



Sea Witch

Sarah Henning

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***Wicked* meets *The Little Mermaid* in the captivating origin story of the sea's most iconic villainess, perfect for fans of *Heartless* and *Dorothy Must Die*.**

Ever since her best friend Anna died, Evie has been an outcast in her small fishing town. Hiding her talents, mourning her loss, drowning in her guilt.

Then a girl with an uncanny resemblance to Anna appears on the shore, and the two girls catch the eyes of two charming princes. Suddenly Evie feels like she might finally have a chance at her own happily ever after.

But magic isn't kind, and her new friend harbors secrets of her own. She can't stay in Havnestad—or on two legs—without Evie's help. And when Evie reaches deep into the power of her magic to save her friend's humanity—and her prince's heart—she discovers, too late, what she's bargained away.

Sea Witch Details

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Author : Sarah Henning

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Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Retellings, Mythology, Mermaids



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From Reader Review Sea Witch for online ebook

Beth says

5 Stars!

She knew that with power, the bravery to act would come.

I'm just going to say I hoped and prayed this was going to be good. Ever since I read To Kill a Kingdom I was hook line and sinker for any form of a re-telling of The Little Mermaid. I say that but this is the first one I've read since then. **Anyway** I'm going to be frank, this is a real slow burn, but I loved that. It really builds up to what is coming. You get the back story of a specific day in the past and it goes backwards and forwards in time.

As previously mentioned, the build up for me was glorious, it had me second guessing everything, trying to dissect certain things, now I'm not saying that I didn't see some things coming, because I did however in the last few chapters it was just **blindsided after blindsided** it was incredible. I kept thinking surely this isn't happening, but that's what was so *good about it*.

Characters

So we have **Evie and Nik** to start with. They are two best friends, one is a high born Prince and the other is a fisherman's daughter who isn't seen as worthy to be friends with a Prince. I really really enjoyed the friendship between the two of them all though at times you could see it become a little strained. It was really interesting to see Evie learn certain things and she always tries to do things to help the people she cares for. Evie has a tough time with the place she lives and this is where Nik comes in. His protectiveness for Evie made me love him even more! I just couldn't cope with it. I'm sorry to gush, but I can't help it.

Then we have *Iker and Annemette* I honestly couldn't figure either one out. I was questioning them both throughout for different reasons. That being said I did enjoy their characters because it brought more to the story especially seeing things from the characters POVs.

What I liked?

- Tante Hansa, I wish we'd seen more of her, but what I did see I was all for
- The magic system was interesting, especially later on what things came together
- Witches and Mermaids
- The back stories, I lived
- The loyalty they have for each other!
- All of the little nods towards The Little Mermaid
- Literally loved the Epilogue, it was so interesting

Overall I really really enjoyed this book, I actually think it's a miracle because normally when I'm super hyped for a book it falls flat, but luckily for me I enjoyed it! I know not everyone can be a fan, but if you can deal with slow (but building) pacing for an **epic** ending, I'd suggest this.

So your girl didn't get an Arc...
BUT THIS WAS INCREDIBLE!

Like holy fuck those last few chapters, I can't even cope.

HOPEFULLY full rtc, cause I've been reading to try and finish because I needed to know everything!

Never wanted Netgalley to approve an ARC so much :))

Probably won't because I have a million other books, but I'm requesting it.

May the odds be ever in my favour!

#prayforbethtogetanarc

Emily May says

The sea is a fickle witch.

She is just as likely to bestow a kiss as to steal the breath from your lips.

3 1/2 stars. I gave myself a bit of a headache trying to rate this book. Parts of it were 2 stars, other parts 4/4.5, so in the end I've settled on this. But I will say one thing: **this book is probably not what you are expecting**. I hope it can find the right readers.

It's really a question of how much patience you have. And how easily you can sit through maritime chapters without falling asleep. It's a very slowly-paced book, especially during the first two thirds of the story. Any exciting witchy The Little Mermaid goodness you might be expecting happens in the later chapters, and even then it's pretty subdued.

