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Medieval Mermaids

Alison Lopez

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Medieval Mermaids

Being studied today is how mermaids have changed over the years from medieval times to modern times and how this affects their mythology.



Mermaids have been known in the modern world as creatures who lure men to their death through songs of seduction. A good example of the most recent take of mermaids is in *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*. Mermaids didn't come about in any mythology until Melusine in the 14th century. Before mermaids were Sirens. These were seen in Greek mythology as being part bird part woman and they would use their songs to lure men to their death at sea. They were specifically seen in the *Odyssey*. Different mythologies have their own take on mermaids as well such as Russians have the Rusalki who are women cast out the night of their marriage into the sea where they are transformed into mermaids, and the Mesopotamians have Kuliltu meaning "fish woman". There are also Selkies or Seal Women from Norse and Celtic mythology. These women would have the ability to transform into seals with a seal skin that if taken the woman would have to marry the person who took their skin to get it back. Times didn't start to change for mermaids becoming a mixed mythology of Siren and Mermaid till Disney's "the Little Mermaid" and in Syria woman would use mermaid themed jewelry to symbolize "independence, freedom and rebellion".

Because of Disney's retelling of mermaids into a mythological hybrid of a siren and a mermaid, society now views mermaids as having the ability to sing and lure men to their death bringing about their "darker nature" that most people are familiar with today.



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