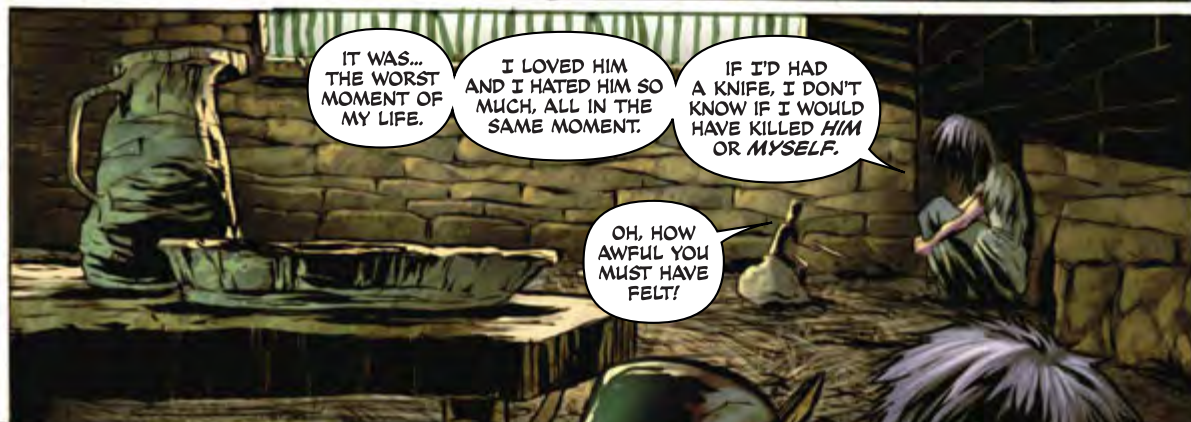




--AND THEN I SAW HIM. MY PRINCE. AND I SAW THE WEDDING WAS NOT MY WEDDING.

MY PRINCE HAD MARRIED ANOTHER, AND I WAS FORSAKEN.

HE DID NOT LOVE ME.



IT WAS... THE WORST MOMENT OF MY LIFE.

I LOVED HIM AND I HATED HIM SO MUCH, ALL IN THE SAME MOMENT.

IF I'D HAD A KNIFE, I DON'T KNOW IF I WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM OR MYSELF.

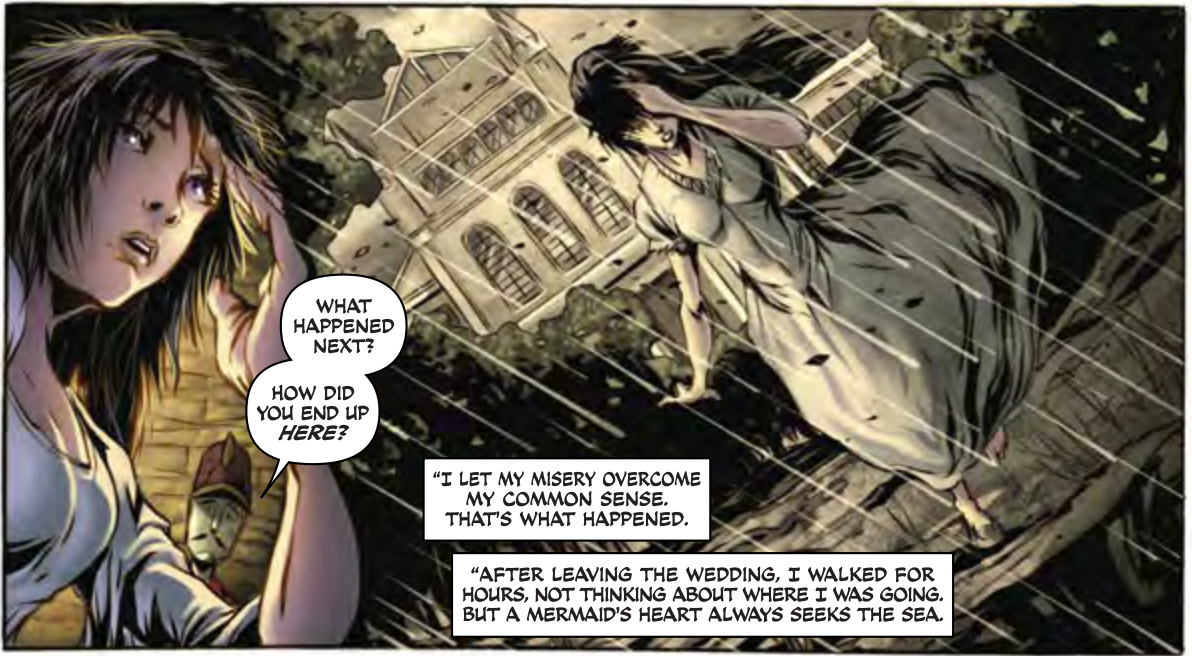
OH, HOW AWFUL YOU MUST HAVE FELT!



