

Forbidden Tides and Poet Tongue

Concept Art Book

By Kyla Stan

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First Printing 2018

Introduction

Books and stories are what keep human civilization alive and creativity flowing.

As a young girl, I always enjoyed literature and writing classes, particularly those that focused on fiction. Unlike other children in my elementary grades, I excelled at reading, and there are still pictures in my parents' house of me practicing my reading/storytelling skills to our beloved family cat, Lucky (RIP sweet girl). This passion gradually turned into a hobby for creating short stories about mermaids and other undersea life made from computer paper, crayons, and stickers.



My love of writing didn't transform until I turned sixteen and had my first high school breakup. I was unable to tell anyone how I felt or how I grieved, so writing brief journal entries or dark Gothic-style poems eased my pain, —but only for a brief time. One day after a meditative shower, I had a creative vision of wolves running through a wild forest, transforming into Native American men. At that moment, I decided to write *Poet Tongue*, a werewolf paranormal romance. The first few editions were not my best work, and it was only a draft manuscript that was left in my desk drawers along with some concept art of my characters, waiting for the public eye. Shortly after, I wrote the first draft manuscript for *Forbidden Tides*. I also sketched what my characters looked like, especially the merfolk, and drew upon inspiration from my twenty-year-old Plecostomus fish (he is still alive ☺). While other teenagers preferred socializing and going to dances, I shut my bedroom door, allowing myself to escape to different worlds hidden in the pages of books, and created my own along the way.

Eager to learn more about literature and writing, I pursued a degree in communications with a minor in fiction from Farmingdale State College, but it wasn't until I was accepted into Southern New Hampshire University's English and Creative writing program that I saw my skills flourish. Along my online courses, I met some amazing professors and talented individuals that I still keep in touch with. While writing my thesis, a collection of undersea short stories featuring mermaids, sirens, salty fishermen, and dangerous creatures (does this sound familiar?) I revitalized *Forbidden Tides*, got some help from editors, gathered bits of Photoshop information, and the book was born.

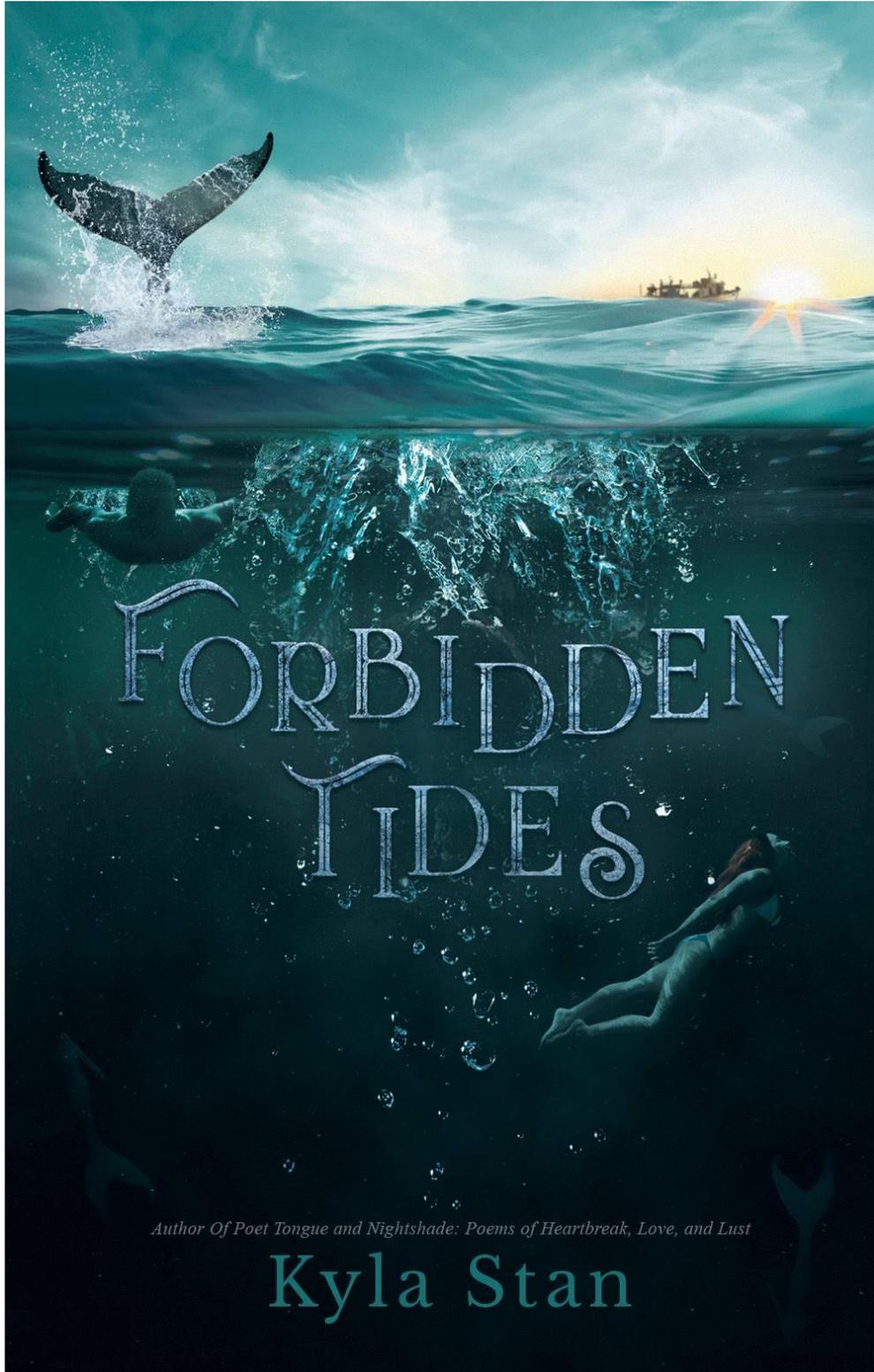
After publishing this novel, I realized that I left *Poet Tongue* in the dark, not allowing its true wolfish elements to surface. I am proud to announce that it will be re-released in October 2018, just before Halloween!



