



# Waking the Merrow

*Heather Rigney*

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## **Waking the Merrow** Heather Rigney

This second edition features new, alternative cover art, as well as the first chapter of Book 2 in The Merrow Trilogy - HUNTING THE MERROW.

ISBNs of the original cover edition of WAKING THE MERROW:

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In 1772, angry Rhode Island colonists set fire to a British ship, sparking the American Revolution. Taxation without representation was a motivator. So was the vengeful, man-eating mermaid who had it out for the commanding officer. That was then. This is now. Mermaids, or merrow, still hunt in Narragansett Bay, but these days they keep a lower profile. At night, centuries-old Nomia seduces smutty frat boys, lures them into icy waters, and feeds them to her voracious kin. By day, she and her half-breed daughter attempt to blend in at the coastal Village Playground. But Nomia slips up. She makes a friend. Then she makes that friend disappear, and someone notices. Thirty-something Evie McFagan just wants to make it through working motherhood. But she's a blistering stew of issues—snarky alcoholic and a friendless funeral director who just witnessed Nomia dismembering a guy at the nearby yacht club. When Evie believes a mermaid stole her baby, who will help? The merrow of Ireland? Or maybe anti-hero Evie will surprise everyone, including herself, and summon the strength to save her own family. Intertwining the stories of two primordial families with the colonial history of Narragansett Bay, *Waking the Merrow* is a dark historical fantasy.

## **Waking the Merrow Details**

Date : Published June 9th 2014 by Cycling Mermaid Press (first published May 22nd 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Heather Rigney

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Genre : Fantasy, Mythology, Mermaids, Horror, Paranormal

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## From Reader Review Waking the Merrow for online ebook

### Shannon says

\*4.5 Stars\* I originally read this in 2015, but reread it before the release of *Hunting the Merrow* (Merrow Trilogy, #2).

What the actual f\*#ck did I just read?

From the shores of Ireland and colonial New England, *Waking the Merrow* is a modern retelling of a legendary subject with a deliciously evil and mythical twist.

This ain't no Disney mermaid tale.

Heather Rigney spins an intelligently written tale, about legendary merfolk tail, seamlessly woven with threads of many genres.

This book is historical fiction.

This book is a psychological thriller.

This book is bust-a-gut/hope I don't pee myself funny.

This book is effin' scary. Seriously. The stuff of which nightmares are made.

I love it!

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### Nicole R says

*Waking the Merrow* is my IRL book club selection for this month. Prior to it being nominated, I had never heard of the book or the author. A little background research showed that the author is a Rhode Island native who lives just down the way from me -- which I love -- but what really got me was the teaser from B&N Book Blog:

*"You know what's great about Rigney's horror-ific (that's horror-filled and terrific), hysterical debut novel? Besides the **bloodthirsty merfolk**, our antihero protagonist is an **overweight, drunk, subpar mother, who also happens to be a funeral director**. I can't even describe the premise of this book without getting giddy, because how many times does a plot involve both **vicious mermaids and Rhode Island colonists**?"*

HOLY CRAP! YES!

So, two things immediately happened: 1) I invited the author to the book club -- she immediately and graciously agreed! and 2) I got myself to a book signing with the author at a local brewery -- book and brews, y'all! -- and purchased a copy directly from her.

Then, I procrastinated on actually reading the book until this weekend, giving myself only 5 days to read the whole thing before discussing it with friends and the author.

I shouldn't have worried, I flew through it. I absolutely adored the Irish merrow folklore woven into Rhode Island colonial history that caught up with modern day in a less-than-perfect alcoholic mother whom I rooted for from start to finish.

I am definitely not claiming this was award winning literature, and I really wanted a bit more of the merrow folklore origins, but it is the first of a trilogy and you can bet that I will be reading the second one and keeping an out out for the third, which the author is currently writing.

What is better than finding a debut book from a local author? Finding that you actually LOVE the book and get to talk to her about it in less than a week.

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## **Penny Watson says**

Let me just get this right out there from the get-go.

This is without a doubt the coolest debut novel I've ever read.

