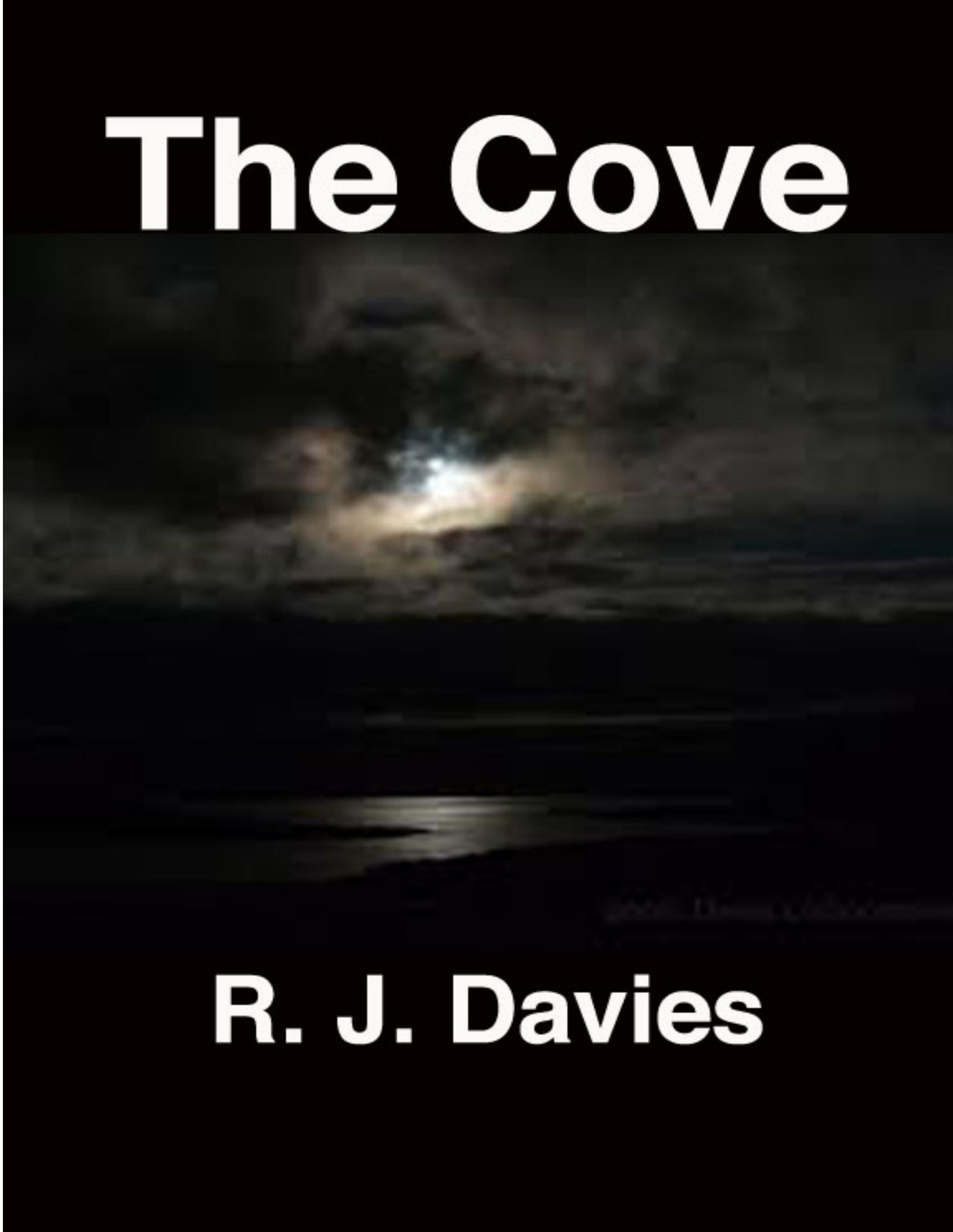


# The Cove



**R. J. Davies**

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The gentle waves rocked her in a soothing motion, as she poked her head above water. There it was. The Cove. Her father warned her to stay away. Something kept driving her to come here. She wasn't sure if it was the beast that lived in the cove that kept calling to her or if it was something else.

