

**FISH OUT OF
WATER**

GREG KROJAC

This story or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express permission of the author except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Please note that this story is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or places, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the author's imagination and are used fictitiously.

Copyright © 2021 Greg Krojac
All rights reserved
Language: UK English

Dedicated to Martin Frowd (martinfrowd.com) for his help in making sure my books are as good as I can make them

CHAPTER 1

A Birthday Surprise

God that hurt!

Sereia hadn't fallen out of bed for months – no, years – not since she was thirteen years old. She lay on the bedroom floor for a few moments, allowing herself time to wake up properly and take proper stock of what had just happened.

At least I don't appear to have hurt myself. That's something. Embarrassing though.

She looked up at the bed. The duvet was missing. She must have had it wrapped around her when she fell. That would explain why her legs didn't feel right – they were trapped inside her duvet.

She glanced down and saw she was right.

A quick look at her bedside clock informed her that it was ten minutes before her alarm was due to go off. Sereia was terrible at waking up, being in that teenage phase where sleeping was a priority, superseding pretty much all other activities.

Ten more minutes. Is it worth it? It might take most of those ten minutes to go back to sleep.

She decided against going back to bed and

unfurled the duvet from her legs. The scream that followed was loud enough to wake the whole street, let alone the neighbours.

She closed her eyes tightly and shook her head, convinced that she was hallucinating and that when she opened her eyes again, all would be well.

Here goes.

She opened her eyes and looked down at her legs again.

A second scream.

Where are my legs? What have you done with them?

Nobody was going to answer her. She was the only person in the room.

She looked down at where her legs should be.

I must still be dreaming. That's it. I'm still asleep. I'm still in bed and I'm dreaming.

She slapped her face hard.

Ow! That stings.

The sound of footsteps running up the staircase distracted her from her now throbbing cheek.

She called out.

"Mum. Dad. Don't come in. Please."

Sereia's mother, Rebecca, knocked on the bedroom door.

"Are you okay, Seri? We heard a scream."

Sereia was understandably flustered yet still managed to come up with a plausible explanation

for her yelling.

“It was a spider, a really big one.”

Her father called out through the closed door.

“Don’t worry. I’ll get rid of it for you.”

Sereia’s panic ramped up a notch.

“No Dad, stay there. It’s gone now. I’m fine.”

Sereia’s mum wasn’t convinced.

“You don’t sound fine, Seri.”

She sighed. If her daughter wasn’t fine, it was her duty to help her.

“I’m coming in.”

Sereia shouted. The last thing she wanted was for her mother to come in and see what had happened to her.

“No. I’ll be okay. Really.”

It was too late. Sereia’s mother opened the door to be confronted by her daughter sporting a large golden fish tail, whose scales shimmered as the morning sunshine occasionally settled on them.

Sereia hurriedly covered her tail up with the duvet.

Rebecca bent down and pulled the bedding away again, showing her daughter’s new appendage in all its glory.

“Honey, it’s... it’s...”

Sereia interrupted her mother.

“I know. It’s freaky. I’ve turned into a freak overnight.”

Her mother shook her head.

“No. It’s beautiful. It’s a beautiful tail.”

Sereia gave her mum a questioning look.

“Why aren’t you freaking out, Mum?”

Rebecca looked at her husband.

“I hadn’t expected it to happen so soon. We need to explain what’s happening, Liam.”

Sereia’s father nodded.

“That we do, Rebecca. That we do.”

CHAPTER 2

Rebecca's Revelation

With a little help from her parents who picked her up from the floor and hoisted her onto the bed, Sereia was now propped up against her pillows, her new tail supported by the mattress and occasionally flapping involuntarily. She looked at her mother.

"How come you're so cool about this, Mum?"

Rebecca glanced downward, a little embarrassed, before looking at her daughter again.

"Well, we hoped it wouldn't happen but there was always a sneaking feeling that it might."

"A sneaking feeling that *what* might happen?"

Her mother gestured towards Sereia's tail.

"This."

"This? That I might turn into a fish?"

Her dad looked sheepish.

"You're not a fish, darling."

Sereia flicked her tail fin.

"What d'you call this then, Dad? The latest fashion in leggings?"

