



May

Kathryn Lasky

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Book 2 in Kathryn Lasky's shimmering quartet about mermaid sisters and supernatural love.

May feels her life drying up. The sea calls to her, but her parents forbid her from swimming. She longs for books, but her mother finds her passion for learning strange. She yearns for independence, but a persistent suitor, Rudd, wants to tame her spirited ways. Yet after her fifteenth birthday, the urge to break free becomes overpowering and May makes a life-changing discovery. She does not belong on land where girls are meant to be obedient. She is a mermaid—a creature of the sea.

For the first time, May learns what freedom feels like—the thrill of exploring both the vast ocean and the previously forbidden books. She even catches the eye of Hugh, an astronomy student who, unlike the townspeople, finds May anything but strange. But not everyone is pleased with May's transformation. Rudd decides that if he can't have May, no one will. He knows how to destroy her happiness and goes to drastic measures to ensure that May loses everything: her freedom and the only boy she's ever loved.

May Details

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From Reader Review May for online ebook

Jane says

I really, really wanted to love this book. I think the series has a great premise, three separate books that link together, but, while some things have improved from the first book, Hannah, this book still has the main problems that made the first book disappointing.

First, I loved the author's descriptions of life in the sea. Beautiful. She has some wonderful prose.

What bothers me is how long these books take to get going, and then the denouement takes place in the last ten pages of the book! Not much gets wrapped up or resolved- we have no idea what becomes of either villain, the book just kind of stops right when things get interesting.

I like this series, and I'll pick up the third, but I wish they were meatier- more drama, more conflict, more romance, more action!

Stacey O'Neale says

This review was completed by Camille Morales, staff reviewer with the YA Fantasy Guide.

This book is about a girl named May who lives in Maine. She's never gone swimming—her parents forbid her from it—but she really wants to, because the sea 'calls' to her. She's also really smart and loves to read, but her mother (who I really hate, by the way) finds it strange and doesn't like it. May wants to be independent. She doesn't want to take care of her 'sick' mother (Did I mention I hate her?). There's a guy named Rudd, however, that likes her, but he doesn't like how smart and independent she is (he's kind of cocky, but not in the good Jace Wayland way, people). After her fifteenth birthday, she decides to ignore the rules and makes some life-changing discoveries. And then she goes and swims and realizes she's a mermaid. She reads books she shouldn't be reading and sneaks out to swim. She falls in love with a guy named Hugh (who is an astronomy student and likes May for who she is) and he falls in love with her, too. But then Rudd, who's become an obsessive stalker, decides that he's the only one that can have her.

I liked this book. I enjoyed it. I didn't really get into it, because (for me) it's not the kind of book I can get into and love. I liked May more than I liked Hannah (who appears in this book, by the way). I liked how she developed more than Hannah did. But the romance was overdone. The language the guy, Hugh, uses is not for me. Meh. I don't know. Like, this book was a simple read. The writing is simple. However, there is more character development here than in the previous book, Hannah. As for the plot, it's the same as in Hannah—a girl finding out she's a mermaid and all that—but Hannah appears as May's sister, and that was, uh, interesting.

I liked the characters here a lot, except I missed some of the maids who worked with Hannah in the first book. Yeah. I didn't like some characters, but I liked Gar and May and I loved Ettie's appearance. Also, I thought Rudd would've made a great love interest if he had been sane. But yeah. The characters in this story—well, mostly Gar and May—developed more than the ones in Hannah did, and their development was for the best. I would've liked to see Rudd and Zeeba (May's mom) develop, though. Too bad they didn't.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. It was a cute read.

I give it a 3/5 stars, and I recommend it (again) to those who've read Hannah and want to know what happens next. I recommend this series to those who are looking for a cute mermaid read, nothing heavy at all. If you're looking for a dark mermaid book or something more YA-like, this is not the book for you, in my opinion. But younger readers may enjoy this series.

Orchid says

Since I finally had a chance to read Hannah I thought I would just go ahead and read May while the first book was still fresh in my mind. I found that I enjoyed reading May a lot more.

One, if not, the main reason I enjoyed May more than Hannah would have to be that it didn't take practically the whole book for her to find out what she was (if there's one thing that annoys me about books is when it takes the whole book for the MC to figure out what the reader has known since they picked up the book).

