

AQUAMAN

By

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***Free*editorial** 

AQUAMAN

There was a cabin built in the middle of the woods. This is where the Shuver family lives. They live a very typical life. There are four of them in the family. Hugo, the father is a blacksmith and Hamlet, the mother is a plain housewife. They have two kids. The elder child is Gringo and the younger child is Frida.

The couple argues a lot. They fight every now and then for common household problems that almost every typical family goes into. Sometimes, they run out of penny to buy food for dinner. Hamlet always complain about household chores and about how Frida seems to waste her life sitting all day in the house. Frida feels bad about this most of the time. She feels belittled and insulted but she doesn't take this against her mother. She understands because the words that come out of her mother's mouth are true. She does nothing to help in the household chores and expenses but she's trying her best to snag some income.

Money has always been an issue in Shuver's home. Hamlet and Hugo weren't fortunate to be born rich. Their house is very small but it's concrete and the roof is made of corrugated galvanized iron sheets. It's not much but it's sturdy and they're proud to call it their home.

Frida used to earn a living in the nearby town. She earns a decent amount and she spends half of her money to provide for the family. She was a responsible daughter. She loves her family very much even if sometimes she feels unappreciated. She doesn't let this get into her heart because she knows she's cruel too; especially when she couldn't get any more money out of her

pocket. Sometimes she'd yell and would turn into a beast.

One day, Hamlet said so many bad words out of anger and exhaustion perhaps.

“Frida, there is nothing good that you do! You just sit all day in a corner. You did not even take some time to wash the dishes or sweep the floor. You're getting old and you're still like that. You're useless!”

Frida was hurt but she kept the emotions she feel inside. She tried her best not to cry. Her brother added up more nasty words to what her mother had just said. They added more pain to the already painful remarks that linger in her heart.

“Mother's right Frida. Why don't you look for a job? I'm tired of shouldering all the household expenses. Look at you! You're not getting any younger. What will happen to you? You are of no help to your parents.”

Frida did not bother saying a word for she knew it wouldn't lead to anything better. She turned her back at them and slowly walked towards the door. From the moment she reached the door, she ran as fast as she can, with tears running down her cheeks. She stopped by the brook and leaned on the old oak tree. She can't stop herself from crying. Those words sting.

The brook had been a witness to all the tears that had flown from Frida's eyes for years. She would always go here whenever she feels sorry for herself. In this place, she finds solitude that momentarily eases the pain.

A voice very near from where she is stopped her from crying. She wiped her tears and when she looked in front of her, there was a man. He isn't just a man but a very strange man. His silhouette resembles that of a human being. He has mouth, ears, nose, eyes, arms, hands, legs, and feet but his whole body

is made up of water. The sight of an unknown creature frightened Frida. She could barely open her mouth and almost froze. The strange creature knelt down and held Frida's hands.

“Don't be scared. I'm not going to hurt you. I know I look strange but I have a heart and soul like that of a human.”

Frida is a brave girl; so even if she is scared, she slowly gathered all the strength she can get at that moment and managed to ask the man.

“Who are you? Why do you look like that?”

“I am Aquaman. I came from the water. I've been here for a very long time and I've seen you cried for years,” replied the Aquaman.

“I go here everytime I feel bad,” said Frida.

“Look, I may look like this but I can be a friend,” continued the Aquaman.

“We have a little problem at home. They must be tired of me being useless for years. I haven't been working lately so I don't bring food to the table and I don't do some chores. They've complained about it a while ago. That was probably the most painful remarks I heard from them. I'm trying my best to do my part but I just couldn't find the perfect opportunity yet. I'm hoping I can snag some cash in the coming days. About the chores? I want to do them but my body just don't feel like doing them. It's like I feel I'm getting sick everytime I do them at a time I don't really feel like doing them. I kind of hated the way they treated me because they make me feel like I'm not trying at all,” explained Frida.

“Every family goes through that kind of problem. Every issue can be resolved. Stop crying. What's your name by the way?” asked Aquaman.

“My name is Frida.”

“I know it hurts but don’t feel bad about it. You’ll get over it and maybe you’ll get some blessings soon. Always think positive,” said Aquaman.

“Thanks. It makes me feel better. How do you know about these things? You’re not human,” queried Frida.

“Frida, I told you just a while ago that I have a heart and soul as that of a human,” Aquaman stressed.

“Why do you look like that? Were you cursed?” asked Frida, chuckling.

“No, I wasn’t cursed. I came into this world like this. There are no other creatures like me that still exist today. They all have vanished decades ago because they tried to do things that are prohibited from doing,” Aquaman answered.

“Such as?” asked Frida, pondering.

“They scared people like you. They made fun of them. They have broken the rules of our kingdom and as punishment, all of them had vanished. Anyway, let’s not talk about them anymore...Uh-huuuuuhhh..uhh,” Aquaman yawned.

“I see...I’m very lucky to have you around then,” Frida whispered to Aquaman.

“You really are!” Aquaman responded.

“You know what? I got to tell you something.”

“What is it?!” exclaimed Frida.

“Do you know that I can turn into a real human being?” Aquaman shared.

“Really?!” cried Frida.

“You heard it right. If ever I fall in love with a girl and she kisses me on the lips, I will become a human being for life. The girl must be in love with me

too, of course,” says Aquaman.

“A fairy tale romance,” Frida commented.

Frida and Aquaman enjoyed a wonderful conversation. It was lunch time when Frida recalled that she can't be away from home for so long. Her mother would yell at her again. She said goodbye to Aquaman but promised she will return.

“Aquaman, I need to go home for now. My mother might be looking for me already,” said Frida.

“Okay,” Aquaman answered.

“I'll be back. I promise!” exclaimed Frida.

“I'll be waiting,” said Aquaman.

Frida slowly passed out of Aquaman's sight. Aquaman couldn't help himself from smiling. Frida was surely special to him. He knew it right from the first time he saw Frida.

Frida arrived at home just in time for lunch.

“Where have you been?” asked Hamlet.

“I just went for a walk outside,” Frida replied.

“Sit down and eat your lunch,” Hamlet told Frida.

Frida sat down and ate her lunch. It was delicious. She always love the meals her mother prepares. She's a good cook. Frida had always wanted to cook ever since she was young. She would collect recipe books or cut some recipes she'd find on a magazine.

Afternoon came and Frida got so bored. She decided to visit her father on a cottage just a few walks away from their house. She found her father busy finishing some bolos that he would sell on the market tomorrow. Frida felt like

sobbing. Her father is already very old and yet he is still working so hard to earn some income. Frida decided to cheer him up to make it up to him. After all, it should be her who is sweating for money.

“Hello there Father!” Frida greeted her father.

“What are you doing here?” asked Hugo.

“Just dropping by to see how you’re doing here,” Frida responded.

“Everything’s going well here Frida. I’ve made enough bolos to sell on the market tomorrow,” said Hugo.

“I’m sorry Father,” uttered Frida.

“Sorry for what?” he asked.

“I should be the one toiling for this family instead of you. I’m sorry that I failed you. One of these days, I can make it up to you. I hope all my plans work the way I wish them to,” explained Frida.

“It’s okay Frida. You know, sometimes our plans and ambitions in life don’t work the way we want them to,” Hugo cheered his daughter.

Hugo hugged his daughter. Frida felt happy. She felt relieved. For once, she felt understood. Frida perfectly knows how it feels to be blamed whenever things don’t come easy. All these years, she honestly felt like a failure because that is what everybody makes her feel like. She just doesn’t hear that word but that’s just what it means; only unspoken.

“Father, I’ll accompany you tomorrow in the market. I’ll help you sell your bolos,” Frida suggested.