Though, in many ways, Sea Witch is much smarter than I expected for a YA The Little Mermaid retelling. The story is set in 19th Century Denmark and is woven with hundreds of years of Danish history. The Danes, especially under King Christian IV, put many "witches" to death in the 16th and 17th centuries. Henning combines this real fear of witches on land with the story of the sea witch we all know from the Andersen tale (and the Disney remake).

There are many interesting aspects of what the author has done here. I love that **so much of it is rooted in history**; I love that I googled Øresund Kingdoms and discovered that the Øresund strait is a real thing. I love that it mentioned the infamous "witch" - Maren Spliid.

The story is about three unlikely childhood friends - Nik (the prince), Anna (now deceased) and Evie (the half-Italian fisherman's daughter). In the present of the story, Nik's near-drowning results in him being saved by a mysterious girl who looks like Anna. She is the beautiful Annemette and Evie quickly befriends her, feeling drawn towards this stranger who looks so like her friend.

Slowly drawn friendship and romantic dynamics lead toward magical secrets. Annemette is clearly not all she appears to be, but the depths of what she's hiding are indeed dark and full of terrors. This is all set to an atmospheric backdrop of salty air and sea breezes. Henning does a great job of infusing everything with a sea-like essence.

Also, Nik is a delightful little sweetie. Rarely are male characters allowed to be such starry-eyed romantics and it was adorable, yet not unrealistic.

Unfortunately, though, it really is slow. I actually wonder if I would have made it through if I hadn't committed to an arc, and I foresee many DNFs on the horizon. It's not a thrills and romance kind of book - it's a gentle wander through history, class divides and the unwarranted fear of witches. The occasional third person chapters also slow down the book. I think *Sea Witch* will work really well for the right sort of reader, but I think the majority of readers will pick this up expecting something it doesn't deliver.

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Laura says

An origin story for *The Little Mermaid's* villain Ursula? Yes, please! I can't help but have a special place in my heart for Ursula because that's what I was almost named. Of course, the famous Disney movie came out in '89, and in the classic tale, the sea witch did not have a name. So the urge to name me Ursula was purely a German thing and thankfully it wasn't my name because in elementary school, kids would've had a field day with this. Anyway..the name Ursula isn't actually present in the story, but it is her origin story.

At times the story feels sooooo slow, while at others it's enchanting. What's brilliant about the book is the real life Danish history blended into the story. This isn't something I expected and it even went over my head at first while I was reading. The second I realized what was happening, I had google up and couldn't stop.

Evie, Nik, and Anna are best friends. Evie is poor, while Nik is prince and Anna is a baron's daughter. One day while playing by the water, Anna drowns. It's been four years. Evie is an outcast who still struggles with the loss of Anna. She also is a human witch with magic she doesn't understand. She still hangs out with Nik and is in love with his cousin Iker. One day, a girl rescues Nik from drowning after he falls off his boat. Evie sees her on the shore with Nik and notices a tail. A few days later, a mysterious girl shows up with a striking resemblance to both the girl Evie saw on the shore the other day...and her friend she lost four years ago, Anna. This girl has legs and is called Annemette. Who is she and why is she here? What secrets is she keeping?

The beginning of the book is very slow. The pace picks up closer to the end. The romance is off-putting for me, but only because of where things went at the end. We're led to believe one thing that goes a completely different way and it just confuses me? Other than that, it was fine throughout the story. It works in this plot up to a certain point.

This one could've been better, but it was a solid origin story for the sea witch. I just wish it hadn't been so slow at times.

Alana • thebookishchick says

Hello friends.

I need this

That is all.

Hamad says

You can find this review and other non-spoilery reviews @ The Book Prescription

Actual Rating: 3.5 stars

“IT’S A PERFECT NIGHT FOR BURNING WITCHES.”

? I learned to go into books without high expectations because the end result will be better whatever it is. But The little mermaid retelling? I am lying if I say that I didn’t raise up the bar a bit!

? I recently read To kill a kingdom and that book was very good, it is getting much attention and for The little mermaid fans, it is actually a very good retelling! Now I don’t know if this can be called a retelling because that was only found after like 80% of the story. Actually this was the biggest problem in this series: nothing pretty much happens till 70% of the story. Now this is not a bad book, but it starts out good and then things start to get slow and there is dragging till the above mentioned part! I can see why people won’t be motivated to continue this in early parts, so if you want the good parts in this book, you have to be tolerant/patient.

