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# Lorali

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

On his way to celebrate his sixteenth birthday, Rory comes across a scruffy naked girl on the beach. Immediately intrigued, he smuggles her home and soon discovers she's even stranger than he first thought - she's never eaten cake before, takes huge bites out of a block of butter, drinks vast quantities of water, and immerses herself in next door's pond at the first opportunity. It turns out that she's a Mer princess who, unbeknownst to the other mermaids, has made the irreversible decision to 'surface' - to grow legs and live among 'Walkers'. Lorali's devastated mother Queen Keppel is desperately worried that she's been captured like her own poor mother, who was horribly tortured by pirates; her skeleton is still attached to the front of their ship. Rory knows that he must keep Lorali's presence a secret but when he goes to his friend Finn for help, it transpires that Finn's 'mad' grandfather knows rather a lot about her. As Rory and Lorali fall in love, Keppel goes to increasingly extreme lengths to find her, causing much trauma and incurring the wrath of the Mer people.

Laura Dockrill has created a richly detailed and fascinating Mer world. We find out that the first mermaid came about when hundreds of fish kissed a murdered woman on the mouth, blowing air into her lungs; no one is born into the Mer world, they're people who've been considered worthy enough to be 'saved' at sea and remain the age that this happened; they must all go through a resolution ceremony which reveals their personality, innermost thoughts, and details of their whole life. Lorali fled to the human world just after her resolution - so what was revealed that made her do this?

The story is told by three narrators: Rory, the Sea, and Lorali. Using the Sea is a particularly useful device as it can see things even if only a small amount of it is present - so for instance we learn the goings on in a hotel room where a mermaid is staying as she has seawater there to protect her tail. There's also a wonderful range of other characters including pirates (bad and very bad), revolting sirens, a traitorous friend and a celebrity-obsessed mermaid (who provides much humour). **Lorali** is a highly inventive, sometimes rather dark, but always entertaining, read.

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