

Bathed in Sound



Morgan Lowe

Morgan is a 21-year old student originally from New Jersey who uses writing as their main form of artistic expression. Through prose, poetry, and lyrics, they enjoy the outlet of wordsmithing, especially when it relates to horror.



Abstract

In the Feyweird, not all is dangerous but most is unsettling. For instance, sometimes you find your partner just sitting in the middle of a bunch of floating whale skeletons.

When River said that the Mist Patches were one of the calmer areas of the Feyweird, Kara thought maybe it meant the oddities would dial back.

Now she realized what a fool's wish that would be in a realm with "weird" in its name.

She didn't know how she got there. Somehow, the memory of the hours prior had faded from Kara's mind, engulfed by the fog that surrounded her.

And if that wasn't strange enough as it was, she found herself surrounded by floating whale skeletons.

An endless sea of skeletons spanned as far as she could see. It was as if they were held up by strings, suspended mid-air. Kara couldn't quite tell if they were all identical, but they were all pointing downward. Bony tails reached to the sky, towering above her as they stood motionlessly into the fog. It almost startled Kara how large their skulls were, one tooth alone were all pointing downward. Bony tails reached to the sky, towering her as they stood motionlessly into the fog. From their sockets, invisible sets of eyes locked

to her skin at all times, her hair bristled like it would under the ghost of someone's fingers. At one point she raised her hand to see if she could touch one, but a foreboding feeling in her gut kept her from doing so.

Her confusion was evident on her face, but she had a feeling the skeletons wouldn't prove to have many answers.

At this point, all Kara could think to do was walk forward. Of all the questions teeming in her mind, one pressed her most of all: where was River? If she was confident in one thing, it was that he was with her before... Whatever this is, happened. She thought about calling his name, but realized that if there was any danger lurking about, it would be best to keep herself discreet under the cloak of fog.

Though, her walk wasn't entirely silent. As she went, she could hear whispers just a step too far away for her to hear. Sometimes she could just barely make out a word, spoken in a hushed tone that she could not decipher if she recognized or not. It was hard to tell, muffled with the distorted clicks and whines that she supposed normal whales made.

‘Where are you, River?’ Kara thought, worry knotting in her core. Beyond the disorienting situation, the possibilities of what could’ve happened to him spurred an uncertain anxiousness. He was her lifeline, her bearing of sanity in a world that thrived on the opposite. He knew of the Fey better than anyone she ever knew, her bright little well of knowledge guiding them both through the near-constant madness.

What if something happened to him? What if she couldn’t protect him? What if she was trapped? What if-

Then, Kara stopped.

A few feet away, she saw him.

In the heart of this forest of floating skeletons, sat River. Staring forward. Not absently, yet his expression remained blank as he peered into the gray haze that spread ever onward.

Kara was almost afraid to approach him. Afraid to speak. These skeletons were lifeless, yet she could feel them watching, not out of malice, perhaps out of something she could never understand.

But her lifeline was right in front of her. He was her light-house after all. And even if the light flickered, even if it didn’t seem like it was his light shining all the time, it was all she had.

“River?”

He heard her. He turned, expression softening slightly,

yet still eerily neutral. “Hey.”

As comforted as she was by his voice, the uneasiness never quite left her stomach. If she didn’t know better, she’d say River was part of all this somehow. Like this place had woven itself into his being and dragged him under, whether voluntarily or not.

“What... What is this? What’s happening?” She asked, the anxiety in her voice ringing a little louder wanted.

“Kara. Remember what I said. Keep calm.”

Kara couldn’t tell if his level tone was reassuring or not, but he had a point. Any anomaly that could be caused by a surge of outward emotion was not something she fancied at the moment.

“Come sit next to me. I’ll explain.” He said.

Alright, that was something she could do, at least. Even though the ground below her was featureless grass, she proceeded as if she could have stepped on a landmine at any moment. She sat down adjacent to him. She could fully see the apparent tranquility on his face, and it perplexed her to no end. Even if it was out of necessity, it still unnerved her.

“We’re in what’s called a Vertigo. Don’t know much about them.” River shrugged. “Only that I’ve heard some call them ‘shifting seas’ in Fey folklore.”

Kara took another look at the skeletons that surrounded them. Defying gravity, floating silently. Not some depraved creatures to

be avoided, or can be avoided at all, just... Existing.

“... Are they dangerous?” She ventured.

“No. But once you’re in one, all you can really do is wait it out. Sometimes they whisper to you, but I don’t think it means anything.

Kara hoped he was right. Even if she couldn’t make any sense of the whispers, they unsettled her none theless.

“Are they alive?” Kara asked, before realizing a second later. “I mean- I know they’re skeletons, but... It doesn’t feel like they’re, y’know, proper dead.”

River thought for a moment. “They’re not dead. At least, not dead like how it works where we’re from. I guess the closest example would be like how viruses ‘live’.”

Kara wondered, did every question asked in the Feyweird lead to one answer and five more questions?

“Well... *Why* do they do this?”

“Kara,” River’s voice lowered slightly, almost startling her. “I should’ve told you this earlier, but, of everything in the Feyweird, among everything we have and haven’t seen...”

His eyes met hers again. They were just slightly more focused.

“Asking *why* anything is so is the most dangerous thing of all.” 🕯