

Twice in a Blue Moon

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AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Written in the perspective of a star surrounding Neptune, this story details the peculiar orbit of 2 moons which scientists call 'a dance of avoidance'. I was inspired by a song called 'Neptune' by Sleeping at Last, which is directly referenced later. Hope you enjoy (and, if you do, go listen to the song! It's so beautiful!), and I warn: there is some serious gay angst. <3*



Sometimes, you have to wonder whether it's real.

Love.

If you observe it from the outside, it can look like the vastest jumble of contradictions and lies, but also truth and an odd image of divinity, which you sort of have to admire. With some people, it's like love chooses them and it's their duty to do others a service by offering their whole heart. Other people only seek it and then ironically have nothing to do but mull over why they have this eternal emptiness inside them.

I'm an observer. Well, you could say I participate in the whole 'love' thing. I've heard some people say that they love me because I'm sparkly and I can bring a luminescent perspective to the nightly shadows of space. But they haven't even met me. I think they love the idea of me. They love that I can be a part of something, like constellations, and maybe it's just that they want to be a part of something too. A wider purpose.

Do you think love gives purpose? I think so. I think love is the reason purpose exists.

I guess the reason I am telling you all this is because I wanted to let you in on a little secret. A hidden gem of our galaxy. And you could say that this story is one of love, but you know how I said earlier that some people only seek love and others only give it? What if you were only ever given the means to love in half, not whole? That would change it all then, wouldn't it?

You can see it, you know, where that big ice giant, Neptune, holds dozens of moons.

There.

Amidst all the burning and the flying and the crashing and the pummeling, there they are. At the edge of your galaxy, rocks fated by invisible rings.

The story is about just *two* of those moons - soul and orbit bound. Though, you shouldn't get confused. They were anything but soulmates. You might say the red string of fate that intertwined the two had frayed into an icy blue, the orange sparks now spitting tears; a wet tapestry of unbridled despair painted along Neptune's sides. But, if you really looked, you wouldn't see it. It's not like the Sun, right in your face, demanding your gaze or the eyes of every shadow. Moons? They only reflect that loving light. An attempt at imitating grace.

So, don't worry if you can't see them from where you are; they are practically the smallest ones. You could probably compare them to pebbles. Skipped stones.

The first of the skipped is Naiad, and she's an interesting one. Her name literally means 'running water' and she does exactly that. Her orbit is half an hour faster than Thalassa's, who, by the way, is the second of the skipped moonstones. And her name is that of the primordial deity of the sea. Can you imagine trying to match someone who created the sea? All of it? You can't, really.

Wait, I want to explain exactly how I see it all from up here.

Try to picture it like art.

As they dive under, just for that moment of clarity, that moment of peaceful silence under the crashing torrents above, they hold still. Breathe. But the wind, strong at their back, drives them forwards - a force of deadly muscle. So, they carry on and convince themselves they're gliding along the water.

This is the way it's meant to be. This is how it has to be. And I want this.

And that blue astral tapestry, threaded in whites and smoky silvers, is lit. It's lit, but the colours are fading now as Naiad approaches- no, is being *driven* up higher. The Sun fades them from pale blue to pitch black, ashen and stained. That's how you know they're close.

But close is where it ends because those wild oceans are still hauling at Naiad's arms, ripping and tugging and yanking, and, I swear, it's like there are water forged manacles at their wrists. Holding them back. And the water is icy, but, like tired rain, weakening at the close.

It makes you think, maybe they have a choice.

There, in golden sea-blue, their lover treads. Thalassa, in all her godly glory, walks barefoot along her silver tightrope. Naiad can only see the back of her head, bushed with ever-stretching strands of coral. And though Naiad is used to the view, she has to admit the ineffable beauty Thalassa holds every time. Every time, and one might describe her immortality as old, cratered and worn, but Naiad never saw any of that in her. Every time she passes, her thoughts can only sweetly whisper of Thalassa's purity and wisdom and adventure.

Then again, how much adventure can one possess when restricted to walk a long and heavy line?

Even now as she gets closer, she can't help but notice how her coral roots are silvering with grey, her soft pebble skin is sagging and - how could she not notice it before? Is she tired?

Naiad never had to fret whether Thalassa could see her worry because she was always flying above or sinking below, but now here they are. Finally at the point where they inevitably meet. And her thoughts meander for a second because they can't do this now. And Thalassa can't see it anyway, but maybe she can. And, and, and...

They are reaching the surface and are passing just below her.

When you're above the tide, free from any push or pull, you can finally see yourself in the runny reflection. That's something that Naiad dreaded, yet she could never urge her eyes away. Her run-down, starless eyes, bags dragging like a black hole. She was sure that could be the only way they looked. She didn't want to be sure, though.

In a spur of the moment decision, she turned to face the woman she so dearly feared to see. When you face the truth, your fantasies have to disappear, and your doubts can be confirmed. The worst part, however, which she hadn't thought ahead to, was the fact that your half-truths and white lies can be discovered. They can be seen - and, God, does she see them.

There's no light now, only darkness surrounding them in its full heart of black blood, and Naiad can see now how Thalassa isn't tired. No, she's just been crying for a long time. She's been silently begging. Naiad knew what for. In fact, she had a little plan in case this happened; a universal song. The tune went like this:

I'm only honest when it rains. If I time it right the thunder breaks when I open my mouth - I want to tell you, but I don't know how.

I'm only honest when it rains. An open book with a torn-out page and my ink's run out. I want to love you, but I don't know how.

The ever-shifting balance between them, with Naiad running up and going down and spiralling in any direction other than the one Thalassa was heading towards, had now levelled and they matched each other's eyes.

And she just wants to give up.

Through Thalassa's eyes, she knows all she can see is a masterpiece of brokenness and the stitching is her own doing. She knows. She knows it all because Naiad lets the winds take her back up, away from her love, away from her pleading cries, and she wishes that her falling tears would thrash around like uncontrolled flames, but they simply wane down the goddess' moon face. Drained.

What Naiad doesn't know is that Thalassa hides her oceans of tears in the very murky seas they're trapped in. That watery darkness, it offers them a snug blanket where unspoken conversations can build a home and fears can nest.

In all of its contradictions, it was comfortable. They felt comfortable.

And so, the lovers part, only to return again at half hour intervals and the loony cycle continues because - you know that phrase you have about rare things happening only "once in a blue moon"? Well, a blue moon isn't all that rare, not from an astronomical perspective, and these two tic-tac tiny moons, forever blue, forever in despair, just aren't that different.

If I could feel that dance of avoidance on a canvas, like you just imagined, I think it would be thick to the brim with paint, splashes and blots and brushes flicked in all directions. Chaotic. Rough.

Do you know the funniest thing about it all? Despite the moons existing, they weren't built to love with their everything, but they still blame

themselves and enable the crazy situation. It's kind of like the people who claim to love me, except they can love with their everything. But not me, when all they see is honestly the dust of dying stars. I'm the patchy crater of the sky's accidental errors and they "love" it. Either people wish to be insane, or they refuse to see things for how they really are.

Complex.

And strange.

And broken.

Love sure is lonely.