? The writing style is good. Not so special but it held my attention enough to make me finish this. There were a few quotes that I like too.

“My father, the sea king, says that when everything is as you hoped, you are blind to the imperfections.”

? The characters are well-written. Once again, nothing too special and by that I mean I didn’t add them to a favorite list or any list in mind, I believe they are the kind that is good but won’t stick with me for a long time.

? Summary: There are many Mermaids stories now and they are increasing too. Sea witch is not the best one of them, but it is a good story if you wait enough. The last 20-30% made me happy. There were literal quotes from the Little mermaid movie, I know some scenes by heart and that’s why I got excited reading them. The majority of the book is 3 stars for me, the final parts were 4 and 5 stars. So the final Rating from me will be 3.5 stars!

ARC provided by the publisher via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Buddy Reading this with Queen Of ARCs

Noura Khalid (theperksofbeingnoura) says

Actual Rating: 3.5

Thank you Edelweiss and Katherine Tegen books for sending me a review copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

"The sea is a fickle witch. She is just as likely to bestow a kiss as to steal the breath from your lips."

Ursula is possibly one of my favorite villains, and finding out that this was a Little Mermaid/Ursula retelling just got me extra excited to get my hands on this book.

The start of this book seemed interesting. I'm not the kind of person who gets bored easily when it comes to books even if the beginning is boring. There were ofcourse interesting bits in between, but it felt quite dragged.

I felt like the excitement showed up after going through 70% of the book. I guessed a few things while reading, and being right actually made me a bit upset because I really wanted to love the book. I thought that would be the end of the plot twists, but I was happy to find out that I hadn't guessed them all. The last few chapters were pretty good. I was surprised with what happened at the end, and I admit that it kept me thinking even after I finished the book.

"My father, the sea king, says that when everything is as you hoped, you are blind to the imperfections."

Overall, I really liked this book. I felt that the story was unique and that it was nicely written. A new and different twist to a beloved story.

|| Blog || Instagram ||

Sara says

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

The Sea Witch follows the story of Evie, a twelve year old girl drawn to the dark powers of the sea after the tragic drowning of her best friend Anna. We follow Evie on her journey from girl to young woman, wrapped up in the exploits of her two love interests, as she meets a mysterious young woman by the shore who looks just like her former best friend, and becomes determined to make amends for the past.

There's no denying this is a clever book for the right audience. Unfortunately this wasn't for me, and I'm torn between a two and three star rating because it's rather difficult to pinpoint what exactly I didn't really

enjoy. I think it was mainly that my expectations going in weren't really met. I wanted a magical fantasy retelling, filled with mermaids, but instead I got a lot of maritime history, dotted with historical attitudes towards witches in a Dutch setting and instalove. It's a very slow paced plot and I really struggled to get past the more mundane descriptions with little to no plot development. It's only really in the last chapters that things really start to ramp up and get suitably dark and intense. If I went in beforehand knowing this, I might have enjoyed it more as generally I do like historical novels, and usually don't mind a slower pace if things develop well over time.

I also didn't enjoy the love interests at all. Aside from the opening chapter which briefly explores their initial relationship, we're given no real insight into why Nik in particular is so obsessed with Evie. He sometimes borders on overly simpering, and I did find it a little irritating - especially as it clashed with Evie and Anna's more assertive personalities. In fact, for most of the novel, both male characters feel more like filler than actively adding anything to the plot. In comparison, I found Evie and 'Anna' both dynamic and interesting characters and would have loved to have seen some more in-depth character development on them both as their potential to really shine here was evident. Evie and her powers, inherited from her mother, really stand out in particular as a strong point. I just wish she wasn't so infatuated with Iker and Nik.

I also found the writing style a little convoluted at times, with too many descriptions that made the story hard to follow easily. It was hard to keep my attention at times. I really do feel that if I'd gone into this knowing what I was expecting, I would have liked this more. I think it would have been better marketed as more of a historical novel with some magical elements later on as opposed to a YA fantasy. I hope it finds the right readers who can really appreciate the historical details that have obviously been added with great care and research.