“Are you sure about that? It’s extremely hot there. I’m afraid you can’t bear working under the sun,” Hugo remarked.

“It’s alright Father. I’m not so infatuated with having a white skin. Besides,

we're going to bring a big umbrella," reasoned Frida.

It was Saturday morning. Hugo and Frida woke up early and headed to the market. They prepared their stall and placed a huge umbrella over the stall. People came over their stall to buy bolos. It was the town fiesta that's why bolos sell a lot. People look for cheap items to buy during this time and most of them use these bolos to chop some woods or to crack open a young coconut fruit which is commonly used for a salad. Frida kept on shouting to call everyone's attention. By noon, all of their bolos were sold out. The two went home happy and completely satisfied with the results of their hard work.

"So how was your day?" Hamlet asked the two.

"It is a very good day Hamlet! We sold all of the one hundred bolos that we brought. Look at this...this is \$ 10, 000!" exclaimed Hugo.

"Wow! How did you do that?" Hamlet asked.

"Well, I didn't know that Frida idolized Tarzan so much. Her voice echoed all throughout the marketplace. Everyone came rushing over to our stall to buy bolos," quipped Hugo.

"Good work Frida!" said Hamlet.

"We brought something. Here, open this. There's pork chop there, beef steak, and grilled squid. Place them all on a tray so we can share a delicious meal together," Hugo told his wife.

Hamlet held the plastic bags that Hugo is carrying. She opened them up and placed the food on a tray. She can smell the sumptuous aroma of a freshly-cooked meat and seafood. It was quite a long time since the last time they had dined together in a nearby restaurant. She missed good food.

"Mmmm...yummy! I'll eat a lot today," uttered Hamlet.

Soon, she served the meal on the table. Everybody was waiting for the food.

“There’s a cola on the fridge Gringo. Can you please get it,” Hamlet requested.

“Okay,” answered Gringo.

Just as Frida was about to drink a glass of cola, she remembered Aquaman.

“Oh God, I may not be able to visit him today. I’m slightly exhausted. How could I have forgotten about him,” Frida grumbled.

“What are you saying Frida?” asked Gringo.

“Nothing Gringo...I just reckoned something.”

The next morning, Frida prepared some food and placed them on a basket. She’s going to the brook. She walked towards the brook humming.

“Oh...oh...oh...ho...what a beautiful day it is...hmmm...”

She reached the brook in time. Aquaman was lying on the grass. He saw Frida approaching.

“Hello Frida! I thought you’re never going to return,” Aquaman gushed.

“How could I not return? I promised I’ll go back right?” cheered Frida.

Aquaman kept staring at Frida. She looked so happy and radiant.

“Hu...hum....oh...oh...ho...I’m so happy you’re my friend...but I’m sad I cannot take you with me....oh...ho...ho...hmmm,” Frida hummed.

“Hey Frida! You look happy. What’s the good news?” asked Aquaman.

“The tension around the house slightly faltered,” Frida responded.

“I’m happy for you. I want to see you smile more often. What is it that you have in your basket?” asked Aquaman.

“I brought some snacks. Do you eat these kinds of foods?” Frida asked

Aquaman.

“I don’t. I just drink water from the brook. That’s enough for me to live,” Aquaman answered.

“Well then...I’ll just open this mat and eat these foods by myself,” Frida remarked.

Frida laid the mat all over the grass and sat next to Aquaman. Later, they indulged themselves in a serious conversation.

“Are you happy with your life?” Frida asked Aquaman.

“I am happy even though my life just revolves around this brook. This is how I was made and this is the life I am supposed to live,” Aquaman responded.

“I admire your way of thinking. You sound divine. I, too, am happy with my life even though I seemed to be trapped. There are so many things I want to do. I want to accomplish a lot of things. I want to go to several places. I want to explore the world while I’m still young. I want to create lasting memories so that by the time I grow old, I can tell myself and everyone that I have lived a wonderful life. Why wasn’t I born privileged enough to do all these things? Never mind anyway, there are also a lot of things to still be happy about,” Frida remarked.

“I can comprehend what you’re trying to say Frida. You’re disappointed that your life didn’t go as how you planned it to be. It’s kind of difficult especially when everyone else expects you to be living a good life by now like how people of your age live their lives. I know that you seem to hide the real status of your life to your friends. You pretend that all is well with you when you know that it’s not because you don’t want to feel small compared to them.

Stop expecting Frida. Embrace your life the way it is or else you will always be sad and disappointed by thinking of what could have happened if your life is the other way around. It's perfectly understandable that you can't take it easy but there are things in life that can no longer be fixed but there is a chance that some things may go your way."

"Thanks for enlightening me. How did you know these things about me?" asked Frida.

"I have watched you grow and I watch your everyday experiences in the palm of my hands. I know you very well Frida. There's nothing you can hide from me," whispered Aquaman.

"Have you ever wished that you were human?" asked Frida.

"I did; but being human is more complicated than being Aquaman. When I'm Aquaman, there are no expectations. I'm just going to stay here at the brook and that's it. When I'd be human, there would be many rules to follow and standards to live by," explained Aquaman.

"You have a point but it still feels good to be human. You get to experience the joy of falling in love. It's the best thing in the world Aquaman. When your heart starts beating for someone, you forget about your worries. It's like a temporary refuge from this complex world that we live in," Frida gushed.

"You seem to be an expert on it," teased Aquaman.

"Years ago, I was," admitted Frida. "I don't have time for it right now unless I find someone who's completely ready to understand the kind of life I'm in and to love me the way I am. I don't see anyone I deem worthy of my affection just yet. People are going to hurt. I must prepare myself for a heartache. I fell in love with a stranger recently. It's not intense. It's just puppy

love. It didn't hurt much actually. What really hurts me is the fact that I don't get to enjoy the freedom to engage in a "getting to know you" part for any man I like. He didn't actually have to be a boyfriend. I was just looking for someone who could perhaps give me a feeling of being liked even as a friend. I don't know...maybe I'm just lonely. He just walked away. I don't hate him. I cried actually...not because he dumped me but because the happiness brought by an emerging friendship quickly ended. I'm still thankful for that experience. Even though nothing happened, it created a happy memory for me," Frida confessed.

"Is he nice?" asked Aquaman.

"I think so! I mean, he seems nice but he always talk about things I don't want to talk about. He's a man and I completely understand. I'm not just into that kind of thing. I'm looking for a serious relationship...that kind of relationship that may lead to wedding vows," Frida admitted.

"Don't worry about that Frida. There are plenty of boys in this world," cheered Aquaman.

"Plenty of jerks too!" Frida murmured.

"Why don't we change the topic and talk about something that can make us happy?" Aquaman suggested.

"I have an idea! Let's swim in the brook!" Frida squealed.

"Cool!" exclaimed Aquaman.

The two went swimming into the brook. They played with the water and raced against each other until their bodies bumped against each other. The sun is up so Aquaman's body is as warm as the water in the brook. They were standing in front of each other. Frida can feel some sort of electricity creeping

into her veins. Her heart started beating faster. There's happiness inside of her that she can't explain. Unknown to Frida, Aquaman feels the same way.

"Why am I feeling this way for him? This can't be real. He isn't human," Frida thought.

Aquaman held Frida's hands and kissed them. Frida felt Aquaman's cool lips.

"Frida, I like you a lot. You have such a charming personality. Has anyone ever told you how pretty you are?"

"None actually...but they don't have to say it. I know I look good," joked Frida.

"Seriously Frida...I want to be a part of your life. I want to be special to you. I know it's odd for me to ask you this, knowing how I look like but...Frida, do you feel something for me too?"

"I do. I like you too Aquaman. I want to be with you."

