

# DEUS EX MARINA

*The last temptation of Sam Irving*

Living in seemingly effortless harmony, a Marin County, Calif., couple and their three children are in for a rude awakening. Is an untold truth a lie? *Mermaid Drowning* (Autumn Moon Books, 355 pages, \$14.99) is the story of a secret that shouldn't matter — but does.

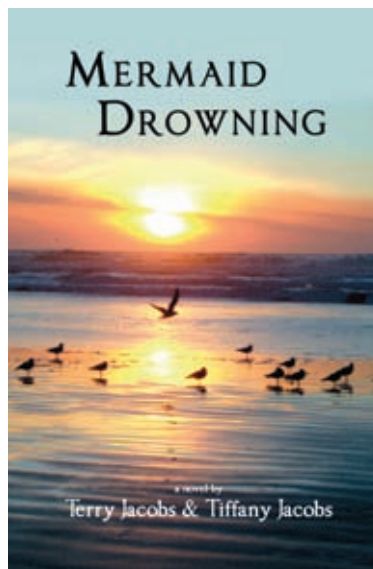
Equally sentimental and riveting, the appropriately titled novel, which could easily be the love child of Danielle Steel and Stieg Larsson, is in fact penned by Eugene husband-and-wife author team Terry and Tiffany Jacobs.

Faced with a looming divorce, Evelyn and Sam Irving go on separate tracks. As Evelyn tends to her poorly coping children (ironic given that she is a child psychologist), her husband embarks on an ill-willed journey ripe with accidental discovery of a greater truth.

Told in tandem first-person, the Irvings' perspectives deviate and overlap, occasionally giving pivotal multi-angle insights into the same events. Add to that internal monologues and you come to learn the two quite well. Occasional interruptions with poems by their daughter add sentiment, somewhat taxingly, but give you the children's perspective. For them, this is a coming-of-age story.

In Los Angeles, Sam negotiates a gauntlet of nasty archetypes representing wrong paths he could choose, something like Dickensian ghosts for Mr. Scrooge. He bites off more than he can chew as the ghosts get bigger and meaner. His final confrontation rings of the Devil himself a la Matthew 4:9: "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

A tragic heroine, Evelyn is the epitome of trauma and loss. Her past is marred by violence and her present is one



of harsh judgment. She is in need of many miracles. The Jacobses teach us, if we are to understand correctly, that God lives underwater and dolphins are angels.

Overtone of faith and frequent use of aquatic symbolism are intertwined exhaustively but adeptly as we learn of husband and wife and their interface with the meaning of life. The coastal theme and cartography of both Northern and Southern California also make for immersive reading pleasure.

Passing nonchalantly by are glimpses of the human experience that defy gender expectation and point back to a massive billboard. Placed in only the farthest outskirts of the moral majority's comfort zone, *Mermaid* is a primer on tolerance, shaking you to your core in

search of accountability for the words that some people put in God's mouth. ■

*Terry and Tiffany Jacobs will be available in the author booth at the Lane County Fair from 1 to 5 pm Friday, July 26.*

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**Come see the semi-finalists compete on the community stage at the Lane County Fair!**

## FRIDAY, JULY 26TH

- 4:00pm Scott Austin
- 4:45pm Paris Green
- 5:30pm Those Willows
- 6:15pm Tita Louisa
- 7:00pm The Crescendo Show
- 7:45pm Robert Meade
- 8:30pm Dubious
- 9:15pm The Great Hiatus

## SATURDAY, JULY 27TH

- 1:45pm Caroline Bauer
- 2:30pm Michael Conley
- 3:15pm Elena Leona
- 4:00pm Edewaard

## SUNDAY, JULY 28TH

- 1:45pm Speaker Wave
- 2:30pm Sol Seed
- 3:15pm Steel Wool
- 4:00pm Barefoot Leroy

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**Q. WHAT ARE THE NEW HOURS AND WHEN WILL THE PATIO BE OPEN?**  
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**Q. DO YOU STILL HAVE LOCAL BEER ON TAP?**  
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