Heather Rigney, who the hell are you? And where did you come from?

WAKING THE MERROW is a cross-genre, horrifying twist on the mermaid legend. Rigney has seamlessly woven a story that combines horror, comedy, colonial history, fantasy world-building, flawless writing, and the most unappealing yet strangely mesmerizing "heroine" I've ever read. Evie is a short, fat, self-loathing alcoholic who manages to get the reader, against her will, rooting for her in this fascinating tale.

This story jumps back in forth from current times to colonial times in Rhode Island, and mixes intriguing bits of maritime history with the familial history of the Irish Cantillon family. Not only is Rigney a fine writer, but she is also an excellent storyteller. The pacing and time-jumping are perfectly executed, and I raced along with the story to find out what would happen to Evie and her family.

Warning: This is not your mother's cutesy mermaid with the sparkling tiara and clam-shell bra.

Not even close.

I love a good horror tale, and this certainly delivers. Rigney calls this novel "dark fantasy" and I agree. It's fantasy. And it's dark. And the juxtaposition of mundane real-life details with horrifying merrow behavior works spectacularly well.

There was a wee lull in the story during the tribunal near the end, but other than that, it was close to perfect. And the ending promises more in this series.

Forgive the pun: this baby blew me right out of the freezing cold Rhode Island waters, and I can't freakin' wait to dive back in with the next book.

If you are looking for something unique, creative, well-written and satisfying, I highly recommend WAKING THE MERROW. In a sea of cookie cutter releases, this book stands out as one-of-a-kind, which is quite a feat for a debut author.

Highly recommend! Grade: A

Penny

#### SUMMARY:

WAKING THE MERROW is a horrifying, addictive, and intriguing twist on the mermaid legend, and takes the reader on a bone-chilling ride through colonial and current times in Rhode Island. This is a fabulous debut novel by Heather Rigney.

Read it if you dare.

(It's out early! Available at Amazon).

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#### **Emm Cole says**

Narragansett Bay seems like an ordinary place, but beneath the water's surface are dangerous, vicious creatures. The merrow are not your sweet, basking mermaids, and they aren't looking for a prince to kiss. No, the merrow are a devious bunch with some real bite. It would serve those in the area well not to cross their path.

Evie McFagan crosses them. Oh, she certainly doesn't mean to. At the beginning of this story, Evie is a reluctant parent who really doesn't mind muddling through her day with a little alcohol, some jaded internal musings, and a whole lot of colorful curse words. At first, you think, this woman should have "hot mess" tattooed on her right bicep.

But a chance encounter at the park with another mother named Nomia is about to challenge Evie. You see, even though Evie is somewhat of a disaster, beneath the sour remarks and extra cocktails hides some genuine heart and a survivor's intuition. And when she sees the refined, elegant, Stepford-like Nomia making friends with a neighbor who soon goes missing, Evie knows in her gut that she's encountered someone with evil intentions. Nomia isn't just up to something, she is something--something other than human.

Still, Nomia is no fool, and she isn't about to let Evie spoil her wicked fun. The question is, can Evie McFagan pull herself together, enough so that she can protect her family and take this wicked, scheming, supernatural on.

Waking the Merrow is a delightfully dark fantasy that stirs in colonial history and some eerily fun mythology. Heather Rigney is doing what she's meant to do, and her story will have you laughing all along the way even as the scariest of creatures stalk this plot. I cannot recommend this sassy, dark, intelligent book enough. It's not every day you find yourself rooting for a cantankerous heroine with a hangover, but I think Evie McFagan can and will win you over.

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#### **Betsy says**

Mermaids are sexy in this book, but they aren't lovable. Wow! Fierce, vicious, dangerous and corrupted. This feels like a folklore novel. It is set partially in Ireland and also in Rhode Island. The story vacillates between multiple timelines but is not overly confusing or jarring in its shifts.

