

The Siren

Kiera Cass

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One fateful night, to save herself from drowning, Kahlen accepts the Ocean's offer to become a Siren. For the next hundred years, she is expected to faithfully serve the Ocean, using her lethal voice to lure humans to their deaths and feed Her. The balance of the world hinges on this job, so if she makes a mistake, Kahlen may be subject to severe punishment or even immediate death. If she completes this service successfully, her memories will be wiped and she'll become a normal human again.

During her service, Kahlen lives with her sister Sirens, who enjoy mingling with humans despite having to remain silent. They relocate every so often to avoid suspicion about their true identities. Unlike her sisters, though, Kahlen rarely leaves their house. She struggles with grief and loneliness, a result of the intense guilt she suffers from murdering people. Although these feelings complicate her relationship with the Ocean, Kahlen has still become one of the Ocean's most beloved Sirens through her unwavering devotion and kindness. For decades, Kahlen copes with her sadness alone, and carries out her job dutifully—until one day, she meets Akinli: a college boy who shows interest in more than just her beauty. As Kahlen begins to fall deeper for Akinli, she becomes afraid of her own emotions. Spending time with him allows her to forget her own guilt, but it also endangers her and her sisters; Sirens are forbidden from developing long-term romantic relationships. Consequently, Kahlen becomes determined to hide Akinli from the Ocean and her sisters, refusing to allow herself to meet him too often, if at all. As her guilt from murder and misery from separation develop into a worsening depression, she drifts from her family and becomes sick. How will she repair her relationships and her health, while maintaining the secrecy that protects Akinli and herself?

At first glance, *The Siren* by Kiera Cass may seem like a typical romance, but it actually revolves around much deeper themes. Although Akinli and Kahlen's relationship pushes the story along, its development is definitely not the core focus of the book. In fact, there's very little substance to their love. Rather, the conflicts that arise from this relationship are the main substance of Kahlen's story: conflicts within herself and among her family. Kahlen's one dream has always been to fall in love and get married, which she originally intended to pursue after she finishes her service. However, her feelings for Akinli lead her to wonder if she can pursue this dream while she's still a Siren, or if it's even worth pursuing this dream once she's a human, if it's not with Akinli. Then, without this dream, she wonders what her purpose in life truly is. As her internal turmoil develops into external dejection, her family is affected as well. Kahlen's gloominess weighs on her sisters, who desperately attempt to accommodate and comfort her, despite dealing with their own pain. More notably, the Ocean frets about Kahlen, unaware that Her restrictions are what hurt her and unable to console her. Throughout the story, the characters discover what it truly means to sacrifice for love, whether it's romantic or familial. Their selfless loyalty to each other will make you appreciate your own loved ones and resolve to support them in the same unconditional way.

The Siren by Kiera Cass is a fantastical yet realistic story about the boundless capacity of love, but uniquely for YA books, this love is not limited to only romance. You'll feel Kahlen's heartache with her and root for her happy ending, but you'll also ache with her sisters and the

Ocean. The sides in the conflict are purposely blurry; it is them against an impossible situation, not against each other. Since there are heavy themes of death, sickness, and depression, I recommend this book to teens who are looking for a break from the average love story. With a combined mythological and modern setting, you'll be immersed in Kahlen's journey as she navigates her relationships with others and herself.

Recommended Titles:

The Selection by Kierra Cass

The Betrothed by Kiera Cass

Red Queen by Victoria Aveyard

The Jewel by Amy Ewing

Wake by Amanda Hocking