Since her father's disappearance, she couldn't stop coming here. On the beach in the distance she could hear them. Humans ... laughing, running on the beach in the moonlight ... playing. She could see them from where she was. She could smell them, they weren't from this area. Tourists the worse kind of humans, they didn't take any pride in this area, they just came in and took what they wanted. They didn't care about the environment.

She felt a tickle in her tummy and knew instinctively the monster was stirring. Make more noise you foolish humans, she snickered, as she watched the male human grab the female human and carry her kicking and giggling.

A grin claimed her lips as she felt the tickle again, the beast beneath was stirring. Scream some more, she coaxed silently. Splashing around a bit more the couple quieted down. Frowning she could see that the two were laying on the sand with their arms and legs entwined.

Humans ... she wrinkled her nose at the notion ... they didn't care.

The beast yawned, it felt like a cool breeze floating over the gentle waves. It was the beast. Her gills flickered with excitement. The beast has yet to disappoint her.

The foolish humans were naked and completely distracted with each other. They wouldn't see the beast coming if he hurried up. Please hurry up and get them!

The anticipation was too great! Hurry up! Hurry! Faster! She willed it.

It stretched and slowly rose its head. Briefly fear seized her as the beast looked out towards the water. Did it sense her, could it see her? Was it hungry for her kind? There wasn't that many of her kind left. Get the humans! Not me, she whined mentally.

Ducking lower into the water she tried to hide herself from the beast. Just then the beast perked up. He could smell them ... he could hear them. Soon he would be eating them. It filled her with joy ... excitement ... the game had begun.

In the moonlight she saw the beast moving under the sand slowly towards the humans. They were lost in their own little world and wouldn't have heard an army approach them. The sand bubbling up and a trail of upheaval sand laid in

the beast's wake. Ten feet away ... slowly it crept along. The beast was big, it just woke up ... the slow dragging of its body as it dug under the sand towards its prey was understandable.

Her gills prickled in the cool night air. Her heart beat faster as she held her breath and waited with wide eyes. Six feet ... it was so close.

The humans fell quiet. They no longer were making noises, they looked like there were holding each other and looking up at the stars. The beast silently crept closer ... five feet ...

She watched as one of the humans gasped and point at the sky, "ohh look a shooting star!"

"Oh wow!"

She glanced up to see a white light trailblazing across the night sky. Quickly glancing back to the beach ... four feet.

"Make a wish!"

They whispered and giggled. Three feet and then it stopped.

Don't stop! She clutched her hands together.

It moved again ... slowly ... slower than before ... it inched closer.

They giggled some more.

"We should go," one of the humans suggested.

"Go? Let's stay for a few more minutes?"

"This place is starting to give me the creeps."

"Alright."

Closer two feet ...

"Where did you throw my clothes?"

They separated one went one way and the other began walking in the opposite direction. They weren't facing each other the female was walking towards the beast ... one foot ... it let her walk pass!

Disappointed shrouded her mood ... perhaps he beast wasn't in the mood for visitors.

Then it happened so quickly her eyes widen like saucers, as she watched the beast rise up out of the sand, the grains sliding off him like water droplets rolling off a leaf. He opened his mouth wide and she was gone before she could even make a sound.

The beast sunk back into the sand. Covering up like a blanket hidden from the remaining survivor.

The other human picked up a piece of clothing and held it up for his mate.  
"Is this what you're looking for? Babes?"

He turned around and was greeted to a deserted beach.

"Carol? Carol?" he shouted frantically he ran over to the water and looked up and down, calling out her name. He didn't see the beast rise up from the sand behind him ... towering over him. The human turned around and her name ... Carol caught half way as he came face to face with the beast. It opened its mouth and the human, soon disappeared as the beast devoured him. The beast sat in the moonlight staring out across the water.

She shivered as the beast stared in her direction. Could he see her? Did he want to eat her too? Slowly she sunk under the water back into the safety of the sea. She didn't like the way he was looking at her, but she had a feeling he wasn't partial to mermaids anyways.