Frida kissed Aquaman. As soon as their lips touched each other, Aquaman slowly transformed into a very handsome man. He has a deep black hair that stretches below his chin. He was quite tall. His build is truly remarkable.

"How do you like me now Frida?"

Frida cannot even speak. Her jaw dropped.

"Can I take you home?!"

"Sure! I'm all yours!"

Frida hugged him so tight.

"You made me so happy!" she told Aquaman.

"Anything for you Frida. I love you!"

Aquaman hugged her even tighter.

“I shall give you a name Aquaman,” Frida uttered.

“I think Flin sounds good,” Aquaman responded.

“Yah...I didn’t know you can think,” teased Frida.

The two laughed at Frida’s joke. She brought Flin home. Hamlet was waiting for her at the front porch.

“Who is he?” asked Hamlet.

“My special someone. His name is Flin. He lives just near the brook. Can he stay here for a while mother?”

“Stay here? Why?!” cried Hamlet.

“I invited him over. Don’t worry Mother...tomorrow, we’ll go to the nearby town and we’ll find work so he won’t be a burden,” Frida assured her mother.

“Okay. He can stay at the attic,” said Hamlet.

Frida and Flin went inside the house and quickly headed to the attic. Frida prepared Flin’s bed and gave him some clothes to wear.

“Here, you can use these bed sheets and blankets and you can wear these clothes. These are Gringo’s. He no longer wears them so you can consider them yours now. If there’s anything you need, just tell me. You can consider this place as your home too. Tomorrow, we must find a job in the nearby town so mother will not say anything bad about you staying here, okay,” Frida remarked.

“Okay,” said Flin.

The next morning, Frida and Flin woke up early. Frida prepared their breakfast. As soon as the clock hit 8:30, they’re out of the house. They rode on a wagon. The two were inseparable. Their hands are always interlocked. Every now and then, Flin would kiss Frida on the cheeks and when nobody’s

watching, Flin kisses her on the lips. By 9:40, the wagon reached the town. The two roamed around the town and soon they managed to land a simple job. They were hired as shoeshiners at Fanatico. The shop agreed to pay them \$ 20 per shoe.

Flin and Frida spent the whole day shining shoes. At the end of the day, they both collected \$ 480. They were both tired but still they couldn't wipe away the smiles on their faces.

"Job well done Frida! Here, add this \$ 480 to your money and give it to your mother. I'm sure she'd be proud of you," said Flin.

"Thanks Flin! That's so generous of you. I'm really very thankful that God gave you to me. I'll never be alone on my struggles anymore."

"I want you to be happy Frida. I'll be more than happy to give you everything you need. You mean a lot to me," said Flin.

"I feel the same way Flin. You're all I have and for that, I intend to be the best girl you can ever have," Frida vowed.

"Come here. I want to give you a hug," Flin told Frida.

Flin hugged her so tight and kissed her on the forehead.

"I respect you a lot Frida. I'll be forever by your side. Don't hesitate to call me if you need me."

"I'll remember that always," Frida gushed.

It was already sunset when the two arrived home. Frida was so excited to give to her mother the money they earned today.

"Mother! Here, take this. We earned more than enough today. That's our share."

"This is too much. Save some for yourselves," Hamlet insisted.

“No Mother. Take it while it’s still there. We’ll just take a portion from what we’ll earn next time,” Frida suggested.

“Okay. I’ll just spend some of these for your birthday tomorrow,” Hamlet remarked.

“I almost forgot! I’m turning twenty-five tomorrow!” exclaimed Frida.

Frida’s birthday came. Everyone was busy inside Shuver’s household. Hamlet was busy baking a cake while Hugo grilled some barbecue. Gringo prepared a punch and Frida and Flin decorated the living room and the dining area with party balloons.

The party commenced after several hours of preparation. Music surrounded the whole place. Some were drinking beers while some danced. The space was small but they managed to create enough room for merriment. They invited only a few friends. After all, it’s just a simple party. Everyone enjoyed the food. The cake was perfectly baked, the barbecue was great, and the punch was so delicious.

Frida soon kept on looking for Flin. She couldn’t see him anywhere inside the house. She peeped outside but he was totally out of sight.

“Where could he be?” she pondered.

Suddenly, a voice popped behind her.

“Are you looking for me?” asked Flin.

“Yes. Where have you been?” answered Frida.

“I just went outside to get these flowers for you. Happy birthday Frida. I love you!”

“Thanks. I love you too! I hope we stay like this for years,” said Frida, bursting in tears.

“We will. I promise,” said Flin.

“I thought I lost you. Don’t ever do that again,” Frida complained.

Frida’s birthday ended with so much joy. Everyone had earned extra pounds and some went home completely drunk.

It was the end of the month. Frida thought of bringing Flin to the park.

“Flin might enjoy seeing a lot of people,” she thought.

“Flin, come with me to the park. You might want to see a different view. There are lots of people there. It’s kind of cool to watch people. I’ll buy you a white soda. It tastes just like the water you drink on the brook but it’s much much more delicious!” exclaimed Frida.

“Sure!” Flin answered.

The two took a walk in the park. They sat on the grass and watched the passers-by. They tease everyone they see and laughed as hard as they could after. Then came a beautiful woman. She was blonde, slim, tall, and she carries herself well. She caught Flin’s attention. Flin followed her and asked for her name. They talked for a while and they seemed to be having fun. Flin had forgotten about Frida. He seemed to like this blonde girl. Frida was left on the grass just looking at them. She was hurt. Frida did not bother waiting for Flin to get back to her. She went home alone. It was nearly dark when Flin arrived at the Shuver’s residence.

“Hi Frida! Why did you left me there? I was looking for you everywhere,” Flin greeted Frida.

Frida did not respond to Flin’s greetings. She ignored him and she pretended like she heard nothing and saw nothing. She stays in her room most times of the day while Flin goes to the park almost everyday to meet with his

blonde girl. Frida can feel the coldness in the way Flin treats her. He isn't like that before. In the blink of an eye, all of his promises and all the vows they've made were just swept away by the wind. Now, Frida feels like she doesn't matter anymore to him.

Flin did not bother about Frida's silence for days. He was so busy with his newfound love. All that mattered to him now is how deeply he wants to see the blonde girl everyday. He had totally forgotten about Frida.

Days passed and soon months too. Frida decided to go to the park late afternoon on the last day of December. She saw Flin and the blonde girl having a fight. He hasn't seen Flin for months already. He left their house since the day she ignored him. They haven't talked for quite a long time. Flin was special to her so even if they have parted ways, she secretly keeps the memories with her; cherishing the moment she met him and all those times they were madly in love with each other.

Frida pretended she never saw Flin. She walked very fast until she lost sight of Flin.

When she arrived at her home...from the park, she quickly locked herself up into her room and sat by the window, looking outside while tears flow from her eyes.

"How can you do this to me Flin?" she thought.

Frida shed tears the whole day but she had quickly recovered from the heartache. She kept herself busy. Everyday, from the moment she wakes up, she'll do all the chores and sometimes she'd go with her father to the market.

It has been a year since Frida went to the park. She heard about the upcoming concert by the park so she went to the park without hesitations. She

did not see Flin around. She was thankful for it. She wants to forget about him.

Frida was enjoying the music at the concert when she suddenly felt thirsty. She went to a nearby stall to buy a soda when she noticed a watery substance splattered somewhere near the monument. It did not rain but it was wet on that part. She was eager to know what it was. People that pass by spit on it and some rub their feet on it. She came near the water when everybody else drifted away from it. The water looks familiar but she can barely recognize it because its color is no longer white but dark brown. It was like mud. She stared at it and she noticed a spider web mark along the edge of the water formation. It was the mark she drew on Flin's wrist.

