

didn't give up my career and follow him. On one of my monthly visits, I found my hairbrush in his bathroom, and tangled in it, long, blonde hair. With another married woman, he texted up to 186 times a day, held hour-long phone calls, and exchanged pictures at midnights.

When I confronted him, he said we'd grown apart and it was sad but simple—nothing to overthink. He told me, since I didn't want to start a family, staying together was not in our best interest.

How silly of me to have believed he would always be faithful. Wait, didn't someone warn me not to trust men?

As much as it hurts to admit, my mother had told me so. She was right.



After signing the divorce papers, I called my mother.

"Find another man," she said. "But don't be stupid and believe in love again."

"Then why bother?"

"It's what normal people do."

"Normal? Was I ever?"

She sighed. "Trust me. A man can help. Like...carrying the baggage."

"Ah. Utility. No, thank you. I can handle my own baggage."



I wanted to travel in the river of time and meet my grandmother. This time, adult-to-adult, woman-to-woman. I'd ask her why she still believed in love after being so hurt. The Little Mermaid's grandmother told her pride must suffer pain. How would she have advised me? How could I fit in at the Home of the Brave?

Her husband had turned into a stranger. How did she swallow the bitter fruit of betrayal? Like the Little Mermaid rescued the prince from a shipwreck, she saved my grandfather in the political storm. Unlike her, she didn't trade in her voice for legs but stood her ground and spoke loud and clear.