

# *All The Mermaids In The Sea*

*By Robert W. Cabell*

## *The Birth of a Princess*



The moment Pearl slipped into the lagoon at Dolphin Quest, the dolphins all swam toward her and away from the other children. They were fighting to reach Pearl. Splash after splash began to sound behind her as she swirled around to see dolphins from the ocean soaring over the seawall into the lagoon. These wild dolphins were shoving their way through the more docile domesticated ones, snapping at them with their maws, clicking and hissing them into submission as they swam to encircle her. Their body mass was actually raising the water level of the lagoon. Pearl was aware of all of this, and aware of a sound ... or a song ... that was surging through and around her all at once, as if it was part of the earth, water, and sky.

The other children started to cry out in frustration and disappointment as the waters filled with more and more dolphins that did nothing but ignore them. Dr. Holger Thorsen was frozen—deaf and dumb to everything else around him—as his mind locked down in awe.

“What’s going on here?” one of the dads sitting on the beach shouted as he stood up to watch.

“We don’t know,” sputtered Hal, who was struggling to push some of the wild dolphins back and away from Pearl.

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“Dad!” he called to his father. “Dad! What’s happening?” But Holger just stood there with his eyes drinking in the enchantment, his lungs drawing deep breathes of the scent of power.

“Dad!” Hal shouted again over the wail of the wind and the ever-increasing clicking from the dolphins. But neither Holger nor Pearl nor anyone else could hear him.

As they all watched, a circle of water like a whirlpool began to swirl and serge around Pearl. The dolphins struggled to stay beside her as the current pushed everything and everyone else backwards.

The sky went dark as thunderclouds instantaneously formed a dome above the lagoon. Hundreds of flickering tongues of lightening illuminated the dome, charging the air within. Hal’s breath grew short, as if the oxygen was being consumed by the fiery sky. It seemed as if the lagoon itself began to spin.

Circles of water, dolphins, clouds, and lightening—circle upon circle—spun in alternate directions like a kaleidoscope, impossible as that was. Hall, Holger, and the children were swept back, pinned in amazement against the stone walls of the lagoon, which could no longer contain the mass of swirling water.

Faster, louder, wilder, each circle grew. Pearl obliviously closed her eyes and tipped her face up to a luscious beam of sunlight that stabbed down from the heavens. The intense ray of light soared down like a golden arrow to a target, to halt gently, and kiss her face. It seemed to bring Pearl to life. She flung her arms wide to embrace it.

The light spread outward like a golden wave above the dolphins, as the swell of their welcoming song rang through her. Pearl was drenched with tremendous joy as the whirlwind lashed her hair out around her like a sea of auburn waves.

A column of water rose from the whirlpool, lifting Pearl higher and closer to the light that poured down on her from the

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dome of clouds. It was as if the column of water was raising her up to greet the sun. She felt fearless and completely safe as lightening flashed all around her and thunder roared through her. The wind spun her, as she laughed with uncontrollable delight, enraptured by the elemental opulence of it all.

Above it all, Pearl heard a voice calling to her with joy, calling her by another name ... a voice as immense as the ocean, claiming her as its own.

The fiery dome above her burst apart like a wave crashing against a cliff. Its energy erupted in three blazing fingers, lifting Pearl higher into the air as dolphins continued to circle around her in the water below in ever-increasing numbers.

The three streams of water wrapped around her body like crystal ribbons. One plunged over her jaw and down her throat, pouring into her lungs as the pressure squeezed every ounce of air out. Pearl felt her neck and shoulders split in a dozen places as water rushed back out of her body through her new gills, after replenishing her lungs with oxygen.

Another stream surged between her legs and coursed through her womb. Her legs slapped together with a snap that made them tingle, sting, and stretch tight.

The third stream spun like a flying water funnel all around her, rising up, and then circling around the length of her arms, spinning her madly in mid air.

Then there was silence ... a sudden, perfect, indescribable silence.

Pearl struggled to open her eyes as she felt herself slowly descend. She couldn't see clearly through the soft, fused sunlight all around her. It was like being in the center of a pearl.

