



Priddy's Tale

Harper Fox

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What doesn't kill you sometimes makes you wish it had...

Priddy's a lost soul in a part of Cornwall the tourists don't get to see. He's young, sweet-natured and gorgeous, but that's not enough to achieve escape velocity from his deadbeat village and rotten family life.

He's a drifter and a dreamer, and self-preservation isn't his strong suit. An accidental overdose of a nightclub high leaves him fractured, hallucinating, too many vital circuits fried to function in a tough world. When a friend offers him winter work in a lighthouse – nothing to do but press the occasional button and keep the windows clean – he gratefully accepts.

His plans to live quietly and stay out of trouble don't last very long. A ferocious Atlantic storm washes a stranger to Priddy's lonely shore. For a shipwrecked sailor, the new arrival seems very composed. He's also handsome as hell, debonair, and completely unconcerned by Priddy's dreadful past.

Priddy has almost given up on the prospect of any kind of friendship, and a new boyfriend – let alone a six-foot beauty with eerily good swimming skills – out of the question entirely. But Merou seems to see undreamed-of promise in Priddy, and when they hit the water together, Priddy has to adapt to Merou's potentials too, and fast. His lover from the sea might be a mere mortal from the waist up, but south of that line...

Far-flung west Cornwall has a hundred mermaid tales. Priddy's loved the stories all his life. Now he has to face up to a wildly impossible truth. Merou's life depends upon his courage and strength, and if Priddy can only find his way in the extraordinary world opening up all around him, all the ocean and a human lifetime needn't be enough to contain the love between merman and mortal.

Priddy's Tale Details

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From Reader Review Priddy's Tale for online ebook

Kaje Harper says

This is a lovely, fairly realistic-paranormal, and well written story about a young man, and the merman he beguiles at first sight. Priddy was always able to see more than most, including the occasional mermaid, but he laughed it off as stories and fantasy, growing up with his best friend Kit. They played and partied and studied, and decided they were not meant to be boyfriends, as they reached adulthood. Then one night at a club, Kit offered Priddy a hit of a new party drug... one which landed Priddy in hospital with permanent damage.

Now he's drifting, dreaming, doing odd jobs and trying to stay sane, while Kit goes off to college without him. A job at a lighthouse gives him a chance at a little cash, in a controlled simple environment where he can perhaps begin to cope better with his life. Until he rescues Merou, wrecked in the middle of a storm, and discovers there is more mystery and confusion and possibility in his life than he believed. I enjoyed seeing Merou make Priddy believe in himself again.

All of Harper Fox's books are worth reading, and this is no exception. The writing is good, the characters interesting. I didn't quite get a deep feel for the romance in this story - it was a bit fated and fast, and the decision to be together wasn't one of time and understanding. In many ways, I was more interested in Priddy's relationship with his friend Kit, which seemed harder and more complex. But I enjoyed the tale of modern mer-people, including many little touches to the world building, and some lovely phrasing and language.

Daphne says

Jem Priddy has not had an easy life, neither by accident of birth nor by his own decisions. He lives in a lighthouse, trying desperately to shield himself from Bad Things and reeling as he recovers from a mind-altering string of events. When Merou arrives, poor Priddy can't be sure whether he is a figment of his fractured mind or a flash of good that's been all too absent from his life. I wasn't sure either.

"The only person who could sweep Priddy up out of the dirt was Priddy himself. He'd known this for some time. Whether he was ready for the effort didn't really matter. Whether he was sane was of little significance, too. He saw visions and heard mermaids. That had been true long before he'd poisoned himself in a basement club in Penzance. He closed his eyes for a moment in sheer lonely pain, then gritted his teeth and let go of the rail."

This story has all of the beauty of Harper Fox's prose but not as much of the gripping painfully beautiful romance that exists in some of her other books. I think maybe that was the point, though. That Priddy needed to come into his own, to save and accept himself, and not just be washed along by the tides of his life.

