

Different

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Hello there! My name is Riku Myers. I'm not like everybody else. In fact, I am completely different from other people. First off, I'm not what you would call a "human". I go by what humans would call a *mermaid*, whatever that is. In my hometown, our population is called Syren. My hometown is known as Aquarius, under the hands of King Tronum, who wields a mighty trident.

Now that I've told you about the basics of my town, let me tell you a bit about me. I am 75 annorum, which is 15 years old in syren language. I don't have any real parents because they left me when I was just 2 years old. Now I live with my foster parents, who are super-duper nice. I never really knew the real reason why they did leave me, but I always felt like it was because of my broken tail. One half of the flippers on my tail is gone, while the other half is a deep, dark purple with yellow scales that shine like sequins. The body of my tail is a light purple with yellow spikes around the edge, but there are dark red scales scattered around, messing up the color. People bully me a lot because of my tail, but I keep my head held up high. I don't let their words get the best of me.

Alright, that's enough about me. Let me tell you about my story.

On One gloomy afternoon in Aquarius, I had been bullied by some Syrens from school. They had me on the ground, saying obnoxious words to me, telling me that my tail looked hideous. I was begging for them to let me leave, but they just paused and left without any words. I swam over to a tiny cave, sat down, and burst out crying, tears dissolving into the sea water. I cried, cried, and cried.

When I started to calm down, I could hear a faint beeping nearby. I swam towards the inside of the cave. As I went in, I could see a small glow of greenish-blue light. The light and beeping got louder as I walked inside the cave. I go in deeper until I find a small jewel shining. I pick it up, and the beeping stops. I feel a connection with the jewel as I hold it. I spot a picture of a Syren near the jewel. They looked somewhat familiar. It felt like the jewel was meant for me.

I swam home, wanting to know more about the jewel. I rushed to my bookshelf, grabbing a book named "Aquarius Stones". I read all over the book but couldn't find anything that looked like my jewel! It had to have been a *super*

special jewel. I went to the stone specialist in town and asked him what kind of stone mine was. He took one look at it, and his face went from calm and happy, to shocked and scared. "Um, I-I'm sorry, I don't know what that is," he stuttered. I knew he was lying. "Are you sure about that, mister?" I asked. "Uh- um, Yep! No idea!" he replied. "Alright, goodbye then," I waved to him as I left the shop. "Farewell!" he said as he quickly rushed me outside. I wondered why he was so shocked after seeing my jewel, but I figured it wouldn't matter. After I left the stone specialist, I went to the pendant shop so I could turn it into a beautiful garment. The Syren running the pendant shop gladly turned my jewel into the prettiest pendant in Aquarius. I swam home, put my pendant on my dresser, and went to bed.

The next day, I woke up ready and refreshed for school. I got dressed, put on my pendant, and swam out my room. "Good morning, Riku," my mom greeted me. "Morning, mom!" I replied. "That's a pretty necklace you've got on, sweetie. Where'd you get it from?" she asked. "Oh, just something I found on the way home from school yesterday," I quickly replied as I swam out the door. "See you later mom!" I said to my mother as I left the house. "Goodbye sweetie!" she replied while waving at the doorstep.

I was a bit nervous to walk into the school, but I got myself together. I walked into the building, and everyone's eyes locked on me. I got so embarrassed, I rushed into the girl's bathroom. I looked in the mirror and saw that my tail had been completely replenished! The flippers were both big and beautiful, the dark red scales were all gone, the spikes on the side turned into silk, and there were shiny yellow jewels placed around the body of my tail, glimmering in the water. My hair and face were also changed! My hair was light purple with small seashells inside, and it looked like my face was literally glowing. I walk out of the restroom and swim to class. Syrens stare at me with blank faces.

Class soon ends, and everyone rushes out the doors. I walk out the class and see a familiar group of Syrens swimming towards me. They were the syren who bullied me yesterday! I covered my face, hoping they wouldn't notice me. "Uh, hey," someone says. It's the Syren from yesterday! "Yes?" I ask. "We're sorry for yesterday. Can we be friends?" I couldn't believe what I just heard. I hesitated at first, but everyone deserves a second chance. "Um okay, sure!" I reply.

When school ended, I was terrified and amazed at what that jewel did to me. I understood why the stone specialist was so horrified. Then, I realized something. Those bullies only befriended me because of my appearance, not my personality. After that, I threw the pendant away, never to be seen again.

This story taught me, Riku Myers, to never change yourself to look like others. You are different and you should embrace it!

~The End