

Mermaid Tales

20,000 Leagues

Teresa always dreams in shades of blue. Swims through them, too, legs-turned-fin while she navigates the ocean depths and embraces her new body.

Her best dreams involved a man, one she'd find a man too eager to kiss her. That's where she plunges him leagues deep, inhaling his last breath through parted lips.

Dry Land

Over the last days of summer, Teresa confesses these things to Darrin. He laughs, says she can't just go and sink men *'cus you wanna what kinda fucked up dreams are you havin' at night, gir?'*

She doesn't reply. Just grins. They're not fucked up, and besides, she doesn't want to drown Darrin, not when they stay in hugs for minutes-too-long and still play the 'we're-like-siblings' card.

Submerge

Three weeks pass. As their inner-city high school clings to the last of August's heat, Teresa's dreams change. Men don't drown anymore. She isn't kissing anybody. Instead, she is finding appeal in the surface where Darrin lives.

No more drownin' men? About fuckin' time.

What's the matter, didn't wanna be one of them?

Nah, not really. Kind of dig the whole 'kissing you while alive' thing.

Capsize

The first night after Darrin crashes down between her thighs, Teresa discerns between colors in her dreams. Blues no longer linger in her vision; as it turns out, her surface is lined with shoreline that stretches in browns and whites.

It is not unpleasant.

Surface Deep

Four months filter through. Darrin breaks up with her. Says he found a new girl, *sorry Teresa, hope we can stay friends.*

She is visited by hurricanes in her slumber

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Drown

She goes back to her shades of blue and her mermaid tail. Imagines Darrin sinking to the ocean floor after their kiss, and enjoys it.

He is not the last. She makes a tombstone of bloated bodies and the piece of heart they took from her.

Swim

After graduation, Teresa moves away from the crowded streets and out in a cottage by the sea. People are still near, however, and there's a neighbor with a smile so wide he's cast a net over her shores.

Her dreams continue. Maybe he's next, she thinks. Maybe he's the one that won't become a part of her collection.