

A LIE'S DEPTH

Written by

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Based on, Turtle and Rabbit, a Korean fable

EXT. UNDERWATER - OCEAN KINGDOM - NIGHT

In the horizon, a bustling castle comes into view. People and fish swim together happily throughout the castle that comes into view.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

The throne room door fly open as the lead court doctor comes into view. He grabs the guard by the collar.

DOCTOR

Guard! Assemble the medical team!
The king has fallen ill!

GUARD

Right away, Sir.

The guard leaves and the doctor paces back and forth in front of the door. An alarm begins to ring throughout the kingdom.

DOCTOR

By god, I hope we can heal him
soon.

INT. CORAL COTTAGE - NIGHT

The alarm goes off and wakes TURTLE (16, humanoid with turtle features), as it startles him and he falls out of bed.

TURTLE

Neptune preserve us! What is going
on now?

EXT. TURTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Turtle rushes out the house and heads toward the castle. People and fish swim past him in a rush. He picks up his pace.

INT. CASTLE - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Various people gather around in the main hall, an area open to all that is outside of the throne room area.

Turtle leans against a wall. He observes the room. The king's subjects panic and wander around the room. Turtle overhears a WOMAN (50s) talking to a GUARD (30s).

WOMAN

Excuse me, could you be a dear and tell us what's going on? Everyone was woken up in the middle of the night? I need to open the shop in the morning!

Subject begin to gather around the guard, and raise their voices. The guard raises her hands.

GUARD

All of your questions will be answered accordingly. I need to know if there are any doctors available! If so, please come forward!

The crowd looks around, but no one steps forward.

INT. MAIN HALL WALL - CONTINUOUS

Turtle sighs.

TURTLE

Who cares? I'm going back to bed.

Two lower lords overhear Turtle's remark and scoff. Turtle turns away and leaves the castle. He rolls his eyes at the guard, who watches him with squinted eyes.

INT. TURTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Turtle sits down at his desk unable to sleep. He looks out the window, at a perfect view of the castle.

TURTLE

Stupid king. He thinks he can flop his power all around, even while sick! The nerve.

He yanks the drawer of his desk open and pulls out a book. He thumbs around the pages but stops at a picture of a rabbit.

TURTLE (CONT'D)

That's gross! What is that?

His eyes gloss over each word. He reaches the end of the passage, then reads it again. Turtle looks up at the ceiling, looks down at the floor, then shakes his head as he laughs.

TURTLE (CONT'D)
You know what, Why the hell not?
It's not like the king is going to
be around much longer anyway, may
as well get some cred!

Turtle gathers the book into his pouch and rushes out the house toward the castle.

INT. CASTLE - MAIN HALL - DAWN

Turtle pushes through the crowd to meet the guard.

GUARD
What do you want?

TURTLE
Is the doc available? I might have
some information that could help,
but I don't know how accurate it
is.

The guard looks Turtle up and down.

GUARD
Fine. Follow me.

The guard signals, and the door opens.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM HALLWAY - DAWN

The hall is covered in gilded copper and the ceilings are high. Turtle stops a moment and stares at the ceiling.

TURTLE
Wow.

GUARD
Sir, please follow me.

Turtle nods his head and struggles to keep up with the guard fast pace. They arrive at a golden door covered in coral. The guard opens the door and ushers Turtle inside.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Doctor, this boy says he might have
something that could help.

The doctor looks over at him.

DOCTOR
Who, Turtle? The boy knows nothing.

Turtle sucks his teeth and pulls the book from his pouch and turns it to the folded page.

TURTLE

Look! It says right here, "If
fallen ill, the best cure-all is
the eyes of a rabbit, eaten whole."

The doctor snatches the book from Turtle's hands. He reads the passage, looks at the King, and he reads it again.

DOCTOR

This makes no sense. Where would we
find something like this?

TURTLE

Above the ocean.

The guard and the doctor gasp.

DOCTOR

You don't mean --

Turtle nods and points at the ceiling. The doctor and guard look up.

TURTLE

So, I just wanted to pass along the
information. Hope it helps.

Turtle turns to walk out the room, when the guard grabs his by the shell.

GUARD

No way. You're going up there.

TURTLE

Me? Why? I gave you the info?

DOCTOR

Now, now. Guardsmen Kin is correct.
You're the only one with this
preposterous information, and we
can't spare the people to go. So
either you go, or you'll be held
for Treason.

Turtle gasps and grabs his book.

TURTLE

Yes, sir! You can count on me!

DOCTOR
Excellent. Guard, escort him to the
exit.

EXT. KINGDOM WATERLINE - DAY

Turtle swam in place and stares at the shore above.

TURTLE
This is not how I thought this was
going to turn out. Okay, I can do
this, I just have to go up to shore
and find one dumb creature. How
hard can it be?

Turtle takes his time and paddles toward the shore. He makes
it to the surface and pokes his eyes out. The shore is empty.
Turtle yanks his head back down underwater.

TURTLE (CONT'D)
Nothing. Well nothing I can do if
they don't show up right?

Turtle sighs and pokes his head out once more. This time, the
grass near the shore moves, revealing a tiny white RABBIT.

EXT. BEACH SHORE - DAY

Rabbit (15) hops down from the grass and onto the shore. She
sniffs the air then dashes toward the water. Rabbit laughs as
she gets her feet wet and covered in sand.

RABBIT
This is nice! To think I almost let
this go to waste!