In this collection of concept art, you will see some early (and scary) drawings and sketches of the characters and ideas from *Forbidden Tides* and *Poet Tongue* with some other digital artwork added in as a bonus. I hope this inspires other young authors out there to keep pushing through and savor the novel-writing and concept art-creating process!

-Kyla

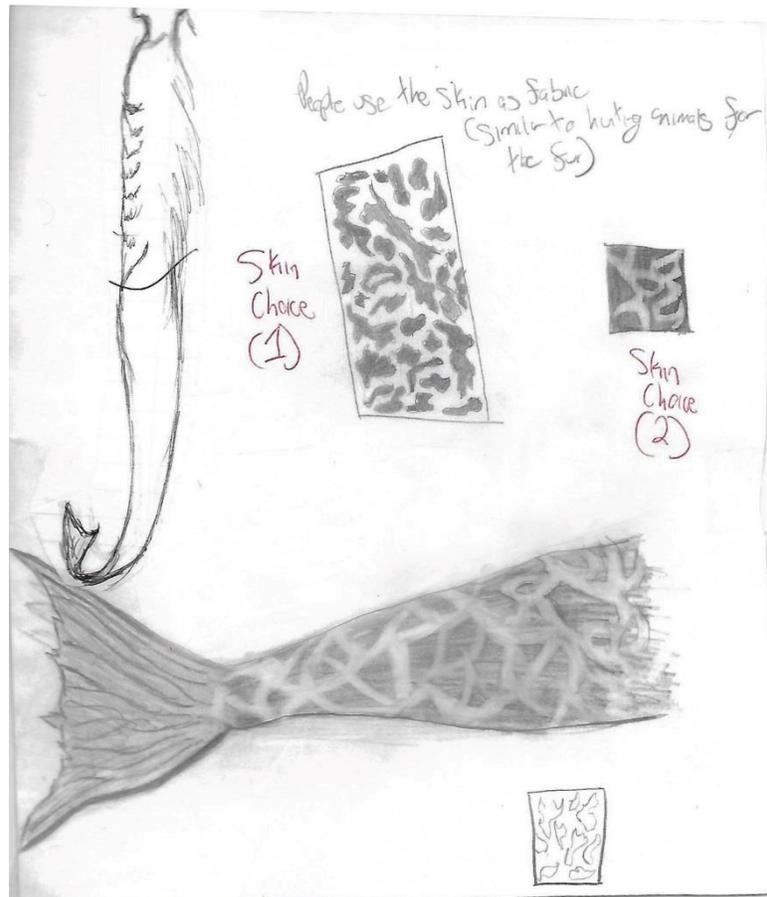
Part I: Forbidden Tides



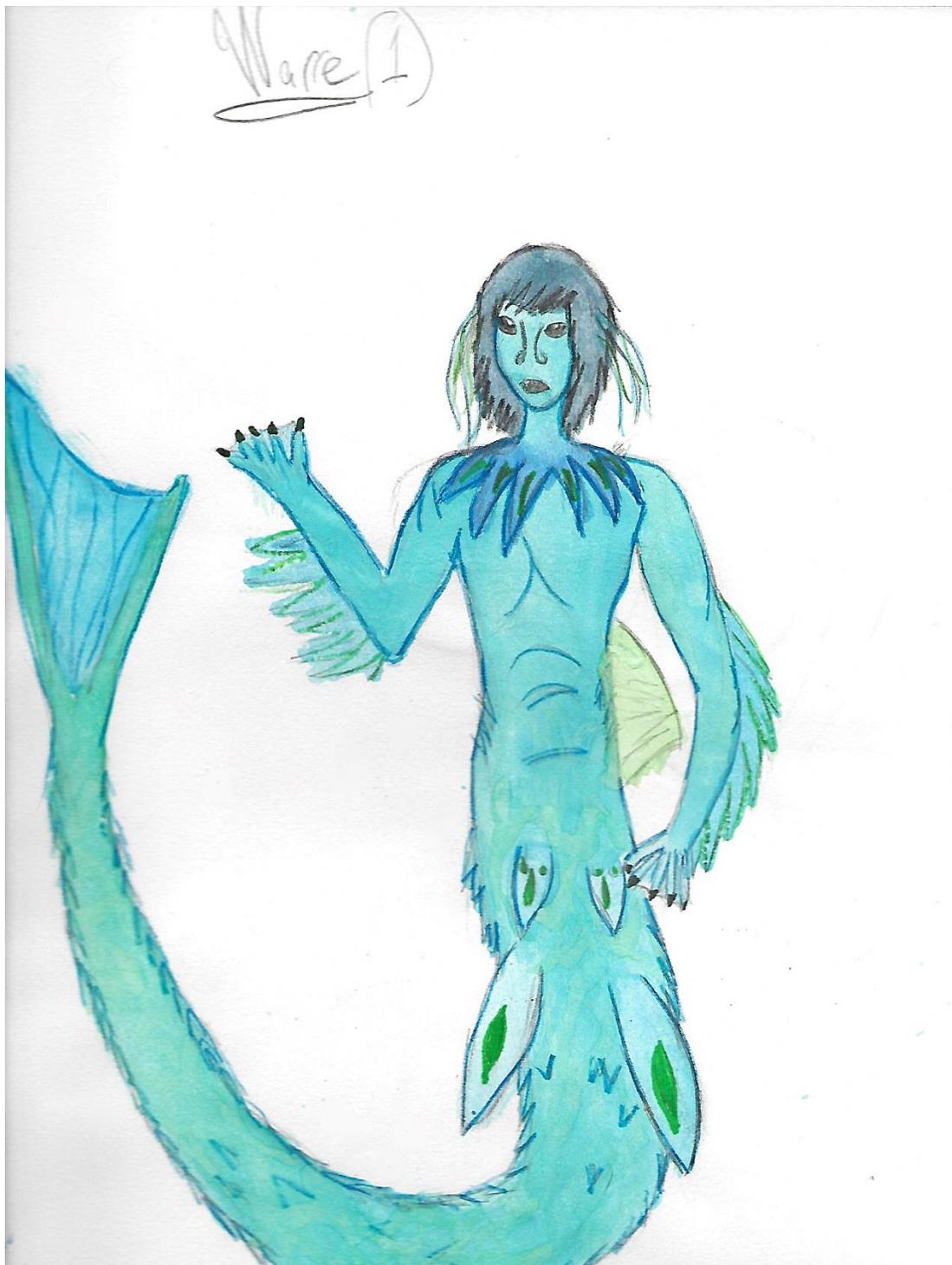
Introduction:

Zander and Astrid went through several phases of development before I was content with both their appearance and personality. Zander's first name was Warre and he looked more like the creature from *The Shape of Water* than a gorgeous merman warrior! Astrid was completely human, and her original name was Astra. Take a look at some concept art on the following pages. To purchase a copy of *Forbidden Tides* [click here!](#)

When I first began sketching my characters, I wanted them to have Plecostomus-like armor and a similar patterned skin. I was also inspired by a more natural look of tattered fins and an arching dorsal fin. Pictured below is my 20-year-old Plecostomus, Suckerfish! (I named him when I was about five, so give me a break ☺).



