

# DAUGHTER OF THE WIND

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## -LOGLINE-

Romantic Drama  
105 pages  
A Very Long Engagement/Malena

When war comes to a small island in the Mediterranean a young artist struggles to protect his wife from the obsession of a U-Boat captain who longs to find a home beneath the sea.

## -SHORT SYNOPSIS-

It's 1943 and Manuel is on the run from the Germans. His tales of sea monsters and cities beneath the sea are haunting Otto the captain of a U-Boat who picked him up in the Mediterranean waters around his island of Pantelleria.

Years earlier Manuel had married a stranger he encounters on the rocks near his potter's studio. Contrary to the suspicions of the villagers his and Monica's marriage is joyous until the death of their young daughter.

Distraught but having to relay the news, he finds Monica bathing in the natural springs. He watches her, sees something below the surface ... Monica's legs have been replaced by a scaly tail.

He tries to follow his wife, into her magnificent home below the sea that he is found floating and half dead.

The U Boat captain is deployed to the Battle Of Lampedusa but he mutinies and heads towards Pantelleria which is being bombarded by sea and air, leading us to the fated meeting of Manuel, Monica and Otto.

Are these men blinded by love, desperate to conquer nature, or perhaps simply wanting to discover somewhere they belong in a world torn apart by hatred?

## -SYNOPSIS-

It's bitter cold and foggy in February 1943 in Venice. The hardships of war mean that the traditional Carnival celebrations have been cancelled, but still masked revellers throng the streets desperate for gaiety and to be lost in another more opulent era. In the midst of this a ill-kempt man with haunted eyes is frog marched by two burly sailors along the 'fondamente'. Pushing their way through the crowds, suddenly the colours and noise fade away.

One single bomb is falling through the sky, through the layers of fog.

It detonates.

In another part of Italy, the Captain is reporting that the guards who were escorting the prisoner were killed in the blast, but that it appears the prisoner, Manuel, has escaped. It seems that the man has many lives, as they had caught him in the middle of the Mediterranean attached to the U-boat as it surfaced.

In the Santa Croce district of Venice in a dark osteria the man with the haunted eyes is crouched over a table with Giovanni an old friend and 'business' associate. Manuel's story unfolds.

He was born on Pantelleria, an Italian island in the Mediterranean, closer to the shore of Africa than Sicily. Like many others, his family are a family of fishermen but even as a child he realizes he's different.

He has a great imagination and he spends hours listening to the tales of the sailors, traders and fisherfolk about sea monsters and creatures who inhabit the deep. He grows up to be a potter. His studio, perched on a hill overlooking the sea, resembles a grotto.

When war breaks out it seems at first that his life and his island will remain distant from the destruction and strife. A few refugees show up but life continues in synch with the rhythms of nature.

Scrambling over the rocks on day Manuel encounters a young woman. She's singing, he watches her, each moment becoming more and more enraptured. She spies him too, and it seems that for her it is also love at first sight. Manuel marries the stranger and contrary to the villagers' suspicions it seems that they are joyously happy, and lead a contented life.

Tragedy strikes though when their only child dies falling into one of the fissures in the island. It is as if the island has swallowed up the love of Manuel and Monica. Monica has always insisted that she has one day per week alone. Manuel, a man wanting to make his wife happy has always agreed, without question. But on the day of their child's death he tracks his wife down and finds her bathing in Gadir, one of the natural springs on the island. As he spots her alone, splashing and singing ... he sees her silhouette.

It seems that her legs have been replaced by a long scaly tail.

She turns and notices him. Their eyes locked, she senses that he only has terrible news. He moves down the cliffs towards her and she slides effortlessly into the sea., away from him.

He runs to the tiny boats moored and steals one. He can see her tail cutting through the waves, the salt of his tears melding with the brine of the water.

Suddenly the colours and the sounds fade out. A wild wind blows and a huge wave capsizes the boat. He loses sight of his island and sinks below the sea.

Once again the light changes and he finds himself entering what seems to be a magnificent palace. He sees his wife, the mermaid entering within.

The next thing he is being shaken awake. It seems he's a prisoner on a German U Boat. He's been telling his story to the disbelief of his interrogators.

Otto, the U Boat captain can't sleep. He contacts his superiors and asks permission to investigate Manuel and his story. Otto is reprimanded and permission denied.

In the osteria Manuel pleads with Giovanni to help him escape Venice. Giovanni laughs. He's not going anywhere. With his boat, his black market business is thriving.

Suddenly the fascist police burst in hunting for Giovanni. The two men brawl with the police but escape and head to the boat. They set sail.

