

THE PRINCESS AND THE MERMAID

by

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1 EXT. BEACH. DAY

1

Seen [by movements from far to near] from out on the water,
a baby- a Princess- HEAVENLY, 1, sits on a regal blanket up
on the beach.

She plays with golden toys and sparkly things. And a mermaid doll.

Her mother, faceless, speaks with nurses and courtiers. Half dutiful, half joyous on this frivolous beach day.

But there's something serious about the baby. Heavenly looks from her toys out to the ocean; on her guard.

2 EXT. THE OCEAN SURFACE. DAY

2

A sexy mermaid raises one sharp eyebrow- in response to the baby far off on the beach.

She flips herself and dives under the water, treating us to a lengthy ogle of her slippery, muscular, brightly-coloured tail as it wriggles back into the water.

3 EXT. THE BEACH. YEARS LATER. DAY

3

Heavenly, 3, toddles up to the water's edge.

A nurse screams and grabs her up.

4 EXT. THE OCEAN SURFACE. DAY

4

The mermaid's jealous eyes slip beneath the water. Open wide, because they're waterproof and because mermaids have massive eyes with thick dome lenses, like a cat's eye.

5 INT. THE OCEAN. WHO KNOWS.

5

The mermaid, henceforth known as CLARISSA, 104 (human appearance: Hollywood/Surrey Hills 54), swoops begrudgingly towards a sunken ship resting qigantically on the sea floor.

Other mermaids are tending to the wreck, stroking its flags, bringing them down and folding them with billows. Carrying away safes and sculptures tiny picture frames and wallets. Pulling out sailors' bodies and taking them off.

Clarissa eyes the damage, wondering how she can be of service here. She notices a man, floating like kelp, half trapped in a smashed window. The look is like she's in love with him, and in mourning.

6 INT. THE OCEAN FLOOR. WHO KNOWS.

6

Using her tail, she covers him over with silt where she has laid him- a chunk of coral on his abdomen to hold him down.

The silt blows over his face until eventually he is covered.

Clarissa sighs, and hold onto a metal pole she's found. Depression.

She surveys the scene going on behind her. She's not part of this. Not like the other mermaids, who all swoop in their own apparent mourning.

Another webbed hand wraps around her metal pole and she is greeted by the menacing face of another mermaid: FRIEND.

They press their foreheads together and the movement of their bodies in the water seems to heal Clarissa. She's reminded of the very fact of life. Turning to her friend, with a caressing hand on her green scaly arm, she nods a thank you, then follows her impulse up from the depths, away from the wreck.

The FRIEND turns back to her duties.

7 EXT. OCEAN SURFACE. DAY

7

Clarissa breaks the surface, near to some rocks, and swims like she doesn't know how to. She's so focused on getting to the rocks.

With her arms, she climbs up, slimy, dripping, and in the wrong climate.

Her tail flinches as its delicate scales are dragged over harsh rocks, barnacles, mussels. It hurts to get up here.

The she flops, sucking up as much of the salt water around her as she can, learning to deny her fish lungs in favour of being above the surface.

The sun is so bright, and bursts like a star, throwing different colours up inside her eyes. The sky is blue. The relief is good. The sound of humans is near.

A little girl singing.

Clarissa takes a good sip from a puddle as she twists herself around.

The girl. Princess Heavenly. With a net on a stick in her hand. This is the moment. The little girl is looking at a real life mermaid.

All Clarissa knows is 'be beautiful'. Lengthening her spine, curling her tail, using her shoulder blades to guide her hair around her back.

She stretches her webbed fingers out over the rocks, and blinks with one delicate flicker of a sideways eyelid.

The Princess is frozen solid. She knows it's a mermaid.

Clarissa raises one webbed hand, stretches it out-

HEAVENLY
AAAAAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

That's it. The little girl has run away.

Clarissa closes her eyes, greeting the disappointment.

She sips from the puddle with her face surrendered onto the harsh rock.

The sun becomes too much, her eyes too dry, and finally high tide claims her.

8 EXT. THE BEACH. YEARS LATER. DAY.

8

A boy hoists a flag on a sailing boat.

HEAVENLY, 15
I really, really can't do this.