I reveled in the freshness of the perspective and language and our heroine, Evelyn/Evie. I enjoyed her take on motherhood, mommy friendships, extended family, drinking and marriage. She was unpredictable, funny, awkward, self-destructive, loving, fierce, drunk and boy was she candid. Heather Rigney wrote a unique heroine, something that is not done all that often. Evie's husband, Paddy, was a delight and lit up the page for me. Even Susanna, the baby, was a scene stealer. Fresh, irreverent and funny. I am intrigued by the central characters and cannot wait to read more.

I highly recommend for any Urban Fantasy reader who is growing fatigued of overused plot devices and carbon copied characters.

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### **Christine DePetrillo says**

A haunting tale soaked with personality, history, and imagination. I'll think twice before dipping my toes into Narragansett Bay. Rigney has a unique voice and style meant to entertain on a whole new sea-salted level. I give this book 5 seashells and a bonus clam cake.

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### **Sophie Carter says**

I loved this book! It was such a fun summer read.

At first, I absolutely loathed Evie, the main character. She has problems with alcohol and she's terribly sarcastic. But as the story went on, I found myself rooting for her more and more until I was literally in tears because I was positive that she was going to die.

This book takes place (mostly) in Pawtuxet Village, where I spend almost every day of my life. Since it's such a tiny little place, it's not really talked about in any Rhode Island history books, let alone a novel. I kept getting so excited whenever the playground or the cafe was brought up. I was like, I go there! I was there yesterday! I'm there right now! It was definitely a funny experience.

As amazing as I thought it was, I only rated it four stars because I'm such a wimp, so it was a little scary for me :)man-eating sea creatures kind of freak me out now.

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### **S.K. Munt says**

Bloody Brilliant. Really VERY bloody and really very brilliant!

I can't imagine anyone not liking this novel. It's one of those things where I see a one star review and am truly shocked. I cannot think of a demographic this wouldn't appeal to or anyone who I wouldn't recommend this to. It's as though Ms Rigney has opened a window and let in a much-needed gust of salty sea air into a shipwrecked genre.

Whatever you're expecting from a book with a mermaid tail on the cover well, this isn't it and thank goodness. Waking The Merrow is ugly, hard, gruesome laugh out loud hilarious and full of action. And I don't throw around the word 'hilarious' lightly. You usually have to be a stand-up comedian in ranks with Russell Brand or Chris Rock to actually solicit a giggle out of me but I was actually highlighting jokes in this one rather jealously :)

This is a very unique story in which the heroine is an overweight drunken and resentful mother and the mermaid is a bitch from hell with absolutely no conscience. I loved the main character immediately and was cheering for her to triumph, and it's been awhile since I felt a character resonate so realistically with me and even longer since I've disliked a bad guy quite so much and so it was all very cathartic. As a mother of three it was nice to pop open the top button and hiss and boo at a villain while drinking a beer from me swinging egg chair while ignoring the kids and feeling totally okay with it because I COULD be worse and still likeable :) In fact, imagine if The Little Mermaid was from Ursula's point of view BEFORE she went batshit crazy- versus the dark-haired version of herself she creates. You end up with two very vindictive alpha-females duking it out for the right to not be a stereotype :)

Heather Rigney is a wonderfully expressive writer who manages to address an incredibly cliché subject and leave said clichés in her wake. The world she paints with words would not be beautiful if not for her striking and highly original prose but she truly creates a setting that is both dark yet colourful and exciting. If you're a fan of Dean Koontz then steer your amazon trolley this way because you're in for a lot of evil snickering and plenty of dramatic tension backed up with creative articulation. Honestly it was just so good- it's revived my love of reading after a pretty serious book hangover.

Recommend to all!

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### **Lena says**

*"They were the wide eyes of her aquatic cousins, unmistakable with the unnaturally large eye-sockets and light-colored irises. He was a merrow."*

Different and did not disappoint! Welcome to world of Irish folklore, of Merfolk with teeth, long memories, clans, and *varied diets*. All told from the slightly meta point of view of a functioning alcoholic.

My TBR is a functioning Jenga Tower but this series has become a must read.

All tail Merfolk May!

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### **Becky says**

This was really hard to put down. It was cool to see mermaids in a different light. It's kinda graphic so not for the faint of heart. You also find out the background behind the merrow and there is more than one group.

