

Mermaid Girl

By Cecilia Copeland

Cecilia Copeland  
ceciliacopeland@gmail.com  
319-594-0232/845-594-0232

MERMAID GIRL  
DR. TESTHER

SCENE 1:

In the Doctor's Office. MERMAID GIRL is in a wheelchair with a blanket over her lower half. DR TESTHER enters with a clipboard.

DR TESTHER

It's nice to see you again. How can I help you today?

MERMAID GIRL

I want... I want the procedure. I have the forms.  
(She tries to hand them over.)

DR TESTHER

I thought... Your parents... They said you would be fine with-

MERMAID GIRL

I'm eighteen now. It's not up to them. I can sign for myself.  
(She holds out the papers again.)

DR TESTHER

It's a very big decis-

MERMAID GIRL

I just... wanna be normal. As I am.

DR TESTHER

It's complicated.

MERMAID GIRL

I know there are some risks.

DR TESTHER

Some... Look, I don't want to give you any kind of... false...

MERMAID GIRL

False hope?

DR TESTHER

I want to help you. I do.

MERMAID GIRL

No one with this condition has lived passed ten years old.

DR TESTHER

And you are very healthy.

MERMAID GIRL

Yes. So I'm a great candidate.

DR TESTHER

It's never been done before.

MERMAID GIRL

It has been done.

DR TESTHER

That was only partially successful.

MERMAID GIRL

Well I'm only partially human right now.

DR TESTHER

I don't want you to have any illusions about this procedure... There's a really high Pucker Factor.

MERMAID GIRL

What's a Pucker Factor? Is that a result from the operation?

DR TESTHER

Pucker Factor isn't a term we use with patients. It's a term that specialists use. The people who make medical implants. Most surgeons only do two maybe three major surgeries in their life that are as complicated as the one we're talking about. The reps from implant companies fly all over the country to assist in surgery. They watch us cut and they tell us what to do. When they say that something, a procedure, has a high pucker factor what they mean is... when something goes wrong... it goes very wrong. The Pucker is a description of the face the surgeon makes when the procedure goes wrong. What you want... We would be cutting into two major arteries. Do you understand me Melissa?

MERMAID GIRL

Mermaid Girl.

DR TESTHER

You want me to call you-

MERMAID GIRL

Yes. I'm Mermaid Girl. That's my name. No one calls me Melissa.

DR TESTHER

Your parents.

MERMAID GIRL

Are no longer in charge of... They no longer have a say. I'm Mermaid Girl.

DR TESTHER

Okay, but um... Even as Mermaid Girl, don't you want a name?

MERMAID GIRL

... Okay, Madison, from Splash? You know, before Tom Hanks was a serious actor? Right after Bosom Buddies.

DR TESTHER

How do you know about Bosom Buddies?

MERMAID GIRL

I watch a lot of TV. Yeah, Madison. Daryl Hanna. Her name was Madison.

DR TESTHER

That movie came out... But I can understand why you would know it.

MERMAID GIRL

No, actually, Ariel from the Little Mermaid. Call me Ariel.

DR TESTHER

Ariel, I want to help you, but I think maybe the psychiatrist would be a good idea first.

MERMAID GIRL

No, no, no, listen to me. Please, I need this procedure. I sit at home and Hooloo TV shows and movies and create Avatars in Sim-life and World of Warcraft and... Meanwhile... I will never have a lover. Never. I can't. Even if I wanted to... Even if, by some weird fucking magic twist of fate, if there was someone out there who wanted to make love to me... It could never happen. The best I can hope for is some kind of tortured longing over virtual reality and I... I want to be free in this world. I want to live as I was meant to live. I feel the pull to travel and I can't. I'm stuck. I have a lover I was born for. He would caress every part of me in every second of the rest of my life, but I need this procedure.

DR TESTHER

Ariel... I don't know if I can do it.

MERMAID GIRL

Where would they go? Just show me. Please.

DR TESTHER

(Touches her neck.)

Well, we would put in one set on each side. Here... The sets are rows of three gills so when you swim... when you dive you pull the water into your mouth and as it goes into your throat it passes the gills before it gets to your lungs... but they go to your arteries... if something... I need you to understand me.

MERMAID GIRL

I see why my parents wouldn't allow it... But... I would rather die than spend the rest of my life on land... pretending to be something I'm not. I don't fit in here and I don't want to try anymore. I am who I am... I am What I am. Help me. Please.

(She sings the papers.)

DR TESTHER

(Takes the papers.)

Okay.

THE END