

Regret: The Second of the Mermaid Vampire Chronicles

Krista Everson

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Mysticism, prophecy, mermaid vampires, and adolescent insecurities—what else could you want out of YA fiction?

A vampire with a mermaid's tail—an unlikely combination. Yet Krista Everson somehow makes her story, as well as her squeaky-clean heroine, swim with insatiable cravings in this second installment of her Mermaid Vampire Chronicles series. Convolved but fun, this bizarre tale set in the small coastal town of Bay View, California, features Kristella on the brink of making decisions that will complete her transition from young adulthood to full maturity.

This overburdened creature struggles through domestic trials and relationship problems in a story filled with mysticism and prophecy: “We made it to the beach. A huge thunderstorm gathered overhead. I was almost in the water when I felt this calling. It was as if the world of goodness and sweetness was calling out to me. I wanted to go to it.”

Along with her boyfriend, Garrid, Kristella faces the worst threat of all: shape-shifting goblins who possess the power to destroy her and those she loves. Still discovering her heritage, Kristella must contend with information overload as she learns to utilize this newfound knowledge to her advantage.

Embedded in this unusual fantasy are adolescent insecurities expected in a typical coming-of-age novel, which lends an ordinary tone to an extraordinary situation. In one example, Kristella relates, “I saw Garrid's eyes forming into daggers again. He didn't turn his head, though. This made me a little angry because I thought that he should be sticking up for me.” This humanizing technique is the book's most outstanding quality, alongside the author's sparkling wit.

The plot, however, is cloudy; readers will likely feel lost and somewhat puzzled in places. The story lacks continuity and needs more explanation about events that have already occurred. Rather than providing a sense of resolution at the end, the novel segues into the third installment of the series. Readers are left hanging, baited to pursue the next book but without the satisfaction of even a temporary conclusion. Added to this problem is heavy reliance on dialogue, as opposed to narrative detail, to propel the story, and an awkward back-cover blurb.

Countless possibilities exist for stories based on the hybrid concept, and though vampires and mermaids are far from new to the young-adult market, success rests with talented writers, like Everson, who implement a visual, action-oriented approach. Think of fangs—not yet bared—suitable for teens seeking a lighter version of the Twilight series.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (November 26, 2013)

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