



**[A Song Below Water](#) by Bethany C. Morrow**

Tor Teen, an imprint of Tor Publishing Group, 2020

ISBN:9781250315335 (Trade Paperback)

\*Age Range: 13-18 (Suggested by Publisher)

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

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Bethany C. Morrow's *A Song Below Water* is the story for today's readers — a captivating modern fantasy about Black sirens, friendship, and self-discovery set against the challenges of today's racism and sexism.

In a society determined to keep her under lock and key, Tavia must hide her siren powers.

Meanwhile, Effie is fighting her own family struggles, pitted against literal demons from her past. Together, these best friends must navigate through the perils of high school's junior year.

But everything changes in the aftermath of a siren murder trial that rocks the nation, and Tavia accidentally lets out her magical voice at the worst possible moment.

Soon, nothing in Portland, Oregon, seems safe. To save themselves from drowning, it's only Tavia and Effie's unbreakable sisterhood that proves to be the strongest magic of all.

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

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"Morrow expertly and smartly explores race, bigotry, oppression, and injustice against a backdrop of ordinary life with a dose of the supernatural added to the mix. *A Song Below Water* is a must-read for lovers of fantasy and contemporary stories alike."—[Booklist, starred review](#)

"Morrow has deftly woven a contemporary tale with mythical elements to take on the invisibility and marginalization of Black women, touching on issues such as misogynoir, body image, social justice, and generational trauma. Empowering and innovative. Morrow elevates mermaids and sirens to legitimate and compelling vanguards for social change."—[School Library Journal](#)

"From sirens to mermaids to sprites and gargoyles, the magic is familiar — but different enough to be exciting. Morrow... tackles anti-blackness and white supremacy head-on, while still giving Tavia and Effie the space to be realistic, flawed teenagers. In this magic-infused version of America, having a voice is literally a superpower — a powerful message for the times we're living in."—*NPR*

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"An exciting new contemporary fantasy. In this parallel world, black female empowerment is standing up for yourself and others while simultaneously navigating love, physical and emotional violence, and the responsibility of immense supernatural power." — [Kirkus Reviews](#)

"It's beautiful and it's brilliant." — *PBS*

"A watery and melodic crossroads of the real and the mythic, *A Song Below Water* lures readers with its seductive and beautifully black siren song. An enthralling tale of black girl magic and searing social commentary ready to rattle the bones." — Dhonielle Clayton, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Belles* series

"I love this book so, so much! Bethany C. Morrow delivers a blistering modern classic with this gorgeous tale of friendship and power. *A Song Below Water* somehow manages to be intensely happy and sad at the same time and all in the balance of great, riveting storytelling. The best YA novel I've read all year." — Daniel José Older, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Shadowshaper*

"Morrow masterfully blends the real lives of Black girls in contemporary Portland with a mythic world of sirens, gargoyles and other supernatural creatures to create a compelling coming-of-age story in which two sisters, bound by love and fate, find their voices and their power." — Rebecca Roanhorse, Hugo, Nebula and John W. Campbell Award Winner, author of *Trail of Lightning* and *Star Wars: Resistance Reborn*

"Delving into misogynoir, mythology, and the importance of friendship, this remarkable work cements Morrow's status as a literary master." — *Buzzfeed*, *Best YA Speculative Fiction of 2020*

"Empowering and full of surprises, *A Song Below Water* reminds us how important it is to use our voices, even when we're afraid. Morrow has created a world that's both familiar and brimming with fantastical creatures, and the result is timely, necessary, and utterly captivating." — Akemi Dawn Bowman, award-winning author of *Starfish*

"A rich, intricate dive into mythology, misogynoir, and the way the world makes black girls out to be monsters. Like the siren's song, *A Song Below Water* is irresistibly compelling." — Heidi Heilig, award-winning author of *The Girl from Everywhere*

"The world is lush and intense, the voice intoxicating, and the message eternal. Morrow will have you under her spell from page one." — L.L. McKinney, author of the *Nightmare-Verse* series

"A compelling tale packed with endlessly inventive magical concepts, blazingly current social commentary, and heroines you'll fall hopelessly in love with. I'm obsessed." — Sarah Kuhn, author of *Heroine Complex* series

"*A Song Below Water* is a lush, colorful, and deeply moving masterpiece about mythology, the sometimes masked evils of racism, and all the ways the world hurts black girls. An irresistible and perfectly bewitching read that I couldn't put down!" — Jay Coles, composer and author of *Tyler Johnson Was Here*

"*A Song Below Water* is a captivating tale about the magic of sisterhood and the importance of being seen for who you truly are." — Parker Peevyhouse, author of *The Echo Room*

"You will want to cheer." — *Locus*

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"A complex, layered, culturally relevant fantasy." —*BookBub*

"Delving into misogyny, mythology, and the importance of friendship, this remarkable work cements Morrow's status as a literary master." —*Buzzfeed*, Best YA Speculative Fiction of 2020

"BLACK. MERMAIDS. That's it. That's the tweet." —*Electric Literature*

"*A Song Below Water* showed me that there will be times when life feels out of control, but those times don't last forever. And sometimes the unknown can be transformed into beauty that can change the world." —[Lightspeed](#)

"An intriguing combination of contemporary themes and genre sensibilities." —*Den of Geek*

"A charming and fierce read, an ode to the bonds of friendship and an indictment of the world around them—and the world around us." —*Bookriot*

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

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- Nautilus Book Award - Gold
- Locus Awards - Nominee
- NPR Best Book of the Year

## MEDIA AND RESOURCES

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- [PBS Newshour - Summer reading lists for young people at a time of crisis](#)
- [Story Punks author interview](#)
- [WBUR Here and Now: "'A Song Below Water' Uses Magic To Talk About The Dilemmas Black Girls Face In America"](#)
- [USA Today: "100 Black novelists you should read"](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books Q&A](#)
- [Kick-butt Kidlit author interview](#)

## \*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

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A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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