Mikee Andrea (ReadWithMikee) says

I was really torn about this book. I didn't LOVE it but it kept me entertained and intrigued enough to push through until the end. It was the last hundred pages or so that really made this book great. Besides that, it probably would've been a solid 2/5 stars for me.

I am a HUGE mermaid fan. I love everything and anything mermaid and The Little Mermaid is and always will be my favorite fairytale. That being said, my expectations were very high considering I haven't actually read a mermaid book that I loved and The Little Mermaid deserved a retelling nothing short of perfection. Though Sea Witch didn't reach those expectations, I did find myself enjoying this origin story of the infamous Ursula.

The overall story itself moved a bit slow and I never really connected with the characters. To be completely honest, I didn't really like the book at all until we got to the last hundred pages because that's where everything started to click together. Once we got to those last few chapters, I couldn't put the book down and I was on my toes the whole time just speed reading to see what would happen next. Though I was never attached to the characters, the epilogue did tug on my heartstrings and my heart ached for the characters. It is an Ursula retelling so you can only imagine how the story ends and if it ends in a happily ever after. ?

All in all, I didn't love this book too much but it was definitely a creative retelling of Ursula's origins. The book wasn't my cup of tea but I can see many readers enjoying this one especially if you love a good sea tale (or should I say TAIL) like me. ?

Lea (drumsofautumn) says

◆ Video Review ◆

Sea Witch is one of those books that grew on me more and more with every page that I read. I started it with excitement because I love The Little Mermaid and Ursula as a villain but also some hesitation because villain origin stories can be repetitive and unoriginal. But **what I got out of Sea Witch was incredibly special!**

"I could tell her that it's like the tang of summer wine and the sound of arrival bells as a new ship docks. Like the scent of salt and limes and the tinkle of a boy's eyes just before a kiss in the moonlight."

This is also one of those books that I have a super hard time doing a review for because it's one that just took my heart by storm. I have a huge emotional connection to it that is hard to put into words. Not just that, **it did exactly what I wanted from a villain origin story.** It had some twists and turns and unexpected revelations and in general felt very original. In my personal opinion it didn't go the well-known paths that millions of authors have gone before.

But obviously with retellings or villain origin stories it always depends a little bit on the picture you have of the fairytale or villain. **These can be hit or miss solely on the fact that this author's portrayal of a character simply doesn't fit what you imagine** that character to be. So it's hard for me to wholeheartedly recommend this, I just know that I truly loved this and I keep thinking about this story and its characters, days after finishing.

It's also hard to talk about my expectations and how well they were fulfilled without going into spoiler territory or ruining your reading experience. As I said, I was impressed by this because I thought it went a different route than one might expect from an origin story like this. I think it is an amazing ability to write a story where everybody already knows the ending but constantly have you question how we will get there and what will tip this story over. I had **huge hopes for how this would turn out but I was still questioning everything** until the very end.

"I return to my lair, the new silence ringing in my ears. Somehow, it's more painful than before. As if hearing a new voice, regaining the shortest moment of humanity, has torn open the wound that is my loneliness."

But as I said, not only did it completely meet my expectations, it was first and foremost a book that I was emotionally invested in from the very beginning. And it broke my heart. **I could already tell after the first third that this would shatter my heart into pieces, long before I knew how.** And there's not a lot of books that can do that so effortlessly.

I know this is not my most conclusive review but it's probably one of the most sincere ones I've ever written.

Because while I like all the aspect of this book and I could tell you how great the characters are or how much I liked the setting, **I simply fell in love with this book.** And there's not always a way to explain why.

◆ Booktube Channel ◆ Twitter ◆ Instagram ◆

I received an ARC of this through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review!

Korrina (OwlCrate) says

I wasn't sure about this when I first started reading it, but I'm so glad I carried on! Around the 40pg mark, I became hooked on the plot. It ended up being hard to put down. Very unique take on the classic story of The Little Mermaid. I think people are going to enjoy this one!

Natalie Monroe says

"Magic was barter—the right words, actions, potions for the right result."

Well, that was... unexpected.