HAD I BEEN THERE I WOULD HAVE RUN HIM THROUGH WITH MY BAYONET FOR DISHONORING YOU SO!

YOU'RE KIND--BUT I THINK PRINCE AURORE WOULD BE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR YOU.

STEADFAST



WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

HOW DID YOU END UP HERE?

"I LET MY MISERY OVERCOME MY COMMON SENSE. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED."

"AFTER LEAVING THE WEDDING, I WALKED FOR HOURS, NOT THINKING ABOUT WHERE I WAS GOING. BUT A MERMAID'S HEART ALWAYS SEEKS THE SEA."



"IN A DAZE, I WANDERED INTO A RIVER AND ASSUMED MY NATURAL FORM WITH BARELY A THOUGHT."

"BUT THE RAINS HAD SWOLLEN THE BANKS AND THE RIVER WAS A TORRENT."



"FOLLOWING THE CURRENT IS NO GUARANTEE OF SAFETY..."



"I MUST HAVE HIT MY HEAD..."



"...BECAUSE THE NEXT THING I KNEW, MY HEAD WAS THROBBING AND HE WAS STANDING OVER ME."

OHO! WHAT HAVE WE HERE?



OH? AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO THAT?

FEAR NOT, MILADY. I WILL RESCUE YOU!

YOU'RE JUST A TINY TIN SOLDIER.



BUT I AM STEADFAST.

AND THAT COUNTS FOR A LOT, I THINK.



I WISH I SHARED YOUR ENTHUSIASM. I TRULY WISH I DID.

BUT I FEAR THAT--

QUIET! HE'S COMING!



I MUST NOT LET HIM SEE ME HERE OR HE'LL MELT ME IN THE FIRE FOR SURE!

I'LL WITHDRAW, BUT I'LL KEEP MY WATCH.



HELLO, DEAR. TIME TO GET TO WORK!

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?



A WELL-TIMED QUESTION, FISHY-MISS!

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT!

IT MUST BE TERRIBLE FOR YOU, EH? LOST AND ALONE.



NO ONE TO LOVE YOU.

NO ONE TO SAVE YOU.

FOOL! I AM A PRINCESS OF THE SEA FOLK! YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS!



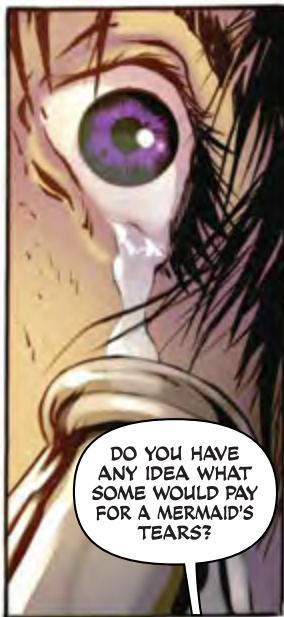
YOUR BLUSTER IS MOST COURAGEOUS, LITTLE ONE. BUT FUTILE, I'M AFRAID. I'VE PEERED INTO MY CRYSTAL AND SEEN THE TRUTH.

IF I DID NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHO YOU WERE, I WOULDN'T HAVE DARED TO HOLD YOU PRISONER.



THERE WE ARE! HOLD STILL!

MUSTN'T WASTE A DROP!