She was inside a transparent sphere of opalescent light. It floated gently down atop the column of water, and then dissipated into the ocean. The dolphins watched her in hushed

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adulation. Then the light around Pearl shimmered and faded, revealing her transformation for the world to see.

That was when the screaming began.

“She’s a mermaid!” someone yelled to the left of her.

“A real mermaid!” another person shouted.

“This is unbelievable!” a man cried from the beach behind her.

Cameras flashed from the beach and the bleachers. The air was shattered by the piercing sound of a siren going off, and Pearl tried to spin to see who everyone was shouting about.

As she floated in the water, she was flooded with feelings and sensations that were all new, and she didn’t understand what was happening. When she tried to make her legs kick, her body responded in an undulating motion. She couldn’t feel her legs, her feet, or her toes. Not until a long, scaly, glistening tail came up out of the water where her legs should be did she have an inkling that they were shouting about *her*. For the first time since the spell began, Pearl was frightened and confused.



Ivan and Lina stared unable to speak.

“Daddy, she’s got a tail!” a little girl cried.

“Zoom in on the mermaid, you idiot!” shouted the director of the Animal Planet TV crew.

“That beam of light must have been a ray gun from a space ship!” the chubby little rich kid bellowed as he spun around in circles, staring up at the sky, ignoring all the amazing things around him.

“This is unbelievable!” a cameraman grunted as he shoved past Ivan, nearly knocking Lina to the ground.

The woman next to them, who’d been chatting with Lina

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a moment before, jumped up and screamed, “These are her parents! They must be mermaids too!”

“Lina, are you all right?” Ivan asked as he lifted her to her feet.

“Forget about me, Ivan, you must help Pearl!” she cried in anguish. They could no longer see Pearl through the crowd.

“Pearl!” Ivan cried as he sprang to his feet and tried to force his way through the people and into the lagoon. “Let me through!” he yelled. “I need to get to my daughter. Please let me get to my daughter!”

“Pearl!” Lina screamed over the crowd, “Daddy’s coming!” Then, like a strong riptide, the crowd turned on them. Hands started grabbing at them from every direction.

“Hold them!” yelled one of the other fathers.

“Don’t let them get away!” screamed the chubby rich kid’s mother.

“Keep them away from the water!” The crowd swung its attention to Ivan and Lina, face after face staring at them with fear, awe, and greed.

The towering wave of clutching hands crashed down around them along with blinding, stabbing camera flashes from every direction. Lina screamed—a loud, terrorized, heart-rending scream—as more sirens went off and the mass of bodies crushed in around her. Then, everything went black.



“Save the princess!” Pearl heard the words inside her head as she gasped and swallowed water. “You must swim, Princess, swim as fast as you can, and follow us to safety,” the dolphin at her side urged.

The dolphin beside Pearl was speaking to her. How was

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that possible?

“Mermaid!” Everyone around the lagoon was pointing and shouting.

“Mermaid! Mermaid!” Greedy, startled, snarling faces were everywhere.

“Catch the mermaid! Someone grab her tail!” A large burly man ordered.

“Get a net!” a woman’s voice called. “You need a net to catch a mermaid!” The mob rushed into the water toward Pearl.

A fierce roar of screeches and clicks erupted from the dolphins surrounding her. Her water guardians turned to face the approaching horde, snapping their maws defiantly.

“Mermaid?” Pearl gasped as a wall of hands, nets, and cameras swept toward her. Instinctively, the dolphins on either side of her seized her arms in their maws, and in one powerful surge, flung her up and over the seawall into the open ocean.

All Pearl could think was, *swim!* As if her thought alone had created it, a current formed behind her to speed her on her way. She coursed through an ocean teeming with dolphins, whales, and fish of every kind. Her new finned friends formed a protective channel that closed behind Pearl, blocking all pursuit, leading her deep into the ocean.

As she reached the sanctity of the deep, the whales and dolphins sang out the news that she who had been lost was now found. The littlest mermaid had returned to the sea.