This is not to say that there was no romance - Merou and Priddy were kind, loving and in ways, devoted to each other. Due to the way the story developed, there was less of an active decision to be together which I missed a little bit. I think my expectations are incredibly high for this author's books, so that might be why I felt like I wanted *more* from the romance. (This is not a euphemism for sex. I mean the achingly beautiful connection in *Life After Joe* or *Brothers of the Wild North Sea* or *Scrap Metal*).

"There was no pain in this realisation, just a sense of acceptance. Friendship had limits. Priddy's lonely, hungry soul blossomed out and expanded in this knowledge: people were limited. It wasn't just him."

Kit and Priddy's friendship was a high point of this story. Too often, friendships in books are constant hijinks or dramatic lovefests or obvious frenemy situations - maybe easier to write because of the characterizations but not altogether resembling real life. Kit and Priddy were childhood friends who were human, flawed but close and cared so much for each other. Their flaws were so relatable (which is a funny thing to say about a merman story).

In sum, I definitely recommend this book.

? Todd says

This one was a fun '*damaged young man meets and falls for a mysterious merman, who falls right back*' tale. Tail? Whatever. ;-)

The first half of the book was funnier and I enjoyed it a bit more than the second half, which was slightly more predictable, but still a very worthwhile and entertaining read.

Fairly sexy, too, considering the novella length.

3.75 stars.

Adam says

This book was a bit weird. And so good.

I might be wrong, but I think this was my first merman read. That angle took a bit getting used to, especially the different anatomy. Plus, I'm not a fan of fish.

The story was exactly what I'd expect from Harper Fox. It started off sad and melancholy, but then there's a glimmer of hope.

I wanted to wrap Priddy up in a hug from the beginning. He was lonely and lost, and made my heart hurt.

But then Priddy saves a strange man from drowning. Merou is an odd-ball. And there's something about him that's just not *right*. The clues are there, but Priddy refuses to connect the dots because that might mean that he'd really gone off the deep end.

Merou won me over just by showing how much he cared for Priddy. He coaxes Priddy out of his shell, and convinces him that he's worth loving.

Merou brings sunshine and laughter back into Priddy's life. He gives Priddy afternoon car rides through the countryside, horse rides across clifftops, and picnics with Priddy's favourite foods.

So Priddy begins to dream. And he realizes that if he wants Merou and a happy future, no one other than himself can make the necessary life-altering decisions and changes.

The title, 'Priddy's Tale', is very apt. There's a strong romance here, but this book is first and foremost the story of Priddy's renewal. There are some sad moments, but at other points I was genuinely laughing at Merou and Priddy's antics.

The happy ever after was perfect in every way.

If you're looking for a MM merman read that will make your heart ache at times but leave you feeling light and happy, I'd definitely recommend 'Priddy's Tale'.

Eugenia says

Absolutely LOVED this! 4.5 Stars.

I had no idea what I was getting into when I picked up this book. I was entranced from the very beginning of what is basically a fairy tale complete with a villain, a hero, and a prince. And, of course, an HEA.

Priddy was such an intriguing character--never knowing when he hallucinated or not. I liked his strange view of the world. This outlook served him in meeting Merou, the merman. Although not quite as deeply drawn as Priddy, Merou was still captivating (I think the merman thing really helped out here).

For a novella, the world-building was particularly fine. I would have loved a full length novel in which we spend more time with Priddy and Merou pre-love. I also want to further explore the undersea world of merfolk and their ability to catch Time currents.

I felt so good reading this tale. It really did feel like an old fairy tale; it felt like a warm embrace.

Suki Fleet says

Harper Fox writes so beautifully^^ Evocative sweeping prose that brings the Cornish coast to life.

Not as emotional as some of Harper Fox's stories. A lovely read.

M'rella says

I am totally in love with this book! Something about the lighthouses and the seaside and the merfolk appeals to me immensely.