In the second phase of design, I wanted Zander (named Warre at the time) to be more animalistic than fairytale merman. His skin had a similar texture to anemone for catching prey, sharp claws, multiple fins, and a fish-like face as well.



In the second round of edits, Zander had longer hair, ear fins, human eyes, and a more armored tail. Notice the gills on the side of his abdomen.



With another update came more humanistic features. Zander was more flirtatious and playful, often getting his human friend into trouble. Some of the fishier features were removed.
(Sorry for the pencil smudges. I'm left-handed!)

Will you Come Out With Me Astra?



Warre (3)

This is another earlier sketch of Zander(Warre) and Astrid (Astra). Astra means “star” but just out of preference, I wanted a stronger name, so I chose Astrid. This scene was after Zander saved Astrid from her father.



The final stage of Zander! I removed some of the unpleasant fish features, like clawed hands, black eyes, and sticky anemone hair. In its place, Zander still has an armored tail and multiple fins, but also has tribal-style, squid ink tattoos to represent his status as a warrior. To make the tattoos, I first sketched them on paper, uploaded them into my computer, then added more color and detail in Photoshop. Credit for the body [here!](#)



In later revisions, I decided to write Zander having the ability to shift from Sirenia to man. This photo was used as a teaser for [my trailer](#). Same credit goes to the body stock as the previous picture.



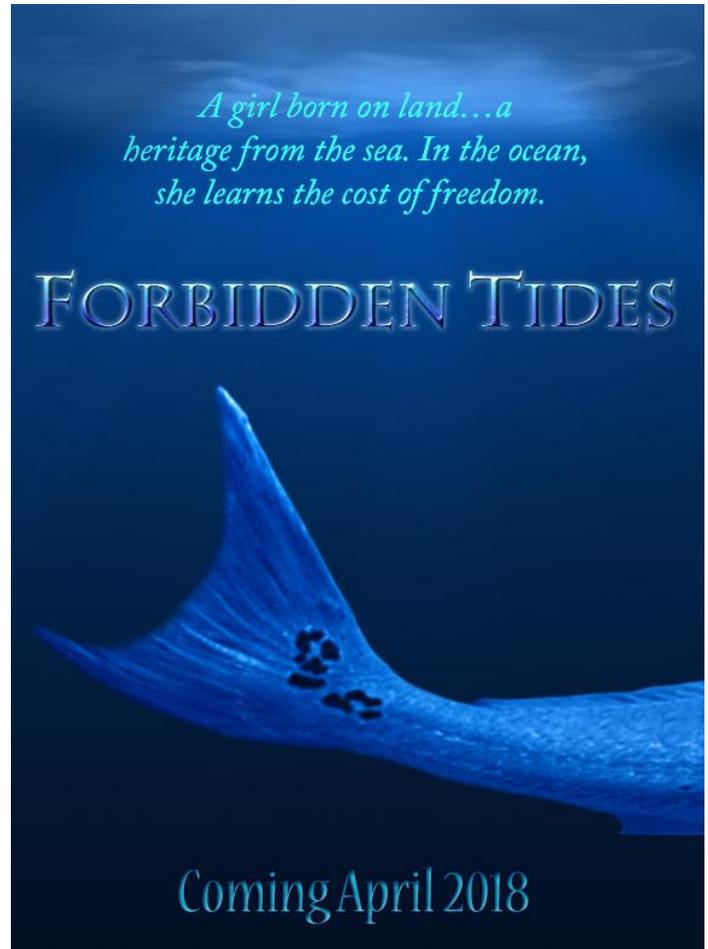
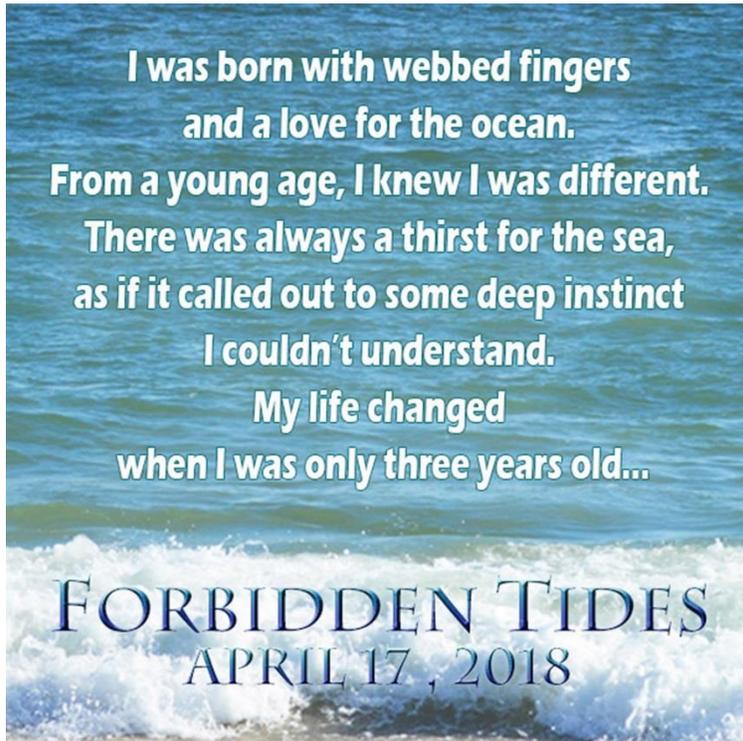
This is some concept art/ promotional art for Astrid. I found the perfect model on Deviantart. You can find her profile [here!](#) The photo of the ocean was taken by my boyfriend while we were exploring Jones Beach on Long Island during the spring.