“Could this be Flin? What could have happened?” she wondered.

Frida cannot kiss the water in public. She'd look like a fool. She thought she'd just buy a pail and take the water to the brook. Either way, it's shameful but still she bought a pail and quickly fetched the water into the pail by cup.

Frida took the pail to the brook and kissed the muddy water. Soon, Aquaman came back to life. He's no longer a human; not until they fall in love with each other again.

“Thanks Frida! I don't know how I can thank you for bringing me back here and transforming me to Aquaman again,” Aquaman sobbed.

“What happened to you?” asked Frida.

“I fell in love so deep into that blonde girl. I did everything she wished but she played a fool out of me. She broke my heart badly. It has been a rule that if I'll have my heart broken while I'm a human, I will melt,” he explained.

“I see. I'm sorry to hear that,” said Frida.

“You don't have to be sorry. I chose it so I'm the only one to be blamed,”

he remarked.

“So how was the experience?” asked Frida.

“She was the prettiest girl I ever met,” answered Aquaman.

“Ouch! You’re hurting me,” Frida murmured.

“I heard that,” Aquaman responded. “She was the prettiest girl I met. That is true and I have loved her deeply. I’m not going to lie. But you...you’re the only girl who truly mattered to me.”

“Do you know what you are saying? You left me without even saying goodbye at all and then you want me to believe that I truly mattered to you? Get real Aquaman!” Frida remarked.

“Okay, I admit I was such a foolish man for leaving you without even saying goodbye. I broke my promises. I even vowed I will always be by your side. I was tempted. I’m sorry,” Aquaman pleaded.

“Just like that? When you see a more beautiful woman, you’d be tempted and leave me behind? If you’re going to make promises, you must have a heart to keep it. Don’t speak a word about wanting me if you’ll just abandon me without hesitations. I value companionship and promises. I leaned on you so much because I thought and I really believed you’ll be there for me until the end of time. I guess I’m a fool for hoping those kinds of relationships still existed. You knew I had no one else to rely on but still you had the heart to leave me all alone,” ranted Frida.

“I’m very sorry Frida. I didn’t know that my company meant the world to you,” he reasoned.

“It did and still it does. I have my family to make me happy and to cheer me up when I feel sad but it was you whom I thought perfectly understood the

complexity of being me,” she explained.

“I understand. I’m sorry. Well, this time I promise...I’ll be man enough for you. I’m just a man. I’ve been weak. You’re beautiful,” he remarked.

“Don’t say it. Do it. I know she looks prettier. I want to believe the words that you are saying right now but my heart doesn’t agree. Anyway, let’s not see each other for a while. Maybe then, we’ll know if we truly matter to each other. If we meet again in this place sometime in the future, then we’ll both know we belong in each other’s arms,” she proposed.

“Okay,” he uttered.

“You’re all covered in dirt. Why don’t you submerge yourself in the brook to cleanse yourself?” she muttered.

Aquaman submerged himself into the brook to cleanse himself from all the mud that went through his body. They said goodbye to each other after a while. Frida slowly turned his back away from Aquaman while Aquaman slowly drowned himself into the water and never stepped out of it again.

Years passed, both of them had learned to forget each other. They went on with their lives. Time had helped Frida to patch things up with her family. Soon, they became a happy household again. Everyone had learned to understand each other’s imperfections.

Aquaman had learned his place. He never bothered to be human again in as much as he never longed to fall in love with a girl again; though he loved the happiness that love brought him. He recalled the wonderful times he had shared with Frida and how he had broken her heart. He felt bad. Frida was such a good girl. She did not deserve that pain. Tears flowed from his eyes.

“I’m really very sorry Frida,” he thought. “I haven’t been man enough for

you.”

All nights, he would look up on the stars and would see Frida’s face glittering in the sky.

“I look forward to the day we’ll see each other again. I’ll show you just how much of a changed man I had become. If only you’ll give me the chance, I’ll marry you,” he thought.

It has been ten years since Frida and Aquaman last saw each other. Frida decided to pick some flowers near the brook. She had been preparing for her brother’s wedding. She sat on the grass to rest for a while. She stared at the brook for a long time. It has been ten years but she never had forgotten about Aquaman.

“It has been a long time since the day we first met. I still remember you. I hope you still remember me,” she thought.

She made a wreath from the flowers that she picked and laid it at the edge of the brook.

“Here...wherever you are, I want you to know that I have forgiven you. If you still want me to be your friend, just give me a sign of where you are and I’ll be there,” she murmured.

Aquaman heard what Frida had said. He smiled. There was joy in his heart. He couldn’t wait to see Frida again.

A cold wind passed by. Frida looked back and he saw Aquaman standing behind her.

“Hi Frida! It’s nice to see you again. How are you?” he asked.

“Aquaman!” Frida squealed. “I’m fine! How are you? I missed you!”

Frida hugged Aquaman. Aquaman held Frida further towards him.

“I’m fine. I missed you too! I was waiting for you all these years,” he whispered to Frida.

Frida and Aquaman sat on the grass and talked for hours.

“Where have you been in the past ten years that we haven’t seen each other?” asked Frida.

“Nowhere. I just stayed in the water and waited for days, months, and years to pass,” Aquaman replied.

“You mean...you’ve never been anywhere else?”

“Yeah...I just stayed underwater. I just got up when I saw you today.”

“It must have been lonely down there.”

“It really was lonely down there. Anyway, what’s new about you? What have you been doing for the past ten years? Have you been married? Have kids?”

“Nope! I haven’t married yet. No kids yet. I kept myself busy helping my family. We’re okay now. We’ve patched all our differences and everything’s going well in our house.”

“I’m happy for you. Have you been working?”

“Nope. I’m helping my father sell some stuffs he made in the market. It supplies us with enough income and I’m happy with what I’m doing.”

“Yeah. You’re right. Whatever you do, what’s important is that you are happy.”

“Is there any girl who visited you here?”

“None at all.”

“But if there ever was someone who saw you here, would you be interested to introduce yourself?”

“No Frida. I wouldn’t.”

“Why not? You’re just shy to tell me.”

“I really am not interested Frida. Why are you so interested to know about it?”

“I’m just curious.”

“Don’t tell me you’re jealous?”

“What if I am?”

“Seriously Frida, do I still mean something to you?”

“Yes, you do. Now what? Do you still want me?”

“Of course! I haven’t wished for anything else other than that.”

The two stared at each other’s eyes and smiled. Somehow, for ten years, they had kept the feelings alive and burning. They hugged each other. It was probably the happiest moment of their lives; other than the day they first fell in love with each other.

Just as the sparks in their hearts kept burning, once again, their lips touched each other. Aquaman became the handsome Flin again.

“Can I ask you something?” Aquaman asked Frida.

“What is it?” she responded.

“Will you marry me?”

Frida broke to tears upon hearing that question from Flin.

“Of course!” Frida answered.

They lay down on the grass holding each other’s hand. They could not explain the happiness they feel.

“When do you want the wedding to happen?” Flin asked Frida.

“I want it to be the most special day of my life so I’m choosing June 15 to

be our wedding day,” Frida answered.

“Okay then. We’ll be husband and wife on June 15.”

“You pick the people who will form part of our entourage. I have no relatives, remember?”

“Okay, no problem! What does Aquaman know about entourage?”

“Uh-uhm. Excuse me! I know a lot about romance stories, wedding bells, and everything. We share stories like that too back in the days.”

“Okay then, forgive me. I’m worried about how I’ll tell my parents about our wedding.”

“I’ll help you out. Don’t worry about that.”