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT SOME WOULD PAY FOR A MERMAID'S TEARS?



THERE, NOW. THAT WASN'T SO BAD, WAS IT?

FINE. YOU'VE GOT YOUR TEARS. NOW LET ME GO.



OH, I THINK NOT. YOU SEE, THERE'S QUITE A MARKET FOR THIS.

I CAN BARTER YOUR TEARS FOR ANYTHING I MIGHT NEED.



STAY SAD, LITTLE ONE.



OH, I AM SORRY.

JUST LEAVE ME. PLEASE.

YOU CANNOT HELP ME.



DO NOT SAY THAT!

I AM SMALL, BUT I AM STRONG. I AM A SOLDIER AND IF I SAY I CAN DO A THING THEN I WILL DO IT!



ALSO--I KNOW WHERE HE KEEPS THE KEY TO YOUR CELL.

IS THAT SO? WELL, IF YOU'RE SUCH A NOBLE FELLOW, HOW IS THAT YOU COME TO LIVE WITH A WARLOCK?



AH, YES. I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR CONFUSION.

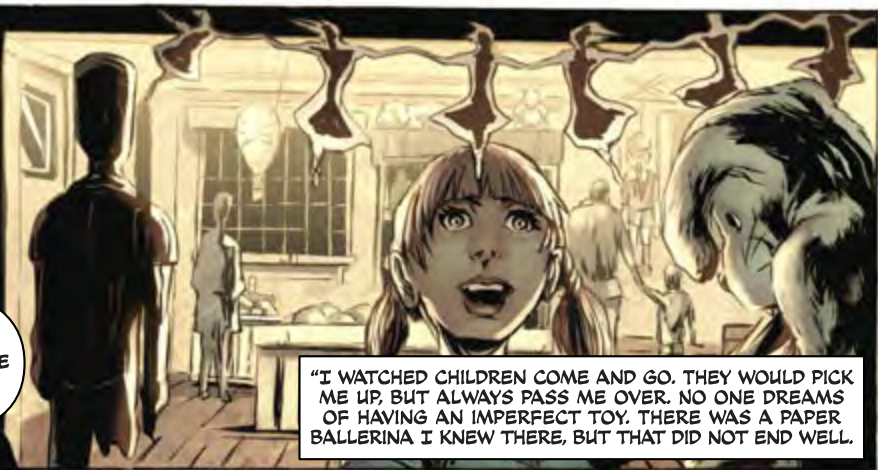
IT'S A SAD STORY, NOT AS REMARKABLE AS YOUR OWN, PERHAPS, BUT SAD ENOUGH IN ITS WAY.



"I WAS CAST AS ONE AMONG MANY, BUT THE TIN RAN OUT BEFORE MY MOLD WAS FULL, HENCE MY MISSING LEG."



DUE TO MY INFIRMITY, I LANGUISHED AT THE TOYMAKER'S FOR SOME TIME.



"I WATCHED CHILDREN COME AND GO. THEY WOULD PICK ME UP, BUT ALWAYS PASS ME OVER. NO ONE DREAMS OF HAVING AN IMPERFECT TOY. THERE WAS A PAPER BALLERINA I KNEW THERE, BUT THAT DID NOT END WELL."

THERE'S YOUR TIN SOLDIER.

NOW STOP COMPLAINING YOU HAVE NO TOYS AND LEAVE ME TO MY WORK.

BUT HE'S *BROKEN*.

"FINALLY, MY 'MASTER' PURCHASED ME FOR HIS SON. I WAS THRILLED UNTIL I REALIZED THAT HE HAD BOUGHT ME NOT OUT OF LOVE FOR THE BOY, BUT AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT."



"IN THOSE DAYS, HE WAS A HARD MAN, AND STRICT, AS ARE MANY WHO PLY THE MAGICAL ARTS."

"HARD, YES. BUT HE WAS NOT BAD."



"IN SPITE OF THE FATHER'S COLDNESS, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF IT, THE BOY CAME TO LOVE ME AND I HIM."

"AND FOR A TIME, WE WERE HAPPY IN OUR OWN SMALL WAY."