Otto gets wind of the escape. He asks permission to be given responsibility to track them down and bring them both back. His request is denied as he and his U Boat are to be deployed on a critical mission in the straits around Lampedusa.

In Pantelleria, Monica waits for her husband to return, even though the villagers say he's either abandoned her or dead. Pantelleria has fallen in the hands of the Americans, after a devastating bombing raid. Only a small platoon of five Nazi soldiers remain on the island.

The German soldiers have commandeered Manuel and Monica's home. They have destroyed his studio and his ceramics. They eat his food, drink his wine and court his wife, revelling in their boorish ways.

Monica is wily. She slowly pits them against each other. All the time longing for her husband to return. She tries to sing, but no sounds will come out.

Manuel and Giovanni heading south find themselves stuck in the middle of a battle between submarines and U-boats. Their boat is destroyed and they are about to be rescued and taken aboard a U-Boat.

Suddenly the light changes and sparkle. It's a glittering aquamarine.

A sinewy sea creature evolves from the waves. As if the tales from Manuel's youth are coming to life, the creature tows the Italians away from the U-Boat, to safety. Otto, is a skilled sailor too and tries to follow in their wake.

He chases but eventually loses them.

Giovanni and Manuel are on an islet, seemingly not on any maps. It's a land of plenty, populated by hedonists who ply the men with intoxicants to soothe their ravaged bodies and minds.

Giovanni is ecstatic. Manuel is agitated, but slowly is seduced by the pace of life and the beauty that surrounds him.

Monica is fighting for her life. One of the Nazi soldier has pinned her to the kitchen floor and is trying to rape her. She wounds him and runs to the cliffs. Just as it seems she's going to throw herself into the roiling wintery ocean she starts to sing.

Manuel wakes from his stupor. He admonishes Giovanni and tells them they have to leave immediately. Giovanni refuses to leave his island paradise. Desperate, Manuel convinces Giovanni and they set sail.

They moor their boat at Gadir and find some way to disguise themselves and then climb up to Manuel's house. He is devastated to see the wreckage and to see his wife treated as a slave. The villagers ignore her, and consider her a 'foreigner' and a traitor. They taunt her about driving Manuel off the island to his death.

Manuel follows her. He sees her sadness, he wants to be with her so much, for it to be as it was, but he realizes that he will never know her completely. For the tiniest moment, he hesitates. He wonders if he can save her, and what their life together could be from now on.

In his hesitation he hasn't noticed Otto, the U-Boat captain. Giovanni approaches. He attacks Otto, but Otto overpowers him and kills him. Manuel tries to escape but Otto demands that he take him to meet his wife, his lorelei. If he refuses he will kill him.

The two men search for Monica. They scour all her favourite places from the Lake of Venus to the caves of Sataria. They eventually make their way to Gadir. Here Manuel spots her edging her way over the rocks. Her beautiful body revealed by the swimming costume she's wearing. He runs to her and with the sun in her eyes she can't make out who it is. All she can see is the silhouette of two men and one is wearing German military uniform.

She panics. She dives into the water .... her swimming costume left on the rocks .... her tail propelling her away from the island.

Suddenly the lights change and the colours fade. She looks back over at the rocks, and she sees that the two men have moved closer to the sea. One of the men is holding her clothes. He is crying. He is her husband.

Their eyes lock. For one moment we think she is going to swim towards the shore and return to him.

But then she averts her eyes and Manuel realizes that she has to go. She has to be true to who she is.

Otto is transfixed by the vision of the woman with the tail. This is why he has not been able to sleep. He is a man possessed. He has lived all his life on the sea, and under it too. He needs to know where this magnificent palace they inhabit is. He dives into the water, but she is gone.

Manuel returns to his home where it seems the Nazis have been killed, seemingly by their own hands, or poisoned.

He touches the pots and pans, still warm from the touch of his wife. He goes into his child's room, looks around, and moves to his studio. He sighs at the destruction. And closes the door.

The light changes. The colours fade and Otto barely below the surface of the sea, spots something bejewelled below him. He tries to dive deep. He can't go deep enough. He tries again. And again.

Then he is swimming closer to the magnificent palace. He can hear the singing of the mermaids. He eagerly opens the door to the palace, and there is a flash of blinding white.

The gnarled fingers of an old man hold a paint brush as he deftly paints onto a jug a refined image of a sea nymph.

He smiles and we see it's Manuel in his studio surrounded by bemused tourists of all nationalities as he tells them that that they did find the U Boat captain's body, sometime later. It was washed up on the western shore of Lampedusa.

And yes, Monica still loves to swim ... infact they can prob. see her out there close to the horizon, playing in the waves, just as she did when they first met.