

HOW I MET MY MERMAID

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Where the blue skies meet the yellow sand. The SURF CRASHES at the shore. The effervescent CLARISSA, 20, dressed in a simple white dress, stands barefoot at the water's edge. She stares out into the horizon longingly.

EXT. BEACH - LIFEGUARD STATION - INTERVIEW

OWEN, 19, short, goofy, sits cross-legged on his brightly-colored beach towel in front of the station.

OWEN

I think her name's like Clarence or something?

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Perched on the stand, MATT, 22, tanned "pretty boy", listens to his iPod. From behind his sunglasses, he sees the lonely Clarissa some twenty yards down the shore.

OWEN (V.O.)

We're... we're pretty sure she's a mermaid. With a tail, you know.

Matt stares until there's SHOUTING. He searches, sees a FRANTIC SORORITY GIRL drag her sorority sister ELISE from the water. He rips his headphones from his ears and jumps to the ground. Jogs down the shore.

MATT

What? What happened?

SORORITY GIRL

She was just surfing! She was just surfing and she slipped!

MATT

Oh, geez...

He squats down next to the unconscious Elise.

MATT (CONT'D)

Where's her surfboard?

SORORITY GIRL

I don't know, out in the water still?!

MATT

Want me to go get it for you?

SORORITY GIRL
 (distressed even more)
 What? No! I want you to save her!

MATT
 Oh, okay.
 (begins chest
 compressions)
 All you had to do was ask.

SORORITY GIRL
 C'mon, Elise, you can do it!

Water spews from Elise's mouth in a heaven-sent fountain, and she begins to gasp for air. Matt stops, helps her sit up.

SORORITY GIRL (CONT'D)
 Elise! Elise, you're alive!

MATT
 Are you okay?

ELISE
 (blinking)
 I... oh my gosh, I... you saved me!
 Who are you?

MATT
 I'm Matt.
 (leans in, whispers)
 ... actually, sometimes I go by
 Manatee Man?

Elise's eyes widen with excitement.

EXT. BEACH - LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY - INTERVIEW

Still Owen.

OWEN
 Yeah, he's the hero of Costa Costa
 Coast.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Matt carries Elise to her car, followed closely by Sorority Girl. He helps her into the passenger seat, buckles her in.

MATT
 All set to go.

SORORITY GIRL
 Thank you so much for your help,
 Manatee Man.

Matt goes to smile at Elise, but realizes she's avoiding his gaze.

MATT
What's wrong, Elise?

ELISE
It's... it's nothing.

MATT
Are you sure? You look a little flustered.

ELISE
It's just... I thought there was a man. When I slipped, you know. I saw a man in the water. An... an evil man. He grabbed my leg, pulled me under even more... he scared me, really scared me.

MATT
It's... it'll all be okay. I'll watch out for him.

ELISE
Thanks.

But Matt isn't paying any more attention, because he's spotted Clarissa leaving the beach. Her white dress disappears into the horizon.

EXT. BEACH - LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY - INTERVIEW

OWEN
He's tried talking to Clarence a couple of times. But she won't say anything. I mean, Matt -- ahem, Manatee Man -- may not have the best people skills, but he saves people. And that's what matters. Saving people. Being a hero. Where would we be these days without Clark Kent? Buffy? JFK?

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Matt dries his face off. Owen stands in the doorway.

MATT
She said there was an evil man in the water. Pulled her straight down.

OWEN

What kind of evil man tries to
drown sorority girls?
(off Matt's look)
Yes, that was a stupid question.

MATT

I hope Clarence is okay. At least
until we can catch that man...

OWEN

Yeah, dude, he's our arch anemone.

Another "what the hell?" look before Matt grabs his
toothbrush and kicks the door shut in Owen's face.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - INTERVIEW

Matt's turn.

MATT

I really like Clarence. I just
wish she would talk to me. As if
it's not already hard enough being
a superhero, now my damsel won't
even freaking talk to me, much less
get in distress.

He groans, falls back into his bed, ready to give up and get
to sleep... when Owen bursts through the door.

OWEN

The Great Hero of Costa Costa
Coast!

MATT

What? Dude, don't ever...

OWEN

I know how to solve your problem!

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Matt and Owen walk through the parking lot toward the beach
the next morning. Matt's got his official Manatee Man t-
shirt on, and Owen has his Kid Kelp shirt.

OWEN

She's a mermaid, Matt. That's why
she can't talk. She's lost her
voice!

MATT

Because of the salt water?

OWEN

No, because she traded it in for her legs! It makes perfect sense now! I mean, how do we even know that Clarence is her real name?

Matt nods, claps Owen on the shoulder.

MATT

Be that as it may, I gotta go. See you later, Kid.

And he leaves. In less than an instant, Owen is SLAMMED AGAINST A CAR, cheek against hot metal, by a darkly-clad, UNSEEN MAN.

UNSEEN MAN

Who are you?

OWEN

Who am I? Who am I? I'm Owen.

UNSEEN MAN

Owen? That's not your real name. You look like my last henchman. Kelp.

OWEN

What? How do you --
(shoved again)
Okay, okay, I'm Kid Kelp! The Courageous Kid Kelp! That's right, I'm going to --

UNSEEN MAN

Stay away from the girl.

One more shove, and the man is gone. Owen never sees his face.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

From atop his lifeguard stand, Matt looks out to the sea with a pair of binoculars.

MATT (V.O.)

I have to watch out for that man. I can't imagine what he would have done if... if I hadn't gotten there in time.

And then Owen's next to him, waving for his attention.

OWEN

Matt! Hey! Matt! There's -- there's something I need to --

MATT
 What? Kid, calm down. What's
 wrong?

