightmares," he whispered dramatically. "Yet you're scared to walk through a door."

"I am not scared."

"You've been standing here for five minutes."

"...I'm thinking."

You're panicking."

I glared at him.

Before I could answer, the chamber door slowly opened.

Aurion stepped out quietly.

"He's awake."

Every thought vanished instantly.

I hurried past him before I could lose courage.

The room was dim except for soft pearl lamps glowing beside the bed. Healing plants floated gently in bowls of water nearby while moonstone bandages wrapped around Kai's shoulder and chest.

For one terrifying second, seeing him hurt like that made my chest ache.

But then he looked up.

And smirked.

"Well," Kai said weakly, "you look terrible."

Relief hit me so hard I nearly laughed.

"You disappeared into living darkness!"

Chapter 6

“And you crashed a spaceship.”

“YOU shoved me into the escape pod!”

Kai smiled faintly. “Good decision though.”

I walked closer to the bed slowly, suddenly unsure what to say anymore.

There had been moments after the battle when I truly believed I would never see him again.

Kai noticed the tears building in my eyes almost immediately.

“Oh no,” he muttered softly. “Don’t cry. You’ll make this weird.”

“I’m not crying.”

“You literally are.”

I wiped my face quickly. “Shut up.”

His smile softened.

For a moment neither of us spoke.

I sat beside the bed finally.

“You scared me.”

The joking expression faded from his face.

“I know.”

Silence filled the room again, softer this time.

Outside the windows, glowing fish drifted peacefully through the waters of the Calamari Kingdom.

“I thought I lost you,” I whispered.

Kai looked at me for a long moment before answering quietly.

“You won’t get rid of me that easily, Sirena.”

A laugh escaped me despite everything.

Then, suddenly, Cove burst into the room, carrying an enormous pile of fruit.

“He lives!” he announced dramatically.

Kai stared at him. “Why do you have that much food?”

“I panic-collected snacks.”

“That’s not a thing.”

Chapter 6

“It absolutely is.”

Rue appeared behind him, shaking her head. “He also cried when they brought you back.”

“I DID NOT.”

“You absolutely did,” she replied.

Cove gasped. “Betrayal.”

For the first time since the Nightmare attacked, the room filled with laughter instead of fear.

And somehow...

It felt like hope.

“So, is this it?” Kai asked softly.

“No, Kai, it's just the beginning,” I replied.