At times, the characters and their personalities made me think of Disney's Beauty and the Beast (which incidentally kept songs from the movie running in my brain while reading). I bet your probably wondering how on earth my mind made that connection, well, let us just start with the fact the May had her very own Gaston. Rudd is so on my list of characters that I HIGHLY dislike...and would very much like to smack because he's such a jerk.

As a character I found May to be a stronger, more interesting MC then Hannah was. It was just so much easier to get caught up in her story and the joy that she felt when she discovered who she really was. I really enjoyed that May was a strong character willing to stand up for herself, which made her a more likable character.

One of the things that made this book so interesting was that there was just a smidge more of a sense of danger for the MC then the previous book.

I felt like the characters were a little more developed in this book, and that there was (a ton) more tension between the protagonist (May) and all the other characters. I especially liked how tense and well-written all the scenes with May's mother were. They left me wondering what on earth that crazy loon was going to do/say next; I also liked the extreme contrast between her two parents. On one hand you had Hepzibah who was done right mean and crazy as a loon, and on the other you had Gar who absolutely loved May.

My favorite part of May, the second book in Kathryn Lasky's Daughters of the Sea series, would have to be May's search for her past and the extremes in which she went to find out where she came from.

While I found May to be a highly enjoyable read, there were a few points when the story seemed to slow down and cover/press the same point repeatedly, like, the fact that she knew she had sisters, but had not found them yet. Even though this one fact irritated me, it did not detract any from my enjoyment of the book.

Final Verdict: May was a fascinating read about one girl's search for the truth. A true page-turner that has left me wanting to know what will happen in the next Daughters of the Sea book.

May earns 5 out of 5 pineapples.

Susan says

This book delivers in the areas of character development, world-building, and conflict in ways its predecessor didn't. May is a dynamic character who quickly discovers and masters her powers while still struggling with her identity and love. While the romance oozes cheese, it's well-developed and compelling. Meanwhile, the villains multiply, the stakes get higher, and Lasky's world expands, promising a tidal wave in the future.

Full review on my blog at: <http://splinteredfragmentsoflight.blog...>

Dana says

Easy little fun read. At first I felt as though I was going into this sequel blindly, because I don't really remember too much from the first book, but it didn't matter and when I got to the end, I had bits and pieces coming back to me. I liked May, but found her parents, especially her mother, annoying. Rudd didn't really seem to have a reason to be there, either, but I did like Hugh. I really only have two complaints, one: I wish there was a little more to the ending. I understand that there is supposed to be another book, but I would have liked a little more between both May and Hugh at the end. Two: I felt as though I were reading an independent reader instead of a young adult book.

Jessica says

Kudos for Lasky for finding a niche that has not been completely over-written (i.e. vampires - enough already!).

I started reading this book and was halfway through when I discovered that it was a #2 in a series. Didn't realize it - and that's a huge plus. The story held it's own. I didn't need the first book to tell me what was going on.

The premise and plot were decent. The writing not bad. But the character development was pretty flat. Zeeba was hateful and selfish; Gar was kind and tolerant; Rudd was a creep; Hugh - starry-eyed for May; and May - well, she was a little more rounded. I definitely liked how she developed throughout the book and ultimately grew a backbone.

Overall, a solid three, *maybe* a 3+. But I'm not running out and pre-ordering the third book in the series, you know?

Cindy says

When I read Daughters of the Sea 1 I was very disappointed. I expected the focus of the book to be on mermaids and it was about a girl who shuffles around and turns at the end. Needless to say I guess I should have held on to my britches as Lasky fulfills this craving in this book.

May starts off with a new character and a completely different point of view, but this time there is a huge focus on the mermaid aspect and a few "hints" about what is to come in the series.

Some of this book backtracks a little and crosses over with Hannah but not enough that you wouldn't know what you were reading if you jumped in with this book.

Many of the questions I had from the first book are answered in this novel. Of course there is still a looming mystery that can only be uncovered in the third book but that's to be expected.

The only complaint I had about this novel was I really could not stand May's mom. I found her annoying, whiny and stifling (which is exactly how Lasky wants her to be) but I had problems with that part of the novel.

Overall, I really think Lasky turned this series around and made it a definite read for mermaid lovers and YA readers alike. I can't picture boys really getting into this story as the characters are all female and there's a love interest floating around but girl readers will love this series.

Yin Chien ?? says

May Plum has been constricted within the confines of the Egg Rock Lighthouse ever since she was born. Her father Edgar "Gar" Plum is a nice man who loves her dearly, but her mother Hepzibah "Zeebah" Plum is the exact opposite. Zeebah suffers from an illness - not only of the body but also of the mind. She is constantly complaining about her illness and always orders May around like a servant because she used to be ordered around by her sick mother and grandmother back when they were alive. Vicious cycle, if you ask me.