Some digital art practice with stock photos found on various websites.



Promotional Graphics:



A promotional graphic about Zander, hinting at his rough history and Sirenia clan culture.

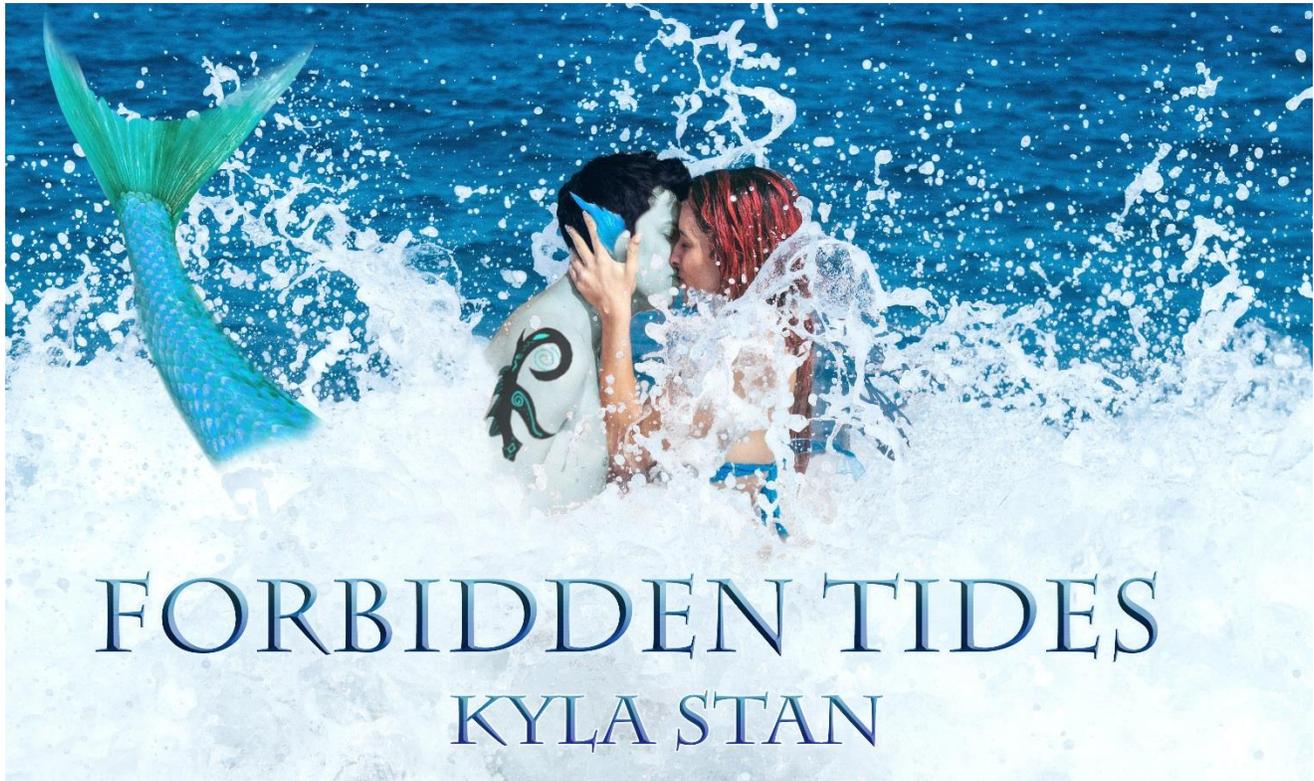
FORBIDDEN TIDES

Zander studied his black squid ink tattoos thoughtfully. Trained as he was to fight and hunt at a young age, each