My only complaint is that I couldn't get quite close to Merou, read more about his side of the story; there is

still plenty of info to piece it together, just ...lacking somehow.

As for mangel in distress, oh well. There *are* boys in trouble out there, and I am sure lots of them can use some help. Being a man doesn't mean you can plow through life with a stoic face, unfazed by troubles. This particular setting in this particular book didn't bother me at all.

5 stars.

PS I might re-read it one day :)

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

surprising depth

I didn't quite know what to expect from this story and it started off kind of dour.

Priddy got into some bad drugs at a party and he's never been the same since. That he's an addict is mentioned but I can't say that I bought into that; however, that is neither here nor there since it is not, nor should it be, the focus of the book.

This is Priddy's tale of finding love in the most unlikely of places: the sea.

It's a magical tale and one that snuck up on me, truth be told. I wasn't truly invested until over the halfway mark and I didn't much care for Priddy initially either. But Priddy and Merou won me over.

Merou is a larger than life personality: gregarious, charming, devastatingly handsome and keeps odd hours. Read: he has a tendency to vanish periodically.

Priddy, on the other hand, is introverted, shy and has a low opinion of himself. Though it's not ever specifically addressed I think his upbringing was less than ideal.

Their journey towards happily ever after is fraught with obstacles and turns into a bit of an adventure which kept my interest, but the ending was perfect. I loved the afterword so hard.

This was my first Harper Fox and won't be my last. I like the way this story was constructed and both of these characters came to life through the prose as well as Chris Clog's narration which was on point.

Recommend to paranormal romance fans.

Also, kudos to the author for using my word (thundercunt) which I have *never* heard or read in a written work before. I was kinda tickled, I don't mind telling you. I *may* have rewound it a couple times.

Vivian says

They don't seem to thrive away from the sea, and if they do leave, they always return.

This is a classic Mer tale.

The hubris of youth that infallible superhero feeling that you can surpass anything until you can't.

Priddy is left behind as his best mate goes to university, still suffering consequences from misjudged youth. That's Priddy's fate. His backstory is sad and unfortunately not uncommon.

Merou is the half-drowned man Priddy pulls from the sea when disaster strikes the rough-hewn cliffs of Cornwall in the rugged West Country. From that moment, time is being rewritten as Priddy's life changes.

Fox's descriptives are a key draw for me, and they don't disappoint. While I am usually keen on the palpable renderings of the setting that was not the focus. Sure the waters are lovingly drawn, but the spotlight is on Merouac, of Mer anatomy itself. He reads like a heroic nude from antiquity, quite beautifully done.

Merouac chuckled. "If you like. Pretty and merry— won't we make a pair?" Closing his eyes, he pulled the bedclothes up to his chest, and Priddy must have imagined the webs between his fingers— there was nothing there now but a glimmer, like fine-ground fish-scale dust.

But it is not all smooth waters and lilting songs on the air, for a nemesis lurks threatening everything. I love the ocean, I could read pages of nothing but sea spray, wind shifts, wave and current patterns and be happy, add in Fox's writing style and this was a big win.

This isn't a grand romance. It's loving and thoughtful and sexy, but more finding that puzzle piece that's been missing than a overwhelming courtship.

Overall, love and the sea, and how both are catalysts of change.

Ula'ndi Hart says

Overall book rating: 4

Audio Book: N/A

Book Cover: 3.5

I like Harper Fox.

This story felt dreamlike to me. Very much "not-in-the-present" if I can put it that way?

I wasn't in the mood for this book at all but I didn't have something else to read so I dove in and finished it. A while ago actually. I just still don't really know what to say about it.

I enjoyed it. I just think maybe I should read it again sometime in the future. I think I'll have even more fun then.

Katerina says

Straight from Cornwall back (in summer 2016 - when this book was published).

I'm **really excited** about this book ... especially, the nice guys sitting there really on the beach ... all alone and lonely (grin).

