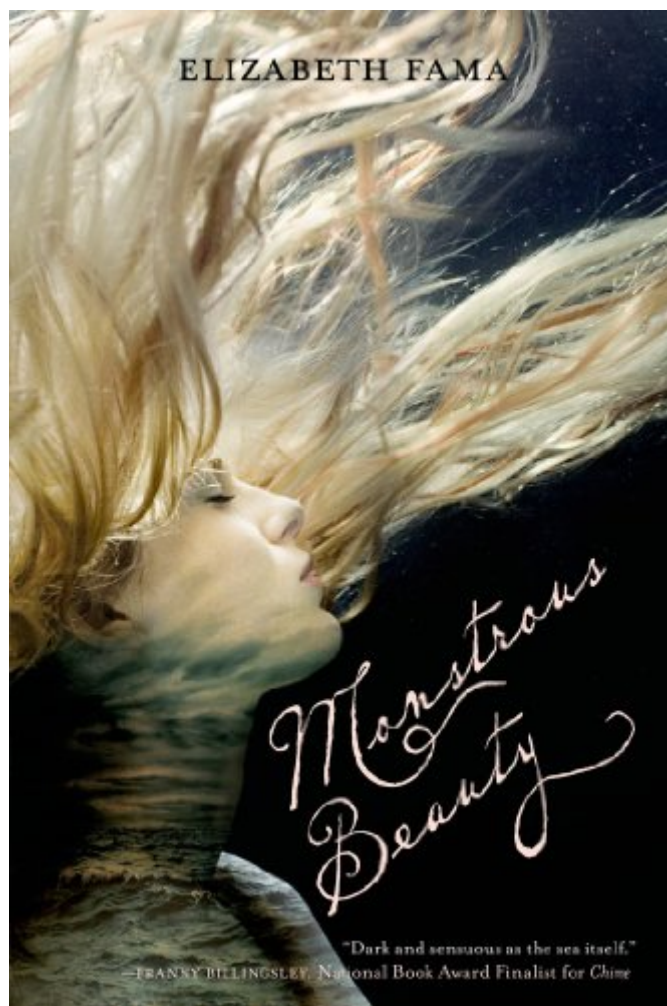


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# Monstrous Beauty



## Synopsis

Fierce, seductive mermaid Syrenka falls in love with Ezra, a young naturalist. When she abandons her life underwater for a chance at happiness on land, she is unaware that this decision comes with horrific and deadly consequences. Almost one hundred forty years later, seventeen-year-old Hester meets a mysterious stranger named Ezra and feels overwhelmingly, inexplicably drawn to him. For generations, love has resulted in death for the women in her family. Is it an undiagnosed genetic defect . . . or a curse? With Ezra's help, Hester investigates her family's strange, sad history. The answers she seeks are waiting in the graveyard, the crypt, and at the bottom of the ocean - but powerful forces will do anything to keep her from uncovering her connection to Syrenka and to the tragedy of so long ago.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I love mermaid books. I really do. The paranormal creatures I tolerate or love are the mermaids, angels and werewolves. But mermaids seem to really do it for me. What can I say, I love the great

