

Parched:
the Scaly Truth of a Suburban Mermaid

Setting: *A suburban kitchen/ dining room. Upstage left is a fridge with an icemaker and lots of postcards of the ocean. Downstage right is a table where our mermaid- CALYPSO – a woman with a faded tan, bluish green hair that looks kind of fried, and skin that is subtly scaly is sitting, typing into a laptop. The table is cheated so when she's looking at the screen, she's really looking over it, at the audience.*

CALYPSO:

Parched. That's what it's like to be a mermaid stuck on dry land. It's like. No matter how many showers you take, how long you soak in the tub, how many weekends you spend at the beach, it's never enough.

(She leaves the kitchen table, carrying a large Starbucks cup – the 24-ounce double-walled kind that you buy to drink cold beverages at home. She fills it 1/2 way with ice, and then with water to the top from the ice maker on the fridge. She drinks about a third of it, tops it off, and returns to the table.)

CALYPSO:

You'd think summer would be the worst, but at least in summer it's humid, so my skin doesn't feel like so many layers of peeling paper. (She laughs.) No, I think I'm the only person in the world who looks forward to Texas summers. Winter... winter though... it's not so much that it's cold – not like the rest of North America, anyway – it's that it's so. Fucking. Dry.

(She drinks most of the water in the cup, then shakes the ice to see if it will miraculously melt into more water. It doesn't. Sighing, she crosses to the fridge again, this time adding only water. Standing in the middle of the kitchen, she continues to speak.)

CALYPSO:

Ordinary humans are told to drink 8 glasses of water a day, but that's assuming eight-ounce glasses. Me? There are days when eight *gallons* barely quench my thirst. My husband makes good money, and my patrons on my podcast keep me in spending money, but you don't want to know what our water bill is like. Some days... some days the ice machine can't even keep up with me when it's set to 'party mode.'

(She refills the cup again, then returns to the table, takes a long slug, and types for a moment.)

CALYPSO (quietly):

I used to have nice skin. My scales were opalescent in the sun, but when Fisher touched me, they were soft, he said. Now, he barely touches me, because they make him bleed. And I *itch*. I itch all the time, and no amount of moisturizer, no amount of soaking in the tub, in the pool, stops the itching.

(She takes another long drink of water.)

My life wasn't supposed to be like this. I wasn't supposed to fall in love with a mortal – with a *human*. But Fisher's hook got caught in my hair one night when he was out on the jetty and that whole bit about the line and the sinker – totally true.

We were supposed to live on a sailboat, and he was going to telecommute. We were going to have fat babies who swam in the ocean and never had to live a landlocked life. But then the mast fell on his back during a storm, and he took a desk job and I lost the second infant and...

(She bites back tears. She pushes the laptop away, buries her face in her hands, and sobs for a while, then grounds herself and starts over.)

CALYPSO:

Every day, I tell Fisher I'm going back to the water.

And every day I die a little, dry out a little more. Because I love him. I love that man so fucking much that I gave up my fins for him.

If I did leave him, if I did go back to the ocean... I'd be wet again. Deliciously, delightfully, *wet*.

But my soul would still be parched.

BLACKOUT.