

The Confession
By: Rachel Leroy

“He’s not coming.” I murmur into my sleeve.

“He’s coming.” Alexa says confidently, looking down the beach.

“It’s almost twilight.”

She doesn’t reply. I frown and look over at her. “He’s here.” She says not looking at me.

I turn and look. Well shucks. There goes Plan A: Hope He Doesn’t Show Up. Time to go with Plan B. Tell Him The Truth. It’s not a simple as it seems. The truth never is.

“Hi.” He states simply, shoving his hands into the pockets of his jean shorts.

“Hi.” I say, and take off my sunglasses. As I look at him, I try to memorize his every feature, knowing that tonight will probably be the last time I see him.

“Hey Chris.” Alexa chimes in, snapping me out of my thoughts.

“Hey Alexa. So what’s up? What did you want to talk about?” He shrugs and turns his eyes back to me. Eyes. A color that reminds me of the ocean.

“Ah, well...” I stammer, unsure of where to start. I look to Alexa to help. Alexa shrugs and slides off the hood of the car we rented and onto the sand. She takes a few steps toward the water and turns back to look at me. Silent. Waiting.

I move off the car and into the sand. Looking down at my feet, I wiggle my toes, relishing the feel of the sand beneath my feet. Eventually I work up the courage to look up and into his eyes.

“It might just be easier to show you.” I say.

He tilts his head to study me and a dark curl flops across his forehead. “Okay.” And all I want to do is brush the curl back into place and run my hands through his hair.

We walk to the edge of the water instead, side by side, our shoulders lightly brushing each other. “It started about 3 months ago.” I say. “Alexa and I discovered something we shouldn’t have,” which was an understatement, “and it got us in a lot more trouble than we bargained for.”

The water laps at my feet. The sky has darkened. I start to feel my skin pulling, stretching. Alexa comes up beside me and I look at her with a slight sense of panic. She raises an eyebrow at me, as if to say, “Don’t chicken out now.” So I do the only logical thing I can think of. I kiss him. And he kisses me. And I want to stay in his arms forever, but the feeling in my legs is getting stronger. So I break away from him and run deeper into the water.

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I hear Alexa splashing beside me. Once we're about mid thigh deep we stop, take a look at each other and take hands. Together we dive into the water. The coolness envelops me and I can feel my legs stretching, transforming.

Finally, the beautiful blue, purple and pink scales appear and the transformation is complete. I look over at Alexa and a huge answering grin is on her face. Together we zoom deeper into the water, our elation making us momentarily forget what I had to do.

I swim back to the beach, careful to keep my tail hidden from sight. Cautiously I lift my head above the water expecting to see Chris. But I don't. How inconsiderate and rude of him to disappear when I have a life changing revelation to tell him. Alexa appears beside me.

"Where did he go?" I ask, even though I know she won't know the answer.

"I don't know Jewel. I'm sorry." She says, even though it's not her fault.

We scan to beach for a few minutes more before the very last bit of light disappears over the horizon. Disappointed I slip back into the water and Alexa and I head home.

The ocean is dim but still busy with all sorts of fish still traveling about. Alexa is quiet the whole swim down.

"Maybe you'll see him tomorrow and you can find out what happened then." She offers.

"Maybe... Ugh, I don't know how I can face him again. Why did I have to kiss him?!"

Alexa only shrugs with a bewildered smile on her face. "Come on, let's do some laps on the track, work off some steam. Nobody will be around this time of night."

"Fine." I mumble, not really wanting to but not knowing what else to do.

But when we get there, the track isn't empty. Someone is doing laps. And doing it fast. Cautiously we swim down to the side of the track, you never know what kind of strange people could be out this time of night.

The blur of body and tail starts to slow just enough for me to get a glimpse of a face.

The man finishes his lap and comes to a halting stop in front of me, panting heavily. We stare. It can't be. My eyes must be playing tricks on me.

"You're a mermaid?!" Chris and I exclaim in surprise.