Her mother came to her father's rescue.

"You're not a fish, Sereia."

"Well, what the hell am I then?"

Rebecca took a deep breath.

"You're a mermaid, Seri."

"A what?"

“A mermaid.”

“But mermaids aren’t real. They’re a myth. They don’t exist.”

Her father smiled at his daughter.

“Your current situation would appear to prove the opposite.”

Sereia was confused.

“But how? I mean, why? No, I mean how?”

Rebecca sat alongside her daughter on the bed and removed her denim jeans, and her panties until she was naked from the waist down. Sereia was mortified.

“What are you doing, Mum? Put your clothes back on.”

Then Sereia was mesmerised as her mother’s legs merged together and her feet disappeared. Within the space of ten seconds, Rebecca sported a mermaid’s tail just as splendid as her daughter’s.

For a few seconds, Sereia was speechless. Then her voice returned.

“You’re a mermaid too?”

Rebecca smiled.

“Yes, Seri. I’m a mermaid too. I always have been.”

“But how come you’ve never told me about this before?”

Rebecca’s smile turned into a grin.

“It’s not the kind of thing you can casually drop

into a conversation, Seri. You were born human and we thought you might stay human all your life, as you appeared to be perfectly normal, normal for a human, that is. But it appears that we were wrong.”

Sereia nodded towards her father.

“Is Dad a mermaid...”

She paused, wondering if her vocabulary was correct.

“I mean merman, too?”

Her dad chuckled.

“Me? Good heavens, no. I’m completely human.”

This was a lot for Sereia to take in. She looked at her mother’s beautiful golden shimmering tail.

“How do you do that, Mum?”

“Do what, honey?”

“Turn your legs into a fish tail.”

“I don’t know, really. I just think about whether I want legs or a tail and it just kinda happens.”

With that, Sereia’s mother’s fish tail returned to their former state, that of a pair of fully functioning human legs. Sereia’s gaped at her mum’s transformation.

“That’s so cool. Can you teach me how to do that?”

Sereia was coming round to the idea of being a mermaid. She liked to swim, and having a fish tail would definitely make her faster in the water than the other girls at school.

Her mother put her jeans and panties back on.

"I can and I will. But, unfortunately, the time's not right yet."

Sereia didn't like the sound of that.

"What do you mean, the time's not right?"

"I mean your body's not ready yet. Your body needs to get accustomed to the changes it's going through. To rush things could cause irreparable damage."

"Like what? It's my birthday and I'm supposed to be going to the pub tonight with my friends. I'm going to have my first alcoholic drink tonight."

Rebecca gave her daughter a knowing look.

"Your first official drink as an eighteen-year-old you mean. I wasn't born yesterday."

"Okay. My first *official* drink as an adult, then."

Rebecca shook her head.

"I'm afraid that's out of the question."

"Why?"

"Because you're a mermaid."

"So?"

"Think about it, Seri. Your friends all have legs. They can move around freely, even go dancing if they want to. You? I'm afraid that's impossible for you at the moment."

Sereia wanted to pace up and down the room but that was now a physical impossibility for her.

"How long will this last?"

She looked down at her tail which was still gently flapping.

“How long do I have to carry this... this thing around with me?”

Rebecca held her daughter’s hand.

“Up to a year, I’m afraid. Maybe even longer. It could take up to five years. It’s different for everybody.”

Sereia was horrified.

“UP TO FIVE YEARS? What the hell am I supposed to do for five years? Stay in bed?”

A year seemed like the rest of her life to Sereia. She had things to do. First, she wanted to go out with her friends that night but, on top of that, she was in her last year of school. She had exams to take. She wanted to go to veterinary college and eventually have her own vet’s practice. Not to mention that she was looking forward to dating seriously. She looked at her parents, tears streaming from her eyes.

“My life might as well be over.”

Rebecca hugged her daughter and kissed her on the forehead.

“Your life’s not over, Seri. I know it must seem like that now but it really isn’t. We’ll get through this. Together. Your dad and I will always be here for you. And, don’t forget, I’m a mermaid too. You can ask me anything about what’s happening to you.

Anything at all.”

