

A Fish Story

by Harris Tobias

It was a dream come true for Geraldine Fisher. All her girlhood fantasies, her dreams of a fairy tale romance had happened. She met Hans. She'll never know what made her answer that classified ad but the fate that led her to it was a strong force and made the impossible happen.

On their first meeting, when Hans rolled his wheelchair to her door she would be he first to say that her heart sank. But he was so beautiful and charming and funny and quirky that his disability was soon forgotten. After ten minutes she was thinking “keeper” and after a half an hour they were confessing their love for one another.

Hans had a curious accent and always kept a blanket on his lap to cover what Geraldine assumed were his withered legs. He was very reticent about his past and avoided direct questions about his family and where he grew up. But he was so kind and good natured about it that Geraldine suspected nothing.

They saw each other very often that first year. Hans was always a gentleman. He took her to the most fabulous places and bought her more and more lavish gifts. Slowly his mysterious past was revealed

He was, he explained, not really of her world.

“You're an alien?” she asked.

“I'm not from another planet, silly,” Hans replied. “I'm from Earth but I'm what your people would call a merman. You know, the male equivalent of a mermaid.” Hans explained to Geraldine's incredulous gaze.

To prove what he was saying was true, Hans lifted his blanket and let Geraldine see for herself his magnificent fishy body beneath the robe. Geraldine gasped and almost fainted. When she regained control of herself, Hans went on to reveal his secret past.

“I am a prince in my world and I am not crippled. It is only here in the air that I cannot walk. As you can see, I have no legs but beneath the sea I assure you I am both agile and graceful.”

“But how can I be with you my love? I cannot live underwater,” said Geraldine, her eyes already welling with tears.

“I have given it much thought since first we met,” said Hans, “And I have a solution. If you will consent, there is an operation that will supply you with gills and with a bit of practice, you can feel quite at home beneath the waves.”

Geraldine had never heard of such an operation but so great was her love for Hans that she trusted him entirely. He told her he would be paying for the whole thing and that it was really quite safe. That night they talked for hours. Hans told her of his home and the wonders that awaited her. Geraldine was entranced. It sounded more grand, more wonderful than she ever hoped. A man like Hans would have been enough but a castle under the sea was beyond her imagining. She agreed to have the operation.

Everything went well and Geraldine was pleased to see that the gills did not detract from her appearance. Two small slits behind her ears were hardly visible. The best thing was how well they worked. It took practice and patience but Geraldine mastered her innate fear of breathing underwater and got comfortable with her new organs. Hans was thrilled that he could soon take her home to meet his parents. He'd already proposed and given Geraldine an enormous diamond. Geraldine was a little sad that she wouldn't have any of her friends or family at the wedding but Hans assured her that he would make a second one just for her. He seemed fabulously wealthy. He promised they would spend half a year in his world and half in hers. He was so agreeable and kind, Geraldine could not refuse.

Now Geraldine was a modern girl. The idea of sex, even pre-marital sex was not foreign to her; but Hans would have none of it. “Call me old fashioned,” he said “but I would much prefer to save all that for our wedding night.” Even that became a part of the charm and mystery of Geraldine's new life.

The day came when Geraldine had to say goodbye to this world. She quit her job and kissed her girlfriends and family goodbye. Then she set out on a boat with Hans. The boat took them far out to sea.

When it reached a certain spot, Hans and Geraldine clasped hands and jumped together into the deep warm sea.

Down they swam into an underwater world that was more beautiful and marvelous than anything any mortal had ever seen. Hans introduced her to his parents. There was much jubilation, music, dancing and elaborate dinners. Everyone loved Geraldine and she loved them back. Geraldine was given an enormous suite of rooms and several mermaid servants to wait on her. She was thinking how wonderful it all was.

The days flew by and before long it was time for the wedding. The castle was lavishly decorated. It seemed like the entire population of the city was in attendance. Geraldine's heart was in a giddy whirl. The wedding ceremony was something out of a storybook. She and Hans danced the night away.

Tipsy and deeply in love, the two newlyweds found their way to Hans' bed chamber. This was the moment when their love would be consummated. Geraldine had dreamed of this night since she first confessed her love to Hans over a year before. She disrobed and slid naked beneath the covers. Hans swam over and took off his wedding finery revealing his muscular body for her examination. He truly was a beautiful specimen. As they moved together beneath the sheets, Geraldine arrived at an awkward realization. Hans had no erection. He was not impotent, he simply did not have normal male equipment. Just as this troubling truth struck her, Hans let out a groan of pleasure and the chamber filled with a milky fluid. Hans had spawned.

"How was that for you," Hans asked, considerate gentleman that he was.