one marked an accomplishment and showed the other clan members that he was dutiful to his kind. He suddenly clenched his jaw when he remembered the skirmishes he had gotten himself into. Respect was something his kind didn't show easily.

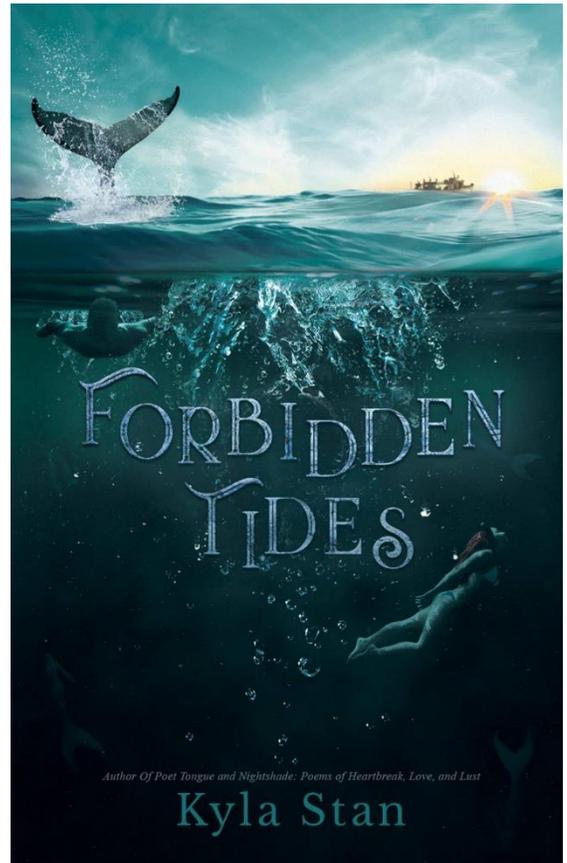
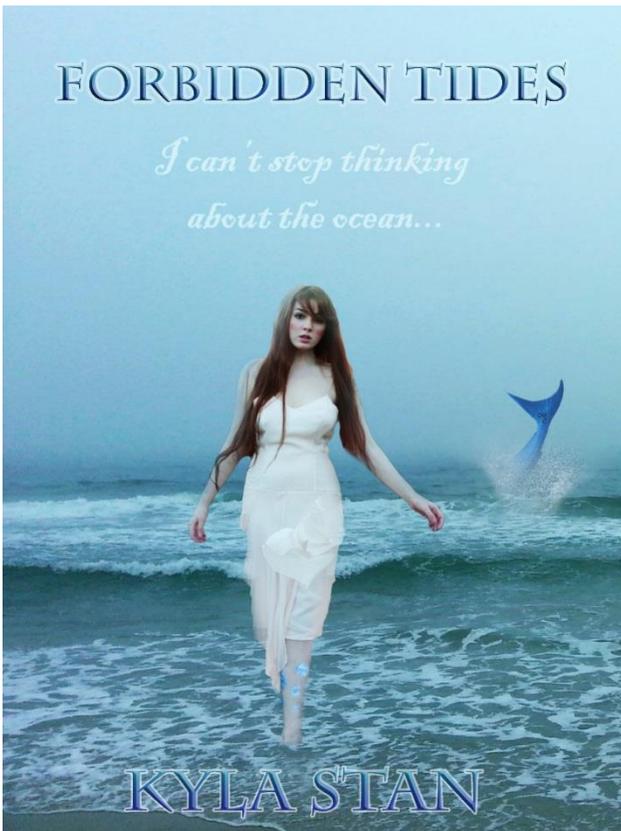
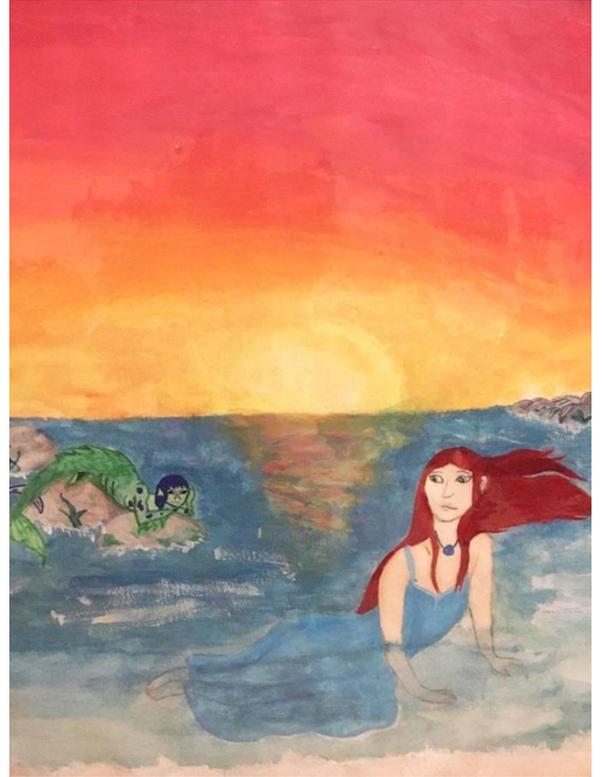