Rabbit hops up and down some more, then settles down on the
sand and watches the waves. Movement on the water catches her
eye.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
What's that?

She sits up and watches Turtle bob his head up and down. He
makes his way toward the shore. Turtle touches down on the
sand and looks down at the sand that sticks to his fins.

TURTLE
(to himself)
Ugh, this is why I don't come here
anymore.

Rabbit bounces up to him. Turtle yelps and steps back.

RABBIT

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you! I saw you coming from the water and got curious. I'm Rabbit. What's your name? Where did you come from.

Turtle grunts.

TURTLE

Can you hold off on the questions? I'm trying to get the sand off.

RABBIT

But you're just gonna stand back in it anyway. Just ignore it.

Turtle opens his mouth to argue, but he closes it. He stares at Rabbit hard. Rabbit looks around before playing with her hair.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Hey, don't stare.

TURTLE

Sorry. I am from the kingdom of Oceana. I wanted to see what it was like here. Although, I kind of regret it now. This sand is annoying.

Rabbit laughs.

RABBIT

I've never heard of Oceana. Is all of it underwater?

TURTLE

It is. It's also boring there. The King thinks everyone loves him. At least it's pretty, I guess.

Rabbit sits next to Turtle. Turtle scoots away some. She turns to him.

RABBIT

What's it like?

EXT. BEACH SHORE - EVENING

Hours pass by as Turtle and Rabbit exchange details about their home worlds. The sun is setting, indicating the time that's passed as they talked.

TURTLE

Like I said, it's nice here, but you would be shocked at how the beauty shines there! If you want, I can show you?

Rabbit shakes her head.

RABBIT

Aren't you forgetting something? I can't exactly swim down there.

Turtle holds his hand out.

TURTLE

If you hold on to me, you will? It takes magic to live down there. I can't exactly live without air either.

Rabbit laughs. She bites her lip as she looks at Turtle's hand. Turtle tilts his head and wiggles his hand.

RABBIT

Why the hell not? You only live once, right?

TURTLE

Exactly.

Rabbit hops off into the grass for a moment. Turtle's face drops a little before he sees her re-emerge from the grass.

RABBIT

Sorry about that! I had to take care of something before we could go. Lead the way!

Rabbit grabs his fin and runs toward the water with him.

EXT. UNDERWATER - OCEAN KINGDOM - EVENING

Rabbit and Turtle swim down toward the Kingdom. Rabbit stares at all the life and plants passing her by. She looks at Turtle and smiles. Turtle looks forward and doesn't return the look.

EXT. CASTLE - EVENING

Turtle stops in front of the castle. Rabbit cries.

TURTLE
Are you okay?

Rabbit nods.

RABBIT
It's just so beautiful! Are we
going inside?

Turtle nods.

TURTLE
We are. There's someone I want you
to meet, but you have to wait a
minute by yourself while I get him.
Is that okay?

RABBIT
Yeah! I'll just look around the
hallway. I won't go anywhere.

TURTLE
Thank you. You're too kind.

INT. CASTLE - MAIN HALL

Turtle leads Rabbit to the hall way that leads to the throne
room.

TURTLE
Wait here.

Turtle leaves through a door. Rabbit walks back and forth as
she looks at the art that adorns the walls. Several people
gasp as they see her.

WOMAN
Can you believe it? Turtle actually
did it!

LORD
It's about time he did something to
contribute to the kingdom! I wonder
how they are going to remove its
eyes.

Rabbit snaps her head toward the conversation. Others take
notice and begin to gather around her. Some excited, others
fear her.

Rabbit trembles. Turtle returns with the doctor and the guardsman. The doctor smiles.

TURTLE
Hey, Rabbit. Listen --

RABBIT
Turtle! I must apologize! You were so kind to show me your home, and I didn't get to see any of it.

Turtle and the Doctor exchange looks while Turtle scratches his head.

TURTLE
What do you mean?

RABBIT
Remember when I left real quick? I went to grab my water eyes. I didn't want to get my main eyes ruined.

The doctor rushes toward Rabbit.

DOCTOR
Nonsense! All sea creatures only have one pair of eyes!

Rabbit nodded.

RABBIT
But I'm not a sea creature. Us land creature have to have water eyes, or ours will dissipate if they get too wet.

Turtle, the Doctor, and the guard huddle and whisper. The break formation and return to the conversation.

DOCTOR
Alright, since you know best, Turtle will take you back to retrieve your eyes. If this is a trick, Turtle will receive severe consequences.

Rabbit nods once.

EXT. BEACH SHORE - NIGHT

Turtle and Rabbit reach the beach shore. Rabbit turns toward Turtle. Turtle holds his head down.

RABBIT

So, you know I figured it out
right?

Turtle nods.

TURTLE

It was supposed to be a prank on
the king, but they forced me to
follow through. I didn't think it
would go this far.

RABBIT

So you would deceive your sick king
and try to kill me in the process?
You're a monster.

Rabbit backs toward the grass.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

I thought I made a new friend. What
is wrong with you?

Rabbit begins to cry.

TURTLE

I'm sorry I --

RABBIT

Save your apologies. You deserve
everything you get when you return.

Rabbit kicks sand in Turtles eyes as she speeds off toward
the grass. Turtle looks at the grass once more before getting
back in the water.

TURTLE

Yeah. I know.

Turtle turns and returns to the water.