“But how will I explain it to them? For ten years, I was all alone and then one day, I’ll just pop into the doorstep with you and I’ll tell them I’m getting married? This will really shock them!” Frida stressed.

“It doesn’t matter how we’ll tell them about our wedding. You’re old enough to build your own family. They’ll understand.”

“What if they ask about your family? Shall I tell them I’m marrying a water?”

“Ouch! I’m just a water huh?”

“Yeah! You’re just a water for me!” Frida teased Flin. “Just kidding! Don’t be mad. Here, let me hug you...and a kiss too!”

“I love being mad at you! I get a hug and a kiss!”

“That was the last!”

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah, you bet!”

Flin and Frida pinched each other in the stomach and rolled over the grass

like little boys and girls. Then came the serious talk.

“Frida, how do you see your life with me?”

“You’re the perfect husband for me Flin! I want to grow old with you. We’ll have two kids. We’ll raise them together; send them to school, provide them with everything they need, and be the best parents we can be. I promise that until the day our hair turns gray, I will love you like the first day we met.”

“That’s so sweet of you Frida! I promise Frida...I’ll be your man until the day I die.”

“Yeah, only mine!” Frida uttered. “How many kids do you want Flin?”

“Two would be enough but we’ll see.”

“Yeah. If we can resist it,” Frida whispered.

“By the way, invite as many friends as you wish Frida. I want them all to witness your happiest day.”

“Let’s invite only a few...my closest friends maybe.”

“Why? Are you not in good terms with your friends?”

“I am friends with my friends. They’re good people. I’m just not comfortable sharing this event with a lot of people.”

“As you wish Frida. Since you will be my wife and I will be your husband, why don’t we take some time to dig into our personalities so we can better understand each other’s imperfections before we exchange vows.”

“Will you change your mind once you get to find out some flaws in my character?”

“Nope! That’s so shallow of me if I do that to you. It’s important for us to know each other very well so that when we become husband and wife, our relationship will run smoothly. It will be awkward for us to adjust to each

other only when we're already married.”

“Okay. I get your point.”

“So how's your life now, in terms of dealing with everyone around you?”

“It's still the same Flin. Nothing has changed.”

“Why don't you adjust to them?”

“I'm doing my best to please them Flin but no matter what I do, it's not enough. It seems like I don't get any of it right.”

“Consider changing your approach. Why don't you try to lengthen your patience? I think that's your problem.”

“You got it right. It's very difficult to be patient. It's hard to pretend like what's going on around me or what they say doesn't bother me. I mean...I have emotions. It's difficult to smile when deep inside it's like crushing my heart.”

“It's not that painful I think.”

“It's not but it's different when it pisses me off. It's hard for me to pretend like it was nothing.”

“I know what you mean. It's like portraying an image that is not who you really are.”

“Exactly! I have to change my habits and my thoughts. When you speak of habits, you've grown into doing them all your life. It will take years to be changed. It's easy to fool yourself and stray away from the things that you really like but if your thoughts don't go with what you want them to see, that's where the problem starts. Thoughts are hardly programmable Flin. I find it very stressful to train my mind to think of something they will like and my actions to conform into what they will like. It's not like changing the color of

your hair. You dye it and it's no longer the same hair. The same applies to my character. It's an agony for me to transform myself into doing and saying things that is far from what I really want to do and what I really want to be."

"I cannot suggest a perfect solution to your problem Frida. Because I don't know what it's like to be you so I cannot exactly feel what you feel inside. What I can tell you instead is to keep on doing whatever it is that you can do at the moment. Over time, you can master it. It took years to build Rome. It doesn't matter if it would take you years to perfect your reactions and how you deal with people around you as long as you keep on going. I know you'd like to ask why you should bother changing your behavior. It is because, the behavior you have is not something that they like. Most of them prefer themselves; so even if you do nothing to them, but because they do not like you to prevail, it won't make any sense Frida. There are people who love the way you are and the way you behave but there are much more people who don't like it. You don't want to see war, do you? I know it hurts, but you must do something that will be best for many and not what is comfortable for you. It sounds unfair and cruel but we have no choice. We have to give way even if it badly hurts. It's for a good cause. Just think of it that way so you won't feel sorry for yourself. What you do is noble. Few people would take discomfort because most want it easy. I would be a fool to say I'd like to share your sufferings. But because I am your friend and your husband to be, I will carry half of your burden."

"And the award goes to...tantararantantan....! Just kidding! That was a long speech you got there. No, seriously...I understand. I wouldn't demand from anybody to share my sufferings. It is obviously normal not to want to suffer. If

it's the other way around, I would honestly think twice too if I would want to be a part of that person's life; but one thing I can guarantee...I'd help her out. Of course, most people don't think that way. You can have everything you want on the other side with less hassle. Would you even bother making it hard for yourself? Of course not! Unless I mean so much to you. But thanks for the kindness Flin. I appreciate it a lot. It means so much to me."

Frida leaned on Flin's shoulder with tears on her eyes. Flin wiped away those tears.

"Frida, it is my pleasure to help you out. It would be so numb of me not to feel your pain. Anyway, I think I've known enough. We better be happy instead. We're together now so there's no need to be sad. Where do you plan to spend our honeymoon?"

"That's a good question Flin. Why not spend it on the nearby resort? It's a beautiful place. We can spend the whole week there. Let's ride a kayak and hop on the next island. We can go snorkeling too. There are plenty of things we can do there. I can't wait to go sunbathing or spend a night under the moonlight with just the two of us."

"I didn't know you were that romantic."

"Wait and see. You're one lucky guy."

"I sure am."

It was already late in the afternoon when Frida decided to go home. She asked Flin to go with her. She'll introduce him to her parents and tell them about their wedding plan. She's already very hungry. She just ate one sandwich. She always bring snacks when she goes to the brook. She can already hear the noise from her stomach. Hamlet was already waiting for Frida

at the front porch.

“Where have you been?” Hamlet asked.

“Near the brook. I picked some flowers for decorations at Gringo’s wedding. Here,” Frida answered.

“And who is he?” Hamlet continued asking.

“He is Flin. He is the guy I brought home long ago. I introduced him to you. He even lived here, remember?” Frida replied.

“Oh, I remember him. Hi Flin! It’s nice to see you again,” Hamlet greeted Flin.

“Hi Mrs. Shuver! Thanks. It’s nice to see you again too. I miss all of you here!” exclaimed Flin.

“Okay, you two go on inside. I’ve prepared something special for you. I’ve made some tacos,” said Hamlet.

“Mother, we have something to tell you. Why don’t you join us?” Frida told her mother.

“Is it important dear?” Hamlet asked.

“Yes mother. It’s important to the two of us,” Frida responded. “Actually, it’s better if Father and Gringo can join us too. We have an important announcement to make.”

“Whew! It must really be important,” Hamlet remarked.

Hamlet saw Hugo coming so she quickly took the opportunity to call his attention and invite him over for a family talk.

“Huuuugoooo!” Hamlet screamed. “Come over here quick! Frida is inviting all of us for a family talk.”

“I’ll be there in a minute!” Hugo shouted.

Frida, Flin, Hugo, Hamlet, and Gringo gathered at the dining table and talked about Frida and Flin's wedding.

"What is it that you are going to tell us Frida?" Hamlet asked.

"Flin and I decided to get married," Frida announced.

"You surprised us Frida!" Gringo exclaimed. "We haven't seen you with somebody for years and suddenly you're getting married?!"

"Gringo, you've seen Flin years ago. I invited him to our house but we parted ways. When we saw each other again, we rekindled the romance we once had. Besides, I think I'm already prepared to settle down. I'm old enough for it," Frida proclaimed.

"I see no problem with it Frida," Hugo commented. "Welcome to our family Flin."

