

# The Parsons' Rant

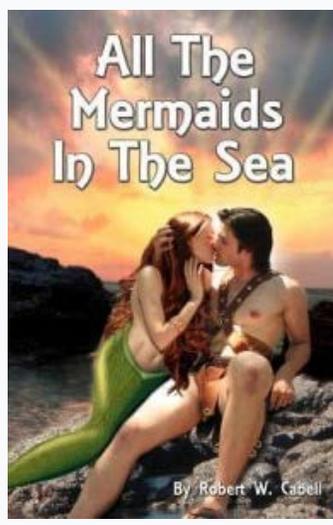
A Tale Told By An Idiot, Full of Sound and Fury and Signifying Nothing



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## ALL THE MERMAIDS IN THE SEA

by Robert W. Cabell



This reviewer is always in search of adjectives to describe the book that he has just finished reading. Among those that come mind in this instance are:

- » Sweet
- » Adorable
- » Darling
- » Lovely
- » Dear
- » Wonderful
- » Brilliant
- » Charming

The Geneva Convention prohibits manly men from using most of those words so this reviewer will have to say that Robert Cabell's brilliant novel, *All The Mermaids In The Sea* is a wonderfully charming story which takes the reader on an exciting journey through both time and the oceans. In many respects, the story is "Potter-esque" in that it does have a natural appeal to fans of Mer-Fiction that goes well

beyond the target audience.

The story begins with the birth of the ninth and last daughter, Helmi, to Poseidon, god of the sea and his wife, Amphitrite, thousands of years ago and follows his daughter, grand-daughter and great grand-daughter through the ages up to modern times. The world changes as the Greco-Roman gods fade away and Christianity takes hold and the chapters skip both forward and backward in time as the sagas of Helmi, her daughter Miranda and grand-daughter Adara – known to her adoptive parents as Pearl – are told with humour and loving attention to detail. It is well worth knowing that Mr. Cabell has included lists of both the cast of characters and memorable things and places that appear in the story. In a book of this proportion, these items are most helpful to younger readers as well as those who are very much older and whose memories aren't quite what they used to be.

Sagas such as these cannot be told without including a villain or two and in this book, they are the Sea Hag – a.k.a. Media, daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis in Greek mythology, and her mortal henchman, Vasili Thermopolis. Media has plagued the oceans and Poseidon's descendants for millennia and when she is unable to have her way, she enlists Vasili as her button-man. She will get to them one way or another and it is Vasili who finally succeeds by blowing up the car carrying Miranda, her husband Halder Thorson, and new-born daughter Adara in modern-day Seattle, Washington. Ardara is thrown from the car by the explosion and is found by Ivan and Lina Sorenson who subsequently name her Perl and raise her as their own.

Needless to say, Perl knows nothing about her divine origins and grows to the age of thirteen much as any other young girl would – or at least any young girl with a mermaid fixation; Not only mermaids but everything else under the sea. Her adoptive mother, Lina, was born in the [Faroe Islands](#) and came to America with her US Navy husband, Ivan. Lina has a tidy business selling water-colour paintings of mermaids and though there is not much money in the family, Pearl is as happy as can be and loves her adoptive parents just as much as they love her. This is the way of Pearl's world until her 13th birthday when all of this changes. Perl becomes a mermaid.

Perl's change happens in a very public way and she is subsequently pursued across the Pacific by Disney, the U.S. Navy and every fortune hunter in-between. It is during this chase that we learn chapters from her family's history and the gaps in the tale are slowly filled in. Will Perl escape her pursuit and be reunited with Ivan and Lina? Will Helmi reach her grand-daughter in time or will the Sea Hag ultimately triumph? That is where the fun of reading *All The Mermaids In The Sea* comes in.

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Robert Cabell has done a masterful job in chronicling the Lost Journals Of The Little Mermaid and has skillfully blended Norse mythology with the Greek legends of the fall of the Titans and the rise of the Greek Gods. In his story, the reader will learn of the Danish King who ultimately fakes his own death so that he can go live in the sea with the real Little Mermaid. Moreover, Mr. Cabell deserves bonus points for including the Faroe Islands in this tale of epic proportions. The world he envisions is as large and as varied as the world we live in and the reader is caught up and swept away in his flights of fancy.

One of the hardest tasks for this reviewer was trying to determine just what audience this book was best suited for. From all appearances, this is a book for Merfolk enthusiasts whether they are Tweens, Young Adults, and not-so-Young Adults. The story is definitely Tween and YA Friendly. While there is violence – you can't go up against the Sea Hag without some – it is not of the blood and gore variety. Indeed, it is a story that many readers will have to force themselves to put down. This reviewer read it one or two chapters in a sitting, taking his time because he did not want this magical experience to end.

One thing that enhanced this experience was that the book was a very clean read. Editors S.C. Moore and Jan Howarth turned in a sterling performance with only a few minor typographical errors slipping in. While this reviewer is a staunch supporter of the lost art of proof-reading, it becomes even more important given the broad age-range to which the novel will appeal. Teachers have a hard enough job trying to instill the goals of proper grammar and spelling in our young people and we – adults and authors – should avoid undermining their work with books that are poorly worded, spelt, and edited.

From all appearances, All The Mermaids In The Sea is only the beginning as there are at least two sequels to follow. This reviewer can only hope that Robert Cabell will finish these in a timely manner and that they will be as magical and entertaining as the first.

**My Rating:** 

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