RUPERT, 17
Oh come on, it'll be fun.

The bough of the boat slips into the water.

HEAVENLY
No. Really.

RUPERT
For me.

Heavenly is frightened of the water.

Her feet take enough steps through it to be lifted, giggling, onto the little sailboat.

9 EXT. SURFACE OF THE WATER. DAY

9

A shock of life passes into Clarissa's body as she watches the scene. She licks at the water ripples.

10 INT. THE BOAT. DAY

10

The sailboat picks up speed.

Heavenly dares to trail a finger in the wake. Then thinks better of it, and stiffens as the Prince screeches into the wind. She smiles, amused.

She looks back at the rushing water, and sees Clarissa's face beneath the texture. She's keeping up.

She touches the bottom of the boat. Not steady enough. Looking at the Prince for help, she stands up, mouth open to call to him, and is knocked off into the water by the sail.

11 EXT. UNDER THE SEA. WHO KNOWS

11

Heavenly falls, half-conscious, with the light from the sun marking the shadow of the boat, and silhouetting Clarissa's mermaid form approaching the falling Princess.

Heavenly's face rests in Clarissa's seaweed-like hair as she's scooped up lovingly.

A webbed hand stretches across the back of her head. And another across her thigh.

Clarissa swims toward camera, deeply satisfied; the boat above and behind her.

12 EXT. THE ENTRANCE TO AN UNDERWATER CAVE. WHO KNOWS.

12

Heavenly has woken a little, and in the time since we left them, the mermaid and the Princess have become familiar.

Clarissa holds their position against the entrance to the cave with one strong arm.

The cave entrance is round, and craggy, with mosses and fish nests and sea bugs living in its wet wrinkles.

Heavenly touches the crags with interest. Clarissa lets her, holding her close with a hand at the base of her spine. Heavenly's bare legs wrap around Clarissa's tail with affection and comfort.

Clarissa bends that one strong arm and presses Heavenly's back against the inside edge of the cave, using her tail and the currents of the water. Their faces move around each other closely, eyes in love and arms embracing.

Heavenly gazes up and deeply into the tunnel.

She moves off to go into it then shocks herself, returning to the mermaid's embrace- realising she can't breathe.

Clarissa laughs, places a webbed hand on Heavenly's lower throat; giving her a gentle push off into the cave, then following her closely as she uses the crags and edges to pull herself, smiling, deeper and deeper into the tight shadow. Their faces show the satisfaction of what we read as innuendo.

13 INT. THE CAVE. WHO KNOWS**13**

On the other side of the long tunnel, Heavenly then Clarissa glide out into a treasure cave. Gold and sparkly trinkets everywhere, and a long tunnel up that leads straight to the colourless light of the sun.

Heavenly dances around, touching different trinkets and giggling, as Clarissa glides to rest on the crumbling skeleton of an old chaise lounge, amid welcoming schools of tiny fish friends and anemones growing out of the chair.

She swooshes her tail and causes a current that pulls and turns Heavenly. She does it again- deftly causing the water to move to her purpose in this familiar space- and Heavenly is pulled towards her.

She holds her in a straddle on her lap, and raises a hand up to her throat.

A bright light grows where Clarissa's hand is, and she's moving it up Heavenly's throat as Heavenly's face turns up, releasing, towards the bright sky above them, above her head framed low-angle in front of it.

Moving the light up almost to her forehead, Clarissa's intention fades. Heavenly is caught in the feeling- the slow building movement of this light up through the centre of her head. Does she really want to do this to her?

She 'sits' up, and gazes at Heavenly's face for a long time. The beauty of her gaze becomes part of Heavenly's ecstasy.

Then she finishes the job, throwing the light out the top of Heavenly's head, where it falls through the water and lands in her own heart. Heavenly is already dead, drifting stiff.

Looking around, newly satisfied, sparkling with success, she now hasn't got long.

Sending goodbyes to everything except Heavenly, Clarissa swishes hard to reach the surface.

14 EXT. THE SURFACE OF THE OCEAN. DAY**14**

She breaks the surface, breathing air suddenly and deeply. Relief, fear of the water, fear of the future, and the erupting laughter of being ready to face any challenge.

With no doubt I her, she heads for land.