

THE STORM

In the midnight blue swirling waters of the sea, a secret was hidden.

Beneath the cliffs lay wide caves and deep lagoons. Here lived Lachlan, with pale aqua eyes and red hair waving in the currents, a muscular physique and from the waist up, you could believe he was like any other agile young man. But to realise his secret, you had to see him swimming in the rippling waters, his bottom half like a fish, silver scales, fins and a tail, expertly weaving in and out of the rocks. Lachlan lived underwater and could only survive for a short while above the surface.

Nobody knew he was there, myths had grown over the years about the large unusual shaped fish, but nobody knew the truth.

Until the night of the storm, when the thunder boomed and the huge waves rolled, one on top of another. Lachlan swam to the surface, in the flashes of light he could see a boat crashing against the rocks, the sound of shouts and splintering wood, and then a piercing scream. Diving under the water he swam to the hull, rags swirled in the water, tossing and turning. Grabbing the red material in front of him, Lachlan realised there was a girl beneath. He knew he had to get her above the surface, she was a human who needed to breath. Using his tail to propel them through the water, he held her in his arms. Taking her to the cave, he gently placed her on a rock above the water, she gasped in the still night air, then spluttered,

“You saved my life.”

He sat beside her as she slept, stroking her drying golden hair and occasionally brushing her cheek. He had never seen anything so beautiful.

But she couldn't stay here, she needed to be on the land. As the sun started to rise, he took her back into the water, they swam to the shallow waters near the beach. Raising his arm as she rose to the surface, Lachlan then wiped the tears from his eyes as she disappeared forever.

Merman Reaching Up – Myrtle Florence Broome (1888 – 1978)

349 words excluding title

Bushey Museum Art Inspired Competition