CHAPTER 3

A Fairy Godmother

Rebecca and Liam sat at the kitchen table, trying to think of ways to ease their daughter's passage through transition. Although he didn't like it, Liam couldn't see any other way around the problem than to keep Sereia at home until her body became accustomed to the biological changes it was going through and she could be taught how to transform between her human and mermaid form.

Rebecca didn't agree.

"Look, Liam. She's a young girl, a young woman. We can't keep her cooped up in the house for years. She'll go crazy and probably drive us crazy too."

Liam shook his head.

"She can't go out, though. She's got a bloody fish tail. What if someone sees? Next thing you know, there'll be a bunch of armed guards and white-coated scientists hauling her off to be experimented on. I don't want that to happen and I won't let it happen. Not to my daughter. No way, no how."

Rebecca clasped her husband's hands in hers and gave him a sly wink.

"I thought you liked my tail."

Liam blushed.

"I do. It's beautiful. But things are a lot easier when you have legs."

Rebecca smiled at Liam.

“We’ll find a way around it. All I know is that I don’t want our daughter to be imprisoned for the next few years. I want her to have as normal a life as possible. As normal a life as any young woman of her age can expect.”

Liam sighed.

“I get that. I really do. But how are we going to make sure she has that nearly normal life?”

Rebecca smiled.

“I have an idea.”

Sereia was watching TV, trying to distract herself from her current predicament, when her parents came back into her bedroom, carrying a picnic blanket and four elasticated belts. Her mother placed the folded blanket on her bed and her dad put the belts down on top of the blanket.

Sereia looked at the unexpected gifts.

“What are these for?”

Rebecca smiled.

“Do you still want to go to the ball, Cinderella?”

Sereia picked up one of the belts and ran it through her fingers.

“If you mean do I still want to go out with my mates tonight then, yes, of course. It’s my birthday.”

Her father was quite animated.

“We think we’ve found a way. But, we need

your help. You've got to stick to the script and not deviate. Nobody can know what's really happening."

Sereia's spirits rose.

"Yeah. Sure. Of course. What script?"

Rebecca picked up the blanket.

"We're going to wrap your legs – I mean, your tail – in this blanket and secure it with these belts."

Sereia was confused. How was this going to help her go out with her mates?

"O-o-okay. But, again, what's the script?"

Liam beamed at his daughter.

"A virus. You've got a virus."

Now Sereia was even more confused.

"A virus? But I feel fine, apart from the obvious."

Rebecca continued.

"You've got a virus, Seri. A contagious virus."

Sereia's father cut in.

"Take note of the word contagious, Seri. Your virus is not airborne infectious – people can't catch it by being near you – but your condition *is* contagious and can be caught by contact with the affected area. Which, in your case, is your legs."

Rebecca gave her husband an irritated look.

"Shall I continue?"

Liam nodded. Sereia's mother continued her briefing.

"You need to keep your legs covered up. Tell your friends you can't show them your legs because

there's nothing to see. The virus has affected the nerves in your legs and you don't want to risk passing the illness to them."

Sereia saw a flaw in the plan.

"How am I supposed to move around?"

Rebecca grinned.

"We thought of that too. My friend, Sarah, is going to lend us her son's spare wheelchair. He's at his dad's at the moment and won't be using it. So you can roll around in that - though I recommend you get one of your friends to push it for you. Ask Rachel. She'll do it.

"The athletes at the Paralympics have had a lot of practice at wheeling themselves around. You're new at this game. It'll be hard work moving your own wheelchair around."

Sereia liked the plan so far. Okay, maybe they couldn't go dancing - Sereia didn't think she could handle watching her friends dancing on the dance floor, whilst she was stuck on the sidelines - but at least she could still have a good night out with her friends.

"How will I get there?"

"Your dad and I will drop you off in the car, and all you have to do is give us a ring and we'll come and fetch you. We've got it all sussed out."

Sereia waved her parents over to the bed so she could give each of them a big hug.

“Thank you so much. Both of you.”

Rebecca smiled.

“Well, you only have one eighteenth birthday. It would be a shame to miss out on it.”

She gave her daughter a faux stern look.

“Don’t get too drunk though.”

Sereia laughed.

“I don’t know about that, Mum. I’m already legless.”