So then ... this is certainly one of the **most extraordinary and beautiful books** I have read. I don't want to say that this book is for everyone. No, not really. It is for people with imagination who can be tempted to daydream like Priddy. For people who shed tears when a Merman whispers that he will die here ashore, if he doesn't come back by itself into the sea. When a new friend sets heaven and hell in motion to save the Merman ... goose bumps ... and then the two go on a journey that leads to the absolute depths of the sea ... It was just beautiful. And I am so glad to have accompanied Priddy a bit of his way. Thank you, Harper Fox.

But the book is so much more. It is the journey of a lost man who finds himself again. It is so full of hope and so much force that the positive energy of this book carries me through the day. The echo of this book resonates in me, like the singing of the marine life. Difficult to comprehend. Just

beautiful.

“Were they all like me, then—primates? Landlings?”

“Don’t you already know? Your mind’s full of our legends. You were like a beacon to me the other night, brighter than your lighthouse, calling me in.”

“Mermaids don’t like to lose their bets.”

“What happens when they do?”

“They make their transformation for the last time, and live on land with the mortal they’ve chosen. Get old and die with him ... But the mermen go the opposite way, and they search all their lives for a mortal who’ll cast off their human skin for them, and join them in the ocean.”

You found him. I’m here. I’ll do it. Priddy bit it all back, even though Merou’s eyes had brightened with tears. Merou might have called him love, and taken him to Lyonesse, but that was no guarantee he wanted him any other way than clad in human skin. “I see.”

“No, you don’t. The mortal doesn’t get to choose, and nor does the Mer. One day—one full-moon night, rather, when nothing makes sense except love—the change comes over the landling like a sweeping tide, and he grows his tail in great pain and suffering, and then he can’t ever return. And I never wished to lay such a fate on any of the beautiful lads who’ve been my companions.”

Rick says

Oh Harper Fox you do my heart and head in, in the most wonderful ways.

Okay I'm going to keep mum about this book other than say

I A D O R E D it!!!! Every word, every page. Great characters who grow, yeah imagine that.

Harper Fox writes characters like flowers growing. First there is the tinge of green on the bud, then a wee bit of color, then the bud suddenly has color and the next day it's opening up it's petals for you to inspect.

Wow that was heavy! lol

Enjoy folks and Happy Reading

Ann says

4.5 Stars

Reading Priddy's tale reminded me how much I love Harper Fox's words. Her brand of prose worked perfectly for this modern fairy tale. This take on the merman and his human didn't take the expected path and I liked it all the more for it. The HEA for Priddy and Merou was an ideal fit for their place in life and I absolutely loved the ending.

?? Michaelle ♡?? says

4.2 Stars

When I pick a Harper Fox book to read (or listen to) I know that it's going to be so much more than the summary suggests, and that's half the excitement. And that summary just doesn't do justice to Priddy's state of mind, his character, the things he's experienced and suffered. The overdose and it's after-effects are definitely important, but we also learn how very detached, disaffected and dreamy he was before that even happened; dare I even say that his personality lent itself to accidentally going overboard (ha!) on the drugs? To being more susceptible to accepting the weird, inexplicable happenings around his beach and lighthouse?

And what weird and wonderful happenings they are! I love this almost Fairy Tale like story...bits of it reminded me of The Little Mermaid - I almost expected Priddy to start combing his hair with a fork there at the end!

I have to mention, once again, that Harper Fox manages to make Cornwall, the Atlantic & that village come alive in her prose. The whole setting feels like an additional side character, of equal importance to his BFF Kit IMHO...

Trio says

Oh Wow! This one truly blew me away - 100% insanely perfect. This is the third book I've read (listened to) by Harper Fox and the poetry of her writing just hits me harder every time. The descriptions of everything are just amazing... the angst and joy and bitter resentment. Gah, just one of the best books I've ever experienced.

Also, the narrator - Chris Clog - was absolutely wonderful.