deep. So it might be my bias for mermaids which made me love this book as much as I do but it is certainly good. Mermaids and ghosts. Sounds weird? I can't believe it myself because how can you mash two genres together? But Elizabeth Fama is supercalifreakinawesome as she has woven an intricate and wonderful story with a world so convincing I stopped listening to my lectures in school and just read this book. (Granted, the lectures were boring and it was a rehash. Bad, bad student.) I read it everywhere because I can't stop. This book has adventure, mystery, romance, danger, myths and everything you'd possibly want. The secrets just kept on coming and I was not ready for any of them. One moment you'd think you got it all figured out but the next thing, boom, Elizabeth has dropped another bombshell and you'd have to form your theory again. Until the very end of the book, you don't know (well at least I don't know) what's the actual deal. This makes for a great reading experience because I was always on edge. So it goes to say that the pacing was extremely well thought out and was gripping. The book alternates every chapter or every few chapters from the present day (Hester) and 1872/1873 (Syrenka). This totally works because I am so invested in both timelines. Elizabeth Fama writes both time frames convincingly that it was not jarring to read. Even Pastor McKee's scottish accent was just awesome! Admittedly, I was suffering from Pitying-the-Other-Guy syndrome as I was feeling so bad for Peter yet falling in love with Ezra. Another fictional man. What is happening to my life? Ezra is a naturalist and of course, being a scientist made me relate to him and his unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Syrenka's life was so poignant, especially at the prologue with Pukanokick. It was heartbreaking and at the same time that you're feeling pity for her, you know that she's the one to blame. Actually, everyone's life was bittersweet or, as Syrenka pointed out, sweet-bitter. Hester was relatable to me, even if I question her actions at times. Just not a fan of her sorta insta-love with Ezra though if you've read the book, it makes sense. Peter took a backseat and wasn't fleshed out but I do understand as he's not too integral to the story than say the other characters. Linnie seriously creeped the hell out of me. There's a particular scene, or for me, two scenes (or maybe three or four, depending on your iffy meter), that might be icky or a dealbreaker with others. This is not some fluffy, light stuff guys. It dabbles with death, soul, life, power, revenge and everything in between. Anyway, I don't think I can write a review that will give this book justice as I was actually at a loss for words when I finished it. Just see for yourself how Elizabeth Fama went from I-don't-know-her to will-definitely-read-all-of-her-books for me and how I just gained another mermaid novel I love. Or how YOU will gain a mermaid novel that you'll love. Or how YOU will get lost in this world and with these characters. Read for yourself. :) Thank you to Elizabeth Fama for writing a tale so exquisite. I love you all!

Disclosure: I had the good fortune to read this book before publication, since the author is a friend.]*Monstrous Beauty* has all the ingredients to become a classic: complex characters, meticulous plotting, intelligent prose, and page-turning situations. The opening pages grabbed me by the throat--and by the heart--and kept me reading.*Syrenka* is an original. This is not your Disney mermaid; she is a true creature of the sea, animal-like in her instincts and morals. Her transition to human form is anguished and difficult, and we ache for her in spite of her blemished character. One of the pleasures of the book is watching *Syrenka* evolve as she learns to live with her newly acquired soul. In addition, the history and lore and culture of the undersea realm that *Syrenka* comes from, with its horrifying queen Noo'kas, are fully realized. The book is ingeniously plotted without reliance on coincidence or contrivance. Much of current YA literature is cranked out to a formula; it is a rare treat to find a book written with this level of care and craft. The twists and revelations are so well planned and paced that the climax took me totally by surprise--although in hindsight, I could see that all the groundwork had been laid and that everything made perfect sense. Anyone who knows Beth Fama knows how much time and energy she would devote to researching the remotest details in a book like this--whether on marine life, nineteenth-century dress and manners, or the best way to kill someone slowly. What is astonishing is how seamlessly she was able to integrate that knowledge into the book so as to enrich but not distract. And did I mention the romance? Oh, yes--the story includes a dreamy male love interest, Ezra. A complicated guy. With issues. The excitement never lets up, with present-day Hester's mysterious ties to the sea, to the past, to a possible family curse; mermaids, secrets, ghosts, murder. And all of it holds together in a tight drama that builds to a wrenching but inevitable, and satisfying, resolution. I wholeheartedly recommend this book!

awesome story- I only wanted to make my opinion known about the one reviewer who complained about the reference to breasts.. Seriously dude? I think theres 2 whole ref's about the mermaids breasts and they NEEDED to be there for the continuation of the event , the description of the story- and the characters could not live without it. I find this story refreshingly new yet still steeping in old mythical histories. My daughters are mermaid fans and I can't wait until they read this one. well done Miss Fama

This was my second foray into the "YA mermaid trend", and I'm glad to report that this book did not disappoint. (Looking at you *The Vicious Deep*.) It's well-executed. The author's take on the sea folk

myth and the world she built was brilliant. My favorite part is Hester, our main gal, going through this journey practically on her own. No damsel in distress needing help from a guy here.

My favorite Mermaid book of all time, I was on the edge of my seat the whole book through. The author did a outstanding job.

What a tangled web.....very exciting and never knew what was next.

So much adventure underwater. I was there. Well written.

I choose this rating because there wasn't anything special about this book. Nothing pulled me in. I would recommend this to pre teens.

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