April 17, 2018

One of my favorite character photos! I used some royalty-free stock to create a romantic moment between human girl and Sirenia warrior. This piece is also available for sale in my merch store. [Click here!](#)



Evolution of the cover:
Thank you Meagan Wallace for the final cover!



For more on *Forbidden Tides*, visit my [website](#) or click [here](#) to buy the novel.

Part II: Poet Tongue

POET TONGUE



🐾 Kyla Stan 🐾

Below is the official summary of the novel:

She threw herself away – and was reborn as a white wolf with a prophecy.

Seventeen-year-old Violet Ashton likes dressing in black and listening to metal music. Her boyfriend Jake likes partying and thinks love is a joke. Trying to navigate her senior year of high school while dealing with multiple bullies is wearing Violet down. Maybe everyone would be better off if she were dead. She tries to kill herself, believing that suicide is the only way out.

Tohon, the gorgeous warrior son of a prominent Skin Walker chief, a race of beings that shapeshift into wolves, is expected to one day succeed his father and find the perfect mate to spend his life with. But Tohon breaks the ultimate Skin Walker rule: stay away from humans. When Tohon smells Violet's blood and saves her from committing suicide, he accidentally bites her, forever marking her as a wolf and awakening an ancient prophecy: Violet has the power to destroy the enemy hunting Tohon's pack – but only if she is willing to risk her life.

Leading the greatest war in Skin Walker history is only part of the problem. Violet must also face long-buried issues of trust as her feelings for Tohon become something more than she ever expected.

Is Violet a raging animal, or a gentle spirit? And can she face down the greatest enemy she has ever known in order to have the things she wants the most? True love and genuine devotion.

[Click here](#) to take a personality quiz and learn more about the characters!

[Click here](#) to visit the official *Poet Tongue* page and see a teaser trailer!