May's relationship with Hugh Fitzsimmons, the Harvard student who studies astrology is rather believable, and their observing the constellations together is rather romantic - I can almost imagine the background music starting to play. On the other hand, I find Rudd, the local boy who is obsessive about controlling May and getting his slimy hands on her repulsive. Ugh.

Hannah's story, which was left dangling in the first book, is continued somewhere in the middle of May's, where the sisters finally meet each other and marvel at their resemblance to each other. The plot of this book is so much better than Hannah, and the various elements of this story seems to fit each other perfectly. Overall, it was quite a lovely, charming story. Hopefully the third book will be even better than this one!

Kayla says

At least it was better than the first instalment!

Rebecca says

Growing up as a lighthouse keeper's daughter on a small island off the coast of Maine in the late 1800s, May has always felt a bit different, and as she gets older those feelings grow stronger, as does her discontent with her life trapped on the island. Often she can't even leave the little island to go to school because her

hypochondriac mother insists May needs to stay home to help her. The year she turns sixteen, May learns she was adopted - which leads to her searching for the truth about her origins as she does not believe her father's story about where he found her, and she has always been suspicious about why he forbids her from swimming in the sea, when they live on an island.

But the truth May discovers the first time she disobeys her father and goes swimming is shocking - she is a mermaid, and that is why she has never felt at home on land. May loves the freedom of sneaking off to swim in the sea at night, and hopes to someday search for the two sisters she believes she was separated from as a baby. Meanwhile, her life on land has become more complicated. May is attracted to Hugh, a young astronomy student from Harvard who has come to Maine to do research. But could someone like him, a college student from the big city, ever love an island girl like her - especially if he ever were to learn what she really is? At the same time she must fend off the advances of Rudd, an unwanted suitor whom May fears will learn her secret.

May is the second book in the Daughters of the Sea series, following Hannah, the story of one of May's sisters. However the books take place at the same time so you can read them in any order. This book was a bit slow to start but ultimately I did enjoy it, the romance was sweet and I liked the historical setting. I think this book would appeal more to readers who enjoy historical fiction, because despite May being a mermaid this novel is really more historical fiction with a fantasy subplot, instead of fantasy that happens to have a historical setting. There was one thing that did bother me a bit, which I hope is explained in future books - the villain seemed to go from being just a rude, annoying person to really evil at the end, without any real explanation why, just some vague hints. It didn't ruin the book for me, but it is something I really hope is explained in the next book in the series.

Alyssa hoffmaster says

more reviews here:

<http://thebookblogexperience.blogspot...>

I don't read many books about historical fiction but I loved this book. May is book 2 in the daughters of the sea book. I didn't really enjoy the first one in the series but I absolutely loved this one.

May is growing up in the 1800's as the lighthouse daughter. The book starts out with the father finding May out in the sea and bringing her back to his wife. (By the title of series you pretty much tell that it's a mermaid tale)

May has wanted to go swimming ever since she was little but her parents forbid it. Until one day she found out why her dad said no. She grew a tail in the water. Throughout the whole book you saw her feeling lost and empty there was something missing. She found her missing sister and she felt better but not complete. They are still missing a sister. There are three of them.

The characters in this book felt so real. I loved the relationship between her and her father even after she found out he wasn't her real father. I was horrified at how the mother (Zeeba) acted throughout this whole book. I felt like punching her and telling her to suck it up.

Then there was Rudd, he was such a creep and then near the end of the book I found out what he was really after. He made me so aggravated. Then the relationship between May and Hugh was so romantic.

I finished May in a couple of hours and I didn't want to finish reading it. I wanted to know what happened after the book ended. Now I can't wait to read the third book in the series. I hope I find out when it comes out soon.

Randi (The Artist Formerly known as Guitar Chick) says

No spoilers for May, but if you haven't read Hannah you might want to move on to another review.

A beautiful sequel that's almost better than it's predecessor. May is my favorite of the DOS books and I really enjoyed it.

While I enjoyed the previous book, (Hannah) what really bothered me was the pacing. Hannah doesn't know she's a mermaid until the very very end of the book, and it left me more desperate for May (punny, I see what you did Kathryn). Here, May finds out the mermaid thing MUCH sooner than Hannah ever did. In fact, in the book, even May gets mildly annoyed waiting for Hannah to change.