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### **Daniel says**

Let me preface this review by saying that I befriended the author, Heather Rigney, whilst I was reading Joe Hill's debut novel, Heart-Shaped Box. I probably (read: I know I did) complained how my I was not liking it. Heather was just starting to read it as well, and it resulted in an ad-hoc buddy read cum support system. We supported each other through Heart-Shaped Box as we bitched and moaned (I bitched, Rigney moaned) about Hill and his cliches, poor characterization, and razor thin plotting. So, when Waking the Merrow came out, Rigney sent me a copy of her book, and I was thrilled to receive it.

So, as debut novels go, even the aforementioned Mr. Hill gets the benefit of the doubt as the novelist is honing his/her craft, finding their voice, what have you. I mean even James Ellroy was barely readable early on and I love his later work. Having said that, Waking the Merrow was a far better debut novel than Heart-Shaped Box.

Oh, by the way, I started to read this book as I started to Stephen King's latest novel, Mr. Mercedes. Rigney and the King clan were just destined to be joined at the hip, I reckon.

The story of killer Merrow, aka Mermaids, and a drunken misanthropic heroine who wages a battle against them to save her family was an engaging one. The story is told in a first-person narrative from the perspective of Evie McFagan, a drunken, foul-mouthed poor excuse for a mother and wife. Right away we realize that this is an unreliable narrator. The book flashes back in alternating chapters, told in the third person, to provide a historical context to story of the merrow/human relationship (think food chain). To write a debut novel is quite a feat, but to do so using two voices, one of which is an unreliable narrator is something else. That the story flows easily given a complex structure is an accomplishment.

Did I mention this is no Disney's The Little Mermaid? The mermaids featured here are of the violent, man-eating sort.

The book is intended to the first of series, so any notion I had that parts of the story could have benefited from further development have to be suspended until the next installment is published.

I will give this book a solid 3.5 stars, rounded up to 4 stars.

What happened to my reading of Mr. Mercedes, you ask? Well, I had to set that aside as it didn't capture my attention as much as Waking the Merrow did. Sorry, Mr. King. I am sure you too have a promising future in writing horror/fantasy novels.

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## **Tiffany Holme says**

Dark & Different...

I really had no idea what I was getting into when I started this book. I did not read the synopsis, nor did I judge it by its cover (although I really like the cover). What I did know is that it came highly recommended. What I got was one hell of a shock when I started reading. There is Mermaids and lore woven into this read, but it is not primarily a mermaid book. The author took this unique and amusing idea and twisted into a story that I found myself with odds with at times, and yet I could not turn away. I chalk this up to the authors talent to spin an honest to goodness dark and mysterious read.

The author deserves a lot of credit for excellent pacing and a knack for keeping things interesting. The characters were different but they fit right in and it was nice not having a main character that was perfect with few faults, but one that had faults and within them the determination to get things done. I also should

mention, there was not a single swoon worthy guy waiting at the edge of the pages getting ready to save the day. This in itself made it a huge difference from anything I have picked up before. It's the type of book that between it's pacing and Rigney's writing that you will find yourself at odds with putting it down, not because things are perfect but because you want to see how the main character makes out.

Evie, was really something else. When we first met her my jaw about fell off dropping. Her language, her self image, her parenting and her drinking floored me. She is not a typical character by any standards or means. The honest part of me wants to tell you that she was a horrible human being, but then she really wasn't. She did drink a fair amount but when it came down to it, she was not taking any crap laying down. A Mermaid trying to mess up her life... Well, HELL NO!! She did not care if the woman/mermaid was murderous, she was a force of her own and would not back down. Evie was flawed and filled with snark but when it came down to it her heart was absolutely in the right place.

There is no real romance in this book. Instead what you will find is a strained and real feeling marriage. This is a book that makes you think twice about what perfect is, and make you consider that everyone's type of happiness is different. Her husband was not a Greek god but she appreciated him and his flaws. However, it drove me crazy when her husband lied or withheld information from her and her bitch of a mother in-law treated her like less than garbage. Her husband keeping things from her and banding up with his mom to do so at times, made me want to scream. No Evie is not perfect but he should have been honest and not treated her as if she were crazy. But she still loved him and I found it easy to appreciate what they did have when things were going down.

