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### The Mermaid's Mirror

Lauren Bangerter

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Madigan, L. K.. *The Mermaid's Mirror*. Houghton Mifflin, 2010. ISBN 978054719491. \$16.00. 320p.

Reviewer: Lauren Bangerter

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Fantasy Fiction;

Subject: Mermaids--Juvenile fiction; Identity--Juvenile fiction; Surfing--Juvenile fiction;  
Books--Reviews;

Lena has always wanted to learn to surf, so as a sixteenth birthday present to herself, Lena secretly starts taking lessons. She keeps the knowledge from her parents, as well as the fact that she is frequently sleep-walking down to the seashore. When Lena sees a mermaid in the ocean, she considers the possibility that she is going crazy. However, after finding a box hidden in her father's room, Lena learns that her real mother (her father's first wife who had supposedly drowned in the ocean) was a mermaid. Upon learning this, Lena and her mother are reunited, and Lena joins her mother for a time in the mermaid village. Lena eventually realizes, however, that while she loves her mother, she can't abandon those on land who are mourning her loss. She returns to live with them, but carries with her a strengthened confidence and understanding about who she really is.

This coming-of-age story is unique in that Lena is no average teenager; she's half-mermaid. But the lessons she learns about love, trust, and family are lessons that any teenager can relate to. Madigan has done a great job at developing believable and compelling characters. The mermaid village and lifestyle is intricate, but only the last fourth of the novel explores that underwater world. The ending felt slightly rushed and unsatisfying, but this book is a quick and enjoyable read which opens a world of imagination to the reader.

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