I think the romance was a little overdone and focused on in this one. While there was a hint of a romance with Stannish and Hannah (and that turned out to be mere curiosity because of the whole mer thing) this was overblown and dragged the story a bit.

But a really cool bit of the story was the bits with the girls' auntie. We catch a few glimpses here and there and really add to that whole "Could you point me in the direction of Atlantis?" type thing I think the fourth book will focus on.

I'm starting to like the settings in these. Maine and Boston and up North and everything. I'm curious to see where book three takes place.

Lastly, I really really loved that Hannah and May's stories twined together. Where the ending on Hannah leaves off, May picks up towards the end of the book. It's cool.

I'm really looking forward to the next one and congrats on a fantastic, non-romance driven, series to Ms. Lasky, this is a rarity in the book stores

Phoebe says

A lighthouse keeper finds baby May floating in a sea chest and takes her home to his hypochondriac wife, and May grows into a beautiful, strong, healthy young woman. Resenting May for these qualities, her foster mother makes May's life unpleasant. Then May answers the pull of the ocean one night, and discovers that she transforms into a mermaid with the touch of the water. She must keep her nightly swims a secret, and she struggles with the knowledge that she belongs fully to neither land nor sea. A rather slight story yet Lasky's writing is often poetic. A romantic tale that will definitely appeal to young teens who like mermaids. Book 2 in the series that leaves plenty still to be told in the next book.

Seeing Double in Neverland says

For Full Review go to <http://seeingdoubleinneverland.blogspot...>

4 out of 5 stars

I liked May's story so much more than Hannah, and when reading May you will be glad you continued on with the story.

Kelly says

May is the second in Kathryn Lasky's Daughters of the Sea series, which tells the story of three orphaned sisters, separated as infants, who discover they are mermaids. In the previous book we met Hannah, who found her true nature while working as a maid to a wealthy family. Here we meet the second sister, May, who was adopted by a lighthouse keeper and his manipulative wife. Her parents have kept something from her, and when she is fifteen she works up the courage to learn what it is.

Compared to her sister, May learns her scary secret much earlier in the story. Readers who were frustrated with the pace of *Hannah* will probably be pleased with this difference, and May's curiosity and her process of discovery are compelling. The faster-moving internal journey, though, is juxtaposed with a more limited external journey. May spends much of the novel under her adoptive mother's thumb and only leaves her hometown in her clandestine swims. I liked the intricate social world of *Hannah* and missed that here. May doesn't interact with many people beyond her parents, a few other briefly glimpsed authority figures such as a doctor and a librarian, and her two potential love interests (one bland, the other over-the-top awful). Later, it turns out that May's story is taking place concurrently with Hannah's and their paths converge.

One of the best parts, to me, was the glimpse into the larger world of mermaids, shown in a handful of chapters from the point of view of the girls' long-lost aunt. What we see is really interesting, and I love the way Lasky tied in the Scottish mythology of the Blue Hag.

The Daughters of the Sea books occupy an odd space between middle grade and young adult literature. The coming-of-age/self-discovery and romance themes would seem to place them in the young adult category; but the writing style, and the occasional "teachy" moments I've come to expect from Lasky, make the books feel younger. In addition, I think most young adult readers will want more grit. I'd recommend this series to girls right on the border of the two age groups — maybe 11 or so — especially if they enjoy the gentler books for girls that were written in the past. (For example, I think I'd have really liked this during my Anne of Green Gables phase at roughly that age.)

This may sound like a petty gripe, but I found the character nicknames distracting at times. Is it really that common to form a nickname from an unstressed syllable? I was okay with "Zeeba" for Hepzibah, mostly because it reminded me of Zeena from *Ethan Frome*, on whom Lasky may have partially based this malingering, malignant character. But "Gar" for Edgar threw me for a loop. I spent half the book having no idea why May was calling her father "Gar" and seriously wondered if it was a regional term for "Dad" that was unfamiliar to me before the light finally dawned.

The story, as in *Hannah*, is left open-ended, and I assume the third book will introduce the final sister and the fourth will be an adventure featuring all three girls and tying up the loose ends. Overall, I didn't like *May* quite as much as I did *Hannah*, though I must admit that the pacing and plotting are better executed here. Recommended for preteen girls looking for a sweet, charming tale. Review written for Fantasy Literature's Kathryn Lasky page.