OWEN
 He's here. The man. He's here.
 He told me to stay away from the
 girl.

MATT
 What? Where?

OWEN
 (rubbing cheek)
 I don't know, but...

Matt glances back at the BEACH BUMS, searching frantically. He even uses binoculars. But finally spots Clarissa, once again in her white dress, making her way down to the shore. He leaps down to the sand.

MATT
 Holy crab. What if he gets her
 too?! I need to go talk to her!
 (thinks)
 But she can't talk! Kid! What am
 I supposed to do?!

OWEN
 Matt, you can do this. You're
 Manatee Man. This is easy as
 shrimp.

MATT
 How do I warn her? She doesn't
 talk!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Back out on the beach, Matt heads determinedly for Clarissa, a big stupid grin on his face. He holds up a notepad with big letters printed on it. "Hi, I'm Matt."

This time, she smiles back. It's too short, though, and she's quickly looking to the water again. Matt writes on his notebook again. Taps her shoulder to get her attention. "Why can't you talk to me?"

She frowns, suddenly scared. Matt's smile fades, and he takes her hand into his. She rips it away, glances back across the beach, behind them.

Matt looks too, and sees a thirty-something-year-old man watching them. He's certainly not dressed for the beach, in his black dress shirt and pants. He's got shades, though.

It's MANTA. The Unseen Man. Matt returns the stare with uncertainty.

INT. LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY

Matt bursts back in. This time, he's got Manta by the shirt collar. He throws him onto the floor.

MANTA
What?! Get off me! Let go!

Owen gloriously dumps a bucket of water onto Manta. Manta covers his face in surprise.

OWEN
That's right, freshwater! And
there more where that came from!

EXT. BEACH - LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY - INTERVIEW

OWEN
(concerned)
Not much more, but more.

INT. LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY

Right back where we left off. Manta cowers on the floor as Owen and Matt stand over him.

MATT
Who are you?

MANTA
I'm not... I'm not telling you.
(coughs up water)
Not in a million years.

OWEN
Oh yeah?
(holds up another bucket)
Huh, punk?

MATT
(holds Owen off)
What's your name?

MANTA
I'm Manta... Lord of the Sea...

MATT
What business do you have with
Clarence? What did you do to her?

MANTA
Clarence? I don't know a Clarence!

MATT
Clarence! That girl out there that
can't talk, because of you! That
beautiful girl!

MANTA
Oh, Clarissa...

OWEN
That's a pretty name.

MANTA
Pretty girl.

MATT
What did you do to her?

MANTA
Stupid boy...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

MANTA (V.O.)
Clarissa came to me for help.

Clarissa spots a shark fin in the shallow water. Her eyes widen as it quickly approaches shore. She looks up at Matt's chair, but nobody's there. Nobody notices. Her heart racing, she tries to scream, but clutches her throat. She can't. She takes off for the lifeguard station, waving her arms frantically, her mouth wide as she tries to scream.

Elise notices. Jumps to her feet and follows.

INT. LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY

OWEN
That's kinda cliché, doncha think?

MATT
What do I have to do? How do I get
her voice back?

MANTA
(stands)
What do you do? I don't know.
Clarissa and I had a deal.

OWEN
No, down! Get back down! Down!

Owen dumps the next bucket on Manta, sending him back to the floor. Manta growls, furious and drenched, and lashes out at Owen, stinging him with his fingers. Owen falls backward, shouting in pain.

MATT
No! That's... my... sidekick!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Clarissa runs faster, screaming without a voice, almost there, but still so far away. Elise catches up, racing Clarissa. But Clarissa stops and shoves Elise down to the sand before continuing.

INT. LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY

Matt dumps another bucket of water onto Manta, who falls to the ground again, shouting.

MATT
Give Clarissa her voice back! Give it back!

MANTA
(trying to catch breath)
No... no... we had a deal...

MATT
The deal's off! She's a Costa Costa girl now, and I'm the Costa Costa hero!

Manta is squeezing his eyes shut when the shell necklace falls out of his shirt, hanging in plain sight. Matt sees it, snatches it away.

MANTA
No, no, give that back!

Manta makes a last lunge at Matt. Matt stomps and smashes the shell under his sandaled foot. Manta hollers in despair. And then they can hear Clarissa's SCREAM from outside.

EXT. BEACH - LIFEGUARD STATION - DAY

Matt runs from the lifeguard station to find Clarissa screaming. He grabs her shoulders, takes her in his arms.

She stops screaming. Pries herself away from him to look into his eyes. Matt smiles, realizes. She doesn't, and screams again. Matt grabs her, quickly covers her mouth with his palm.

MATT (CONT'D)
 No, don't, please, don't. You can
 talk, Clarissa, you have your
 voice!

CLARISSA
 (gurgles)
 Hi.

They both smile, near tears, hugging each other.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY - INTERVIEW

MATT
 We were made for each other,
 Clarence -- ahem, Clarissa -- and
 I. We were.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Back to the beach. Clarissa and Matt hold each other's
 shoulders.

CLARISSA
 You saved me.
 (beat)
 I'm Clarissa.

MATT
 I know. I kind of love you.

CLARISSA
 Me too, I kind of love you too!

They kiss, finally, their emotions swelling as they rejoice
 at the happy ending. The sun shining bright behind them, the
 waves crashing at the sandy shore. Out in the water, Elise
 screams:

ELISE
 Ow, shark! Shark! Help! It's got
 me!

But the happy couple doesn't even notice.

MATT (V.O.)
 I love being a superhero.

FADE OUT.

THE END