"Thanks Mr. Shuver. I'll take care of your daughter. I promise! She will not regret marrying me," Flin vowed to Frida's father.

"Father, thank you very much. Your blessing means a lot to me!" cried Frida.

The following week, the Shuver's household became very busy preparing for Gringo's wedding. On June 15, it will be Frida's wedding day.

June 15 came. Frida woke up so early. She was way too excited for the wedding. On the last few days of the previous month, they were so busy preparing for Frida's wedding. Gringo arranged the reception details while Hamlet took care of the invitations. Hugo made contacts with all the guests for the wedding and the members of the entourage. The couple personally took care of the flowers, the gowns, the decorations, and everything else needed for their special day.

The wedding will commence at exactly 9: 30 in the morning. Frida quickly ate her breakfast and soon went to the bathroom to take a bath. A few hours after, she glanced at her wedding gown and stood in front of the mirror. She turned all around, beaming with joy. She then called her make-up artist to do her make-up and style her hair as well. After a few minutes of beautifying herself, she then put on her wedding dress and her sparkly white wedding shoes. The sun is up. The weather rejoices with her on her big day. She came out of her room to check on everyone else. Everybody was ready for the wedding. The wedding coordinator perfectly handled everything. Frida then proceeded to ride on a white wagon full of amaryllis flowers and calla. Her beauty was radiant. She probably is the most beautiful girl this day. Everyone else rode on a golden wagon filled with flowers too.

Thirty minutes before the wedding commence, the wagon arrived at the church. Frida went down the wagon and stood at the church door. She can see Flin near the altar. He was there anxiously waiting. The wedding hymn was soon played and the whole entourage marched towards the altar. Frida soon came marching down the aisle with her father. As soon as they reached the place where Flin was standing, Hugo handed Frida over to Flin.

Flin took Frida's hand and there they stood right in front of the priest. It took some hours for the ceremony to end. After that, they all proceeded to the reception area. The newlyweds celebrated their wedding day with a blast. They received plenty of gifts. Some are cash and some are household appliances. They even received some furnitures and fixtures. The wealthy ones gave them a brand new car and a new house. Flin and Frida cannot be more thankful for the blessings and the support they received from their beloved.

The very next day after their wedding, Frida and Flin drove to the nearby resort for a week-long honeymoon. As soon as they arrived at the resort, they took a walk along the beach and picked up some shells and polished stones as souvenirs. They swam in the ocean afterwards. They spent the whole day at the beach. Flin would spread some sunblock lotion onto Frida's body while they go sunbathing.

They headed towards their room after their day of swimming ended. Tomorrow, they plan to spend some intimate time together in a bathtub, in a Jacuzzi hot tub, or in the bed perhaps.

When they woke up the next morning, they were too lazy to get up from bed or to go out of their room.

"Flin, let's stay in this room this day," Frida pleaded. "I'm too exhausted. Let's take some rest."

"Okay Frida. As you wish," answered Flin.

The couple spent the whole day in the bed; with just a few breaks meant for eating their meals. They slept all day. It was already evening when they got up completely. They've had enough sleep. As soon as Frida walked towards the Jacuzzi hot tub, there were flower petals spread all over the floor and Flin was right there in the hot tub waiting for her.

"Hey sweetheart...join me here. This tub is large enough to accommodate the two of us," Flin invited Frida.

"I'll be right there honey!" Frida yelled with a smile on her face.

While Frida walks toward the hot tub where Flin was, she slowly took off her clothing piece by piece until she was wearing nothing at all when she reached the tub. Flin kept on smiling for Frida's naughtiness. They made love

in the tub. They caressed each other...kissed each other on the lips, on the neck, and on the whole body. It was a wonderful night for the couple.

The days passed by and they did all the adventures they can try on the resort. All of their activities are being recorded by Flin through a video camera.

“Why do you keep on recording all of our activities here Flin?” Frida asked.

“Memories are precious to me. I want to have something to look onto when we are already old. Let this be a reminder of our love for each other,” Flin explained to Frida.

“Sweet!” mumbled Frida.

The last night of their honeymoon came. The couple decided to swim in the ocean under the moonlight.

“This is a romantic idea Flin!”

“Yup! You bet! It’s just the two of us here.”

After swimming, they sat on the sand where they were surrounded by candles formed in the shape of a heart.

“Flin, what is it that you liked about me?”

“You’re pretty, humorous, sweet, and kind.”

“Really? You find me pretty?”

“Frida, you are pretty to me. You’re the prettiest girl for me rather. How about me? What do you like about me?”

“You are one caring man. I want someone who understands me and always make me feel I am being loved and taken care of.”

“That was deep. You are really looking for affection.”

“I am. Everybody needs to be understood and loved. I want to thank you Flin for making things a little bit easier for me. Thank you for being with me.”

“That puzzles me Frida. You mean most things are difficult for you without me?”

“They sure are.”

“In what way?”

“I like everyone in a broad sense but it seems to me that most people I see and meet are driving me away and I feel like a nuisance to them. I wouldn't ever enjoy friendship if half of me is hesitant to loving them as friends because that feeling of making me unlike them gives me a notion that they don't want to be with me or that they turn their backs away from me and refusing to help me out. I don't have a circle of friends who will support me all throughout. I kind of comprehend what they are trying to do but do they have to do it all the time? I would appreciate it if they would make me understand why they do the things they do. I'm not asking them because I feel like I know what that means. I'm not saying that they are bad. But there seems to be a discrimination going on. Upon years of observing what has been going on around me ever since, I noticed that they all argue and fight sometimes but at the end of the day, I notice too that they seem to reconcile quickly and they help each other out but when I tend to have an argument with any of them, I just end up looking like a fool and unable to earn any companionship or support from them the way I expected it. They quickly act on helping others out but they find it very difficult to do the same to me. I feel like a junk. I hear them saying words of encouragement and gestures of defense against those who oppress me in some ways but later on, they seem to hurt me too so I really don't know

whom I can call as true to me. I am not asking for loyalty or devotion; maybe I just need a constant and secured friendship...those kinds of friends with whom I can reveal my whole self to, my personality, my secrets, and everything and still be assured that no matter what happens, they are at my side. I need them. I really do. These days, it's hard to find people you can count on. You tell them your struggles because you believe they are the ones who'll choose to understand you and help you out but eventually they turn out to be the ones mocking you for your weaknesses that they have known upon you letting them enter your life. You know that there are people who you really have to like because you need them. It hurts me to feel like they don't want me to have them. I am not saying that it is really their purpose but I can't avoid thinking that way. Am I that bad not to be worthy of having them around? It hurts to be mocked for not getting the things you need because it makes me feel like I don't have any worth at all...unwanted by many," Frida confessed.

"Frida, I am aware about the things that you are talking about. You're not bad and you know that. You deserve to get everything you want. There are three sides for why they do that to you. First, it could be that they are forced to do so out of life's pressures. Second, it could be that they intend to do so because you're not the kind of person they want to be associated with. That sounds painful but there are people who have nonsense reasons for doing those things you are talking about. Third, they want you to serve someone else and not yourself. The third one seems to be the most valid reason why they do the things they do. It will be very difficult for you because I know how much you want staying true to yourself and loving yourself. It is your choice. It is up to you whether you'd like to give up living your life as yourself or choosing to

live a life that they wanted you to live. Now, the question is, can you do it?" asked Flin.

"I think I can but I'm not sure when and how long I can do it. I know what to do Flin. I'm trying my best but half of me does not really want to let go of who I truly am. It's like doing half of what they like and doing half of what I want for myself. The question is, do you think they'll settle for that?"