Sea Witch is marketed as a villain origin story, namely the sea witch from The Little Mermaid. Being the weird kid in the murder corner, I eagerly requested on Edelweiss, thinking it'd be a dark and transgressive retelling along the lines of Marissa Meyer's Heartless or Fairest. What I got instead was **a quiet, rather literary novel about friendship and social class.**

The story does largely unfold the same way as the original tale: a mermaid saves a prince, then goes on land to try to win his heart in four days. If she fails, she'll be turned to sea form. A human witch called Evelyn narrates the novel, with third-person chapters recounting the past. The mermaid Annamette bears a striking resemblance to Evelyn's best friend who drowned four years ago and she naturally wants to persevere Annamette's life.

Honestly, Sea Witch didn't start getting interesting until the 60% mark, when a twist kicks things into high gear. The writing doesn't help either. It's difficult to explain, but it **tries too hard** in places, plugging descriptives when they're unnecessary and weigh down a sentence.

Most of the novel has a **small-town atmosphere**, focusing on Evelyn's struggle with her low birth and her friendship with the prince Nik. There are also lots of insights into Danish history and culture, the country The Little Mermaid originated from.

Sea Witch will appeal to a certain kind of reader, but it failed to hook me in. (Fish pun intended)

ARC provided by Edelweiss

Riley says

this was just....not good.

reasons why this book did not work for me:

- there was no plot up until the last 50ish pages
- the characters were flat with zero development
- the two male characters were completely interchangeable
- the romances were the worst cases of insta love I've ever seen
- when the plot finally picked up all the characters became different people out of nowhere

overall this book was just flat out boring

Sabrina says

Wow this book, I'm trying to form more words to express my love for this book but I'm just at awe that I can't form any at the moment. I highly recommend this one. And I'll most definitely reread it soon.

Kristi Housman Confessions of a YA Reader says

When I saw that this was Ursula's story before The Little Mermaid, I knew I had to request it (I also ordered a book box with it). I love anything with mermaids and The Little Mermaid is a favorite.

This book really surprised me. I'm not sure what I really expected, but I really liked this one a lot.

Evie is a poor girl with two best friends above her class. Anna and Nik. Nik is a prince and really shouldn't be playing with Evie, but his father made an exception because Evie's aunt has healed him multiple times. Evie and Anna race in the water one day and both start to drown. Nik goes into the water and saves Evie, but Anna doesn't survive.

Evie is a witch and she tried to cast a spell for Anna. She had to hide it because magic isn't used. Witches are killed, so she and her aunt hide their powers. Evie has a hard time after Anna's death, but she finally starts enjoying life again. She still hangs out with Nik and is also somewhat in love with his cousin, Iker. Evie uses her magic for the fisherman's boats so that they have good catches. But she doesn't have a lot of understanding of her magic.

While out on a boat celebrating Nik's birthday, there is a storm and Nik goes overboard. Evie finds him washed up on the shore with a girl singing to him. She sees Evie and leaves, but not before Evie sees her tail. Mermaids were supposed to be myths. Their stories were used to scare children. None of the tales were positive except that they sometimes helped save men in the sea. Other than that, they were considered evil.

The girl appears later with legs. This girl looks exactly like Anna, but says her name is Annemette. Annemette has powerful magic and admits to Evie that she's a mermaid, but not her lost friend, Anna. Annemette fell in love with Nik and has four days to get him to love her back.

Throughout the story, we get chapters from the past. They start with the accident and then the story continues to now. These are the parts that we learn more about what happened to Anna and also how Annemette came to land.

This story did have the mermaid and magic, but it really focused on friendship, love, and revenge. I knew things wouldn't have a happy ending, but it didn't stop me from hoping while the story unfolded. I enjoyed the writing, too. It was a little slow at times, but I couldn't put it down for the last third of the book.

I gave this one 4 1/2 stars (rounded up to 5). Thank you to Edelweiss and the publishers for giving me a copy for review.

noor says

pre read: wait- you mean a story about my FAVORITE VILLAIN ON THIS EARTH, URSULA? someone find a pen and sign me the fuck uP (pleasepleaseplease let this be everything I'm hoping for rn)

aug.19: okay, im here. we're about to read this. It sounds extremely soul crushing, so I've been delaying this read, but we're finally going to do it.

post-read: wow. Someone please remind me to never read a retelling of a fairy tale if the ending ends up sad. I never want to deal with this pain again