The brave steps that this author took in making this book stand out worked for me. With the unique plot, good pacing and wonderful writing, Heather Rigney has me hooked. The hesitation that I felt towards the start of the book dissipated, once I accepted how wonderfully different the book is. The Mermaids in it are different and I appreciated the deviation from the norm. It isn't that there isn't man eating Mermaids out there, but more that these ones are even an abnormality from normal in their world. I have to say congratulations to Heather Rigney on a wonderful début novel and I look forward to the next book of her that I can get my hands on.

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## **Suzy Turner says**

WOW... I mean, seriously WOW. I could not put this book down – even though at times it:

1. scared the living daylights out of me
2. has probably made me even more ocean-phobic (and swimming pool phobic, for that matter) than I already am
3. made me cry
4. made me laugh out loud
5. almost made me wet my pants (through both fear and laughter)

I just loved the fact that the lead character was so flawed - overweight with a bit of a drink problem and speaks the kind of language that makes the air turn blue. But she is just so likeable. In fact, she's just like you and me. An everyday thirty-something woman who just happens to witnesses something so terrifying that it leads her even further down her scary path. There were moments of sheer genius that literally made me spit out my tea / wine (depending on whether I was reading morning or night!) while I choked on my laughter. I usually try and find something critical to say about the writing or the story itself, but I can honestly say there is not a single negative thing I can offer about Waking the Merrow. It's an absolutely brilliant novel and I can't wait for the next book by this truly amazing author.

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## **John Brownstone says**

We have all heard tales of mermaids, the mythical creatures of great beauty that are half human, half fish that have entranced seafarers and children alike for centuries.

Forget all those tales of those beings that have such beauty and grace

What if by being half human the mer-folk also had some of the worst traits of humanity. Vicious evil creatures that prey upon humanity with impunity. Heather Rigney has woven just such a tale. In the essence of Stephen King and Clive Barker who are Ms. Rigney's inspiration she manages to thrill and scare with the best of them

I was hooked from the very first page and while I was scared at times I also couldn't wait to turn the page and find out what happened next. Written as a historical thriller the book does not disappoint at all. Spanning from the 1700's to the current day a tale that chills to the bone unfolds, a family that becomes intertwined with the merrow and how their future generations pay the price.

The characters she weaves are believable and full of angst bearing the frailties of our modern day life yet they still manage to find that spark within to stand up for what they love and believe in.

Well written giving a full back ground of the merrow and who they are, the book goes back and forth between the beginning of how they became entwined with the land dwellers to the modern day terror they instill.

A must read for any lovers of this genre of writing and I look forward to the future installments of this story.

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## **Kelly Kittel says**

I loved this book and read it in two or three nights. In fact, I stayed up way too late last night to finish it and am thankful we have a snow day today to recover! The setting is right here in my back yard in the waters in which I swim where evil mermaids, aka merrow, are wreaking havoc on the protagonist and her family as, it turns out, they've been doing for centuries. Being part fish, myself, I've always loved tails of the sea and of selkies and the like so I loved the folklore and the premise and the story swam right along.

Coincidentally, I also happened to read a NYT essay called, "A Brisk Swim Across Martha's Vineyard" in which the author reminds, "If you are an open-water swimmer, the sport also demands a particular kind of mental discipline, one in which you must simultaneously indulge your imagination while also asserting control over it. The fear and exhaustion of swimming in the ocean is not struggling against the currents or tide, but the effort it takes to not notice how dark the water beneath you has become, and then, failing that, to assure yourself that it's only the shadow of a cloud scudding above you. Nowhere but in the sea are you so ceaselessly reminded that something you love so much doesn't care about you at all."

Well, I am, indeed, an open water swimmer and I fear I will be thinking of these merrow and their sharp fangs as I swim along in the future. Maybe, with any luck, I'll see the beautiful mermen instead. I love the idea of a Watcher like Ronan out there keeping us all safe from harm.

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