"I'm not really sure how to answer your question but I'm confident they'll accept it that way."

"Here's another problem. I'm not sure how I can please them. They doubt me all the time so I don't know when I'll be able to gain their trust and be assured that I won't do anything that could harm them. Besides, if I do what they want, that means I agree to the fact that whichever angle you see it, I'll go second among their priorities. That means, whatever they do...whether it hurts me or not, I don't have the right to complain. It's like I'm going to take it with my whole heart on it. It's kind of sad because they really hurt. You have no idea how much they can hurt."

"I don't know Frida. Only time can tell. One thing I must remind you about...don't worry anymore about getting the things you need through them. You can enjoy some of the things you want even if you got these people or not."

"I already know about it Flin. That sounds good. It would be a cruel world if it doesn't work that way. But sometimes, it still works that way you know."

"Frida, your life is so complex. I hate to hear those kinds of stories from you but at least now I know. I might be able to help you."

"Thanks Flin. It feels better to be able to vent about my sorrow."

“It’s my pleasure to lend you a helping hand. I’m always here for you. I want you to remember that always.”

Frida and Flin spent the whole night wrapped in each other’s arms. After their honeymoon, they headed out to visit the house and lot that they received as a wedding gift. It was a mansion.

“Wow! This is perhaps the most luxurious present ever for a wedding!” Flin gulped.

“And this is legitimately ours!” Frida screamed.

“Mr. and Mrs. Hanouver are undoubtedly very wealthy,” Flin remarked.

“Let’s get inside!” Frida exclaimed.

Flin unlocked the main door and Frida went inside the house first.

“Beautiful!” cried Frida. “Look, we don’t have to buy anything for this house. It’s fully furnished. All we have to do is to decorate it,” Frida commented.

The mansion has an outdoor pool, an open court area where one could come and play ball games and other miscellaneous exercises, spacious overlooking terraces, libraries, and a lot more.

“We’ll build our family here Frida,” said Flin.

Frida and Flin moved to their new house after a day. They got everything fixed and soon, they started living in the mansion. Frida would constantly visit her family every Saturday and Sunday.

One Saturday, she visited her family to check on them. Nothing much has changed but the silence is deafening. It used to be noisy around the house when she was still there.

Frida went to see her father at the cottage. Hugo was busy packing all the

cleavers that he will sell in the market.

“Father, how are you?”

“Frida! It’s nice to see you here. I can’t entertain you today. I am going to the market to sell these cleavers.”

“I’m fine father. I’m happy. I’ll go with you to the market.”

“You’ll help me sell these cleavers?”

“Yup! Like the way we used to sell those bolos.”

The two laughed and they went to the market to sell the cleavers that Hugo made. They sell a lot. By noon, the cleavers were completely sold out. They got \$ 8, 000 for selling 100 cleavers for \$ 80 a piece.

While on the wagon, Frida had a serious talk with his father.

“Father, how is Flin to you?” Frida asked her father.

“I like him. I see that he treats you very well. That’s enough to make me happy. I’m assured that you are with a good man. As long as he takes care of you and treats you well, there’s nothing else I can ask for,” Hugo smirked.

“He’s asking a lot about you too. He really likes to be close to you,” Frida remarked.

“It’s good to know that. I feel honored that he wishes to reach out to me. How are things going between the two of you?” asked Hugo.

“Well, everything’s going pretty well father. I’m really lucky to have Flin around. He totally made a difference in my life. I can breathe easier now. It’s good to know there’s at least one person I can vent on about my problems and talk to about life experiences.”

“It’s good to hear that Frida. Don’t you have any other friends to talk to about those things?”

“Well, all they do is yawn whenever I try to open up. Do you think I’d dare talk about my struggles again to them when I know I won’t get any response other than a yawn and a statement like “I am just overthinking and that I am boring?” reasoned Frida.

“Really?”

“Yes father. Oh, that’s a great help to me?! It makes me feel like I’m insane. I’m just kidding! They make me feel like I should just keep my troubles to myself and wait until they explode.”

“Your friends are still young. They’re just not ready to talk about things like that. Most of them would rather hear you talk about fun, adventures, and stuffs like that.”

“That’s why I don’t meet with them. I don’t have anything to share. No happy experiences yet other than having been married to Flin. I haven’t got the chance to speak to my friends yet after my wedding.”

“You deserve to be happy Frida. I’m glad Flin came into your life.”

Hugo drove the wagon to Frida’s mansion and bid goodbye to his father.

“Bye father! I’ll see you again next week!”

Frida went to the backyard to check on their garden. She saw Flin planting all kinds of vegetables and fruit-bearing trees. It has always been Flin’s dream to grow a garden full of vegetables and fruit-bearing trees.

“Flin! I got some cashew seedlings here,” Frida greeted Flin.

“Let me have them. I still have a lot of spaces here for those cashews.”

“What fruit trees and vegetables have you planted already?”

“I’ve planted some squash, carrots, peanuts, bitter gourd, watermelon, apples, oranges, lemons, and a lot more. A few more years to go and we’ll

have plenty to harvest. I've always dreamed of having an orchard. This one's not too big but I've planted enough. I've made a secret garden over there so our kids can play and enjoy nature as well. Over time, those vines will completely grow and you'll see...this will be the envy of many. There's a fountain inside. Would you like to take a look?"

"No, not now Flin. When we already have kids, that's the time I'm going to visit that secret garden. Anyway, it looks cool from here. I didn't know you have a passion for secret gardens."

"Little girls love secret gardens so I thought of making one. I've always been enchanted by stories about secret gardens. I used to think that secret gardens really have hidden secrets in it."

"You believe in fantasy?"

"Of course! Our love story is like a fantasy but here we are now and these are all real."

"Oh Flin! You never changed. You're still the guy I fell in love with."

"I'll always be."

"I've got a good news for you by the way. Guess what?"

"What? What is it?"

"You're going to be a father! We're having a baby! It's a girl!"

"Yes! I'm going to be a father! I'm the happiest guy in the whole wide world!"

"Okay, enough! Stop shouting! When you're done with what you're doing, clean yourself up and join me in the dining room. I'm going to bake a cake and cook some bean and bacon soup and Tuscan kale, sun dried tomato and chicken sausage gnocchi."

“Wow! Sounds delicious. What’s the occasion?”

“Nothing! I just want to try a new recipe.”

As soon as Flin was finished planting the cashew seedlings that Frida brought, Flin washed himself up and joined Frida for a wonderful lunch.

A few days after, Frida requested Flin to get the baby’s room ready for the birth of their first child. Flin quickly painted the vacant room in the mansion and also bought a crib.

Whenever the couple goes to the town, they would buy some baby stuffs. They were too excited for the birth of their first child. They only decided to stop buying baby stuffs when they realized that the baby’s room is already filled with all of the things that the baby might need.

Frida, together with her father, already went to see a baby specialist to diagnose the condition of the baby, but she would constantly ask Flin to accompany her to the doctor for a regular check-up. Flin would always do so for he is much more excited for the baby’s arrival.

Nine months had passed and their first child was born. The couple was very happy.

“What name do you want for our baby?” asked Frida.

“I want her to be named Sassy,” blurted Flin.

“As in the word ‘sassy’?” reiterated Frida.

“Yup! What’s wrong with that?” asked Flin.

“Nothing. I like how it sounds. It’s like a combination of a pretty girl, smart attitude, and such a badass chick,” Frida responded.

“Like what you see in the movies,” said Flin.

The couple kept themselves busy taking care of Sassy. Frida and Flin would

switch places to attend to the child's needs. Frida would breastfeed the baby while Flin would sing lullaby to Sassy to get her to sleep. They were ideal parents. When Sassy turned one, she had the grandest baptism in the county. Her godfathers and godmothers were the town officials and well-known poets at the time.

A few months after, Flin would always wake up early and midnight to prepare Sassy's milk and food. He is such a loving father. As soon as Sassy learned to walk, Frida and Flin would take her for a walk at the secret garden.

Five years after, Frida got pregnant again.

"Flin! I'm pregnant! We're having our second baby!" Frida announced.

"Cool! Now we're having two kids," Flin remarked.

"It's a boy!" added Frida.

"Yes! I'm going to have a little me! I'm going to be a father again!" exclaimed Flin.

"Tomorrow, you'll have to repaint the baby's room and by next week we are going to town to buy some baby stuffs for our little boy."

"Sure! I'll take the lead in buying baby stuffs. I know more than you do what our baby boy might be needing."

Flin repainted the baby's room right away. The next morning, the couple went to town to buy some baby stuffs. They did not buy a new crib. They just remodeled the old one. They bought new baby pillows instead. They bought new baby feeding bottles too. They went home with a wagon full of baby stuffs. Flin couldn't be much more excited for the birth of their second child. They brought Sassy with them for no one would attend to her at the mansion.

Nine months had passed and Frida gave birth to their second child.

“So how do you want our baby to be named?” asked Frida.

“I’ll name him Jango. You like it?” Flin answered.

“Sounds like jungle but I like it,” Frida agreed.

In the following months, the couple were so busy taking care of Sassy and Jango. Frida would breastfeed Jango while Flin would take care of Sassy and attend to Jango when he is about to get to sleep at night. He would sleep near Jango’s crib at the baby’s room.

Upon Jango’s baptism, Flin threw an extravagant party where all of their beloved friends and family members were present. Jango’s godfathers and godmothers were present too. Most of them were politicians while others were astronauts.

“Such a handsome child you have Flin!” Mr. Hennessy greeted.

“Thanks Mr. Hennessy! He is really handsome,” Flin replied.

“He looks just like you,” Mrs. Grimm commented.

“I’m a handsome father,” answered Flin.

Everybody shared a good laugh.

Years have passed and Sassy and Jango grew into cute toddlers. They were the delight of many. Frida and Flin would take Sassy and Jango to the Shuver’s residence. Hugo and Hamlet couldn’t get their hands off from the two kids. They would kiss Sassy and Jango everywhere and the two kids would chuckle afterwards. They are both humans. None of them were born in the form of water. Aquaman was already human when he and Frida made love so they were formed inside Frida’s womb as humans.

A few more years had passed and Sassy and Jango grew into a beautiful lady and a handsome gentleman. Sassy now has suitors while Jango is liking a

country girl who lives just a few blocks away from their house. The two would always ask their parents about their love story and would often request for advice. Flin did not keep his secret from his children. He told them about what he is and where he came from. Sassy and Jango even loved him more for saying so. They love stories about strange wonders. Frida can't explain the happiness she feels everytime she would tell her children about how she and Flin met and fell in love with each other.

Frida and Flin are very supportive of their kids. Flin would take Sassy and Jango to school every morning and fetch them in the afternoon. He took a regular job as a shoeshine boy at Fanatico. The income he gets from being a shoeshine boy at Fanatico pays the entire household expenses. Frida had stopped working as a shoeshine girl at Fanatico a long time ago. By this time, the fruit trees and the vegetables that Flin planted years ago are now fully-grown. They don't have any worries regarding their meals because every week, the couple would harvest vegetables and fruits. They are abundant in food. Frida would tirelessly do everything that the two needs such as preparing their meals, washing their clothes, and providing them with clothes, books, and above all...a mother's love.

Sassy and Flin would often hang out in the secret garden where they sing songs and play guitar near the fountain. Sometimes, the whole family would play hide and seek around the maze.

The secret garden is where Sassy and Jango's romances bloomed. Sassy would take her suitors to the secret garden and ride on a swing while Jango would take his girl to the oak tree surrounded by lavenders. He would pick flowers and turn them into a crown and he would place it into the girl's head.

These couples carved their names on the body of the trees inside the secret garden.

Twenty years had passed and Sassy and Jango graduated in college. Sassy took medicine while Jango took law. Soon after, they completely became licensed professionals. Not long after, they began exercising their professions. Sassy would take care of her parents whenever they get sick and Jango would settle all the family's property legalities. Jango built his own firm and Sassy built her own clinic. It was Sassy's dream to build a hospital someday.

Five more years after their graduation, Sassy and Jango got married and had kids. Frida and Flin are now proud grandparents. They already have gray hairs. The couple had raised their children very well. They are confident that both of them are ready to live in this world without them so the two are now ready for whatever tomorrow brings.

It was Saturday morning on the 16th of April when the couple received a bad news. Hugo and Hamlet passed away. Hugo passed away a day after Hamlet died. Frida couldn't stop herself from crying. She loves her parents very much.

"It's alright Frida," said Gringo.

"I'm okay Gringo...don't mind me. I know they're already very old," Frida remarked.

"I'll take care of the funeral," Gringo told Frida.

"Okay. Just let me know if you need my help," said Frida.

There was a heavy rain on the day of the burial. Heaven was expressing its grief for their death. Frida's tears kept flowing from her eyes everytime she recalls the happy memories her family shared through the years.

Six years after her parents' death, Frida and Flin celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Frida is now sitting on a wheelchair while Flin stands with a cane. They're already very old but they're still very much in love with each other.

Flin has shared a secret to his children. It's a secret that has shocked Sassy and Jango.

"Sassy...Jango...I have a secret to tell you," said Flin.

"What is it?" asked Sassy.

"If ever the two of you don't see me anywhere one day, don't be surprised," disclosed Flin.

"Why? What will happen to you Father?" asked Jango.

"You know that I once was an Aquaman. I just became human because of Frida's love. If Frida would soon perish, I will also die and will return to being an Aquaman. I shall die as Aquaman," confessed Flin.

"But there must be another way for you not to vanish too when Mother dies," argued Sassy.

"Sassy, what was written in our history cannot be changed. Frida holds my heart. If she dies, my heart will stop beating. What is destined to happen will happen. Don't you worry. I'll always watch over you two," cheered Flin.

The three hugged each other. Flin sobbed for he's not ready to lose Frida.

The day that Flin fears to happen came. He woke up and hugged Frida but Frida feels so cold. Flin checked her heartbeat. She's no longer breathing. Flin cried.

"Frida, why did you not even gave me a sign that you are already going to leave me?"

Flin called Sassy and Jango and told them about the bad news. The two wept and hugged Frida's cold body. Flin quickly arranged the funeral. At night before going to sleep, Flin would watch their videos and would cry in silence. Their love was so deep that even death cannot erase it. In three days, Frida's coffin was buried beside the brook. It was Frida's wish to be buried there when she dies.

After the burial, everyone else had left the brook while Flin stayed. He was hurting so bad inside. Tears kept flowing from his eyes. He looks from afar and reckoned the last days Frida was still alive.

"Will you be sad if I die?" asked Frida.

"What kind of question is that? Of course I will!" exclaimed Flin.

"Will you cry?" asked Frida.

"Of course!" exclaimed Flin.

Flin wept when he recalled that pretty smile on Frida's face. He would surely miss that smile but only for a while for a few more minutes and he'll soon melt, turn into water again, and eventually perish. He and Frida will be together again.

He stared at the tombstone and read the epitaph. It says..."I love you all." Frida has always been a nice girl even to her death.

Under the heavy rain, Flin slowly walked to the brook and submerged himself into the water. In a few minutes, he melted and became part of the water in the brook.

"Wait for me Frida..."

Until death, they were inseparable.

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