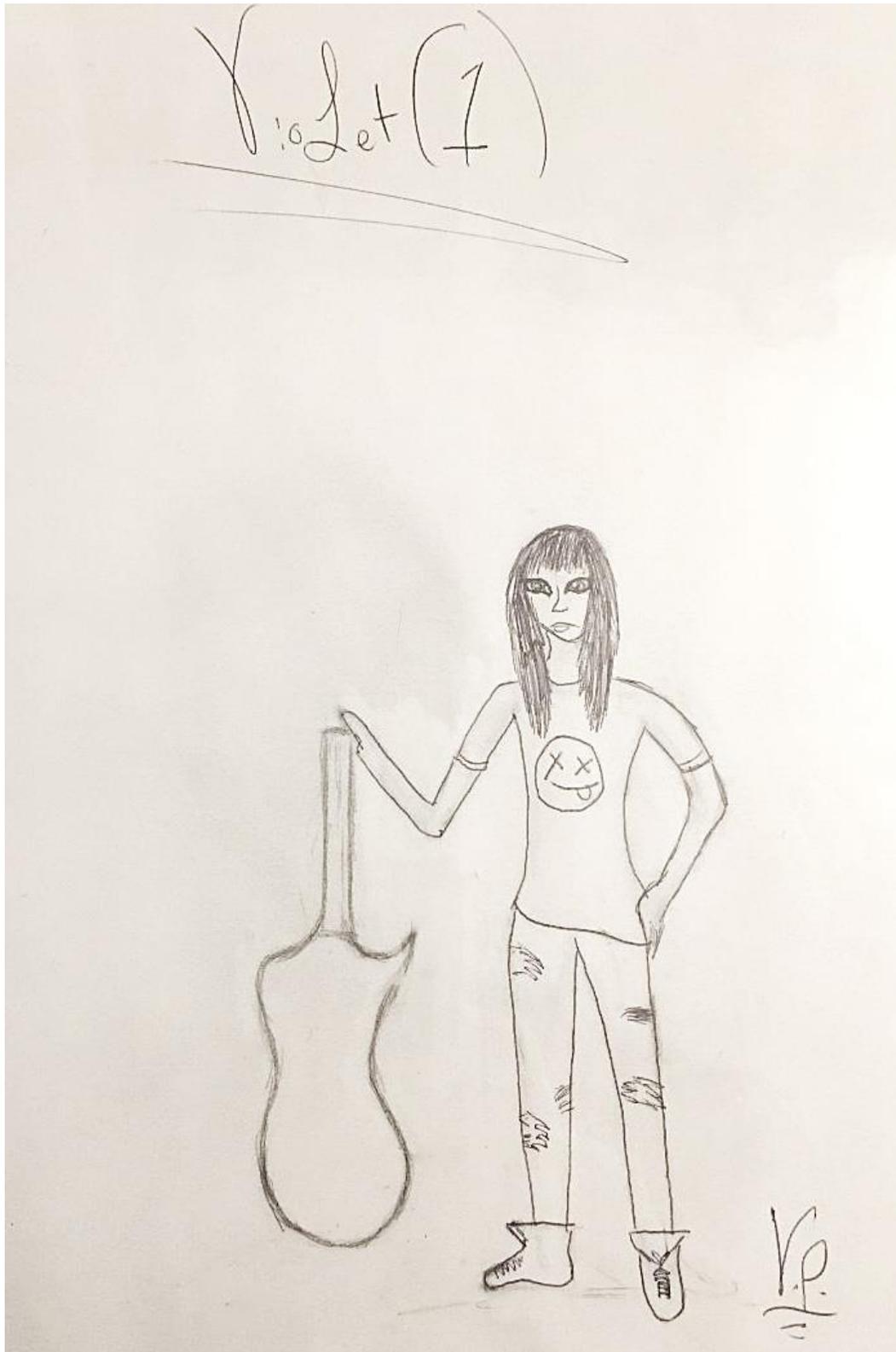
Violet Concept Art:

When I create a female character, I put a little bit of my personality into each trait. I will admit it; I was a Goth girl in high school. I couldn't get enough of skinny jeans, band t-shirts, and jewelry. Headphones were always in my ears when I had a break, but I also loved to write. As I previously mentioned in the introduction, Violet was created during a time of pain. She is literally me in high school, every emotion, thought, and feeling. When I wrote the first draft, I never sketched out a lot of concept art because all I had to do was visualize myself.

This first sketch was an idea for my werewolves. I wanted them to have clubbed tails with poisonous barbs. In this earlier concept, Violet also had a butterfly tattoo and a black mane.



This is a human sketch of Violet that shows a lot of her personality. She has short, choppy black hair, a Nirvana t shirt, ripped jeans, combat boots, thick eyeliner...and an unfinished guitar!



My final vision of Violet! This is just a stock photo and I do not own any of the content, but it is a true portrayal of not only her looks, but her inner strength. Because she is expected to lead a great war, her pack creates a headdress for her. In Native American culture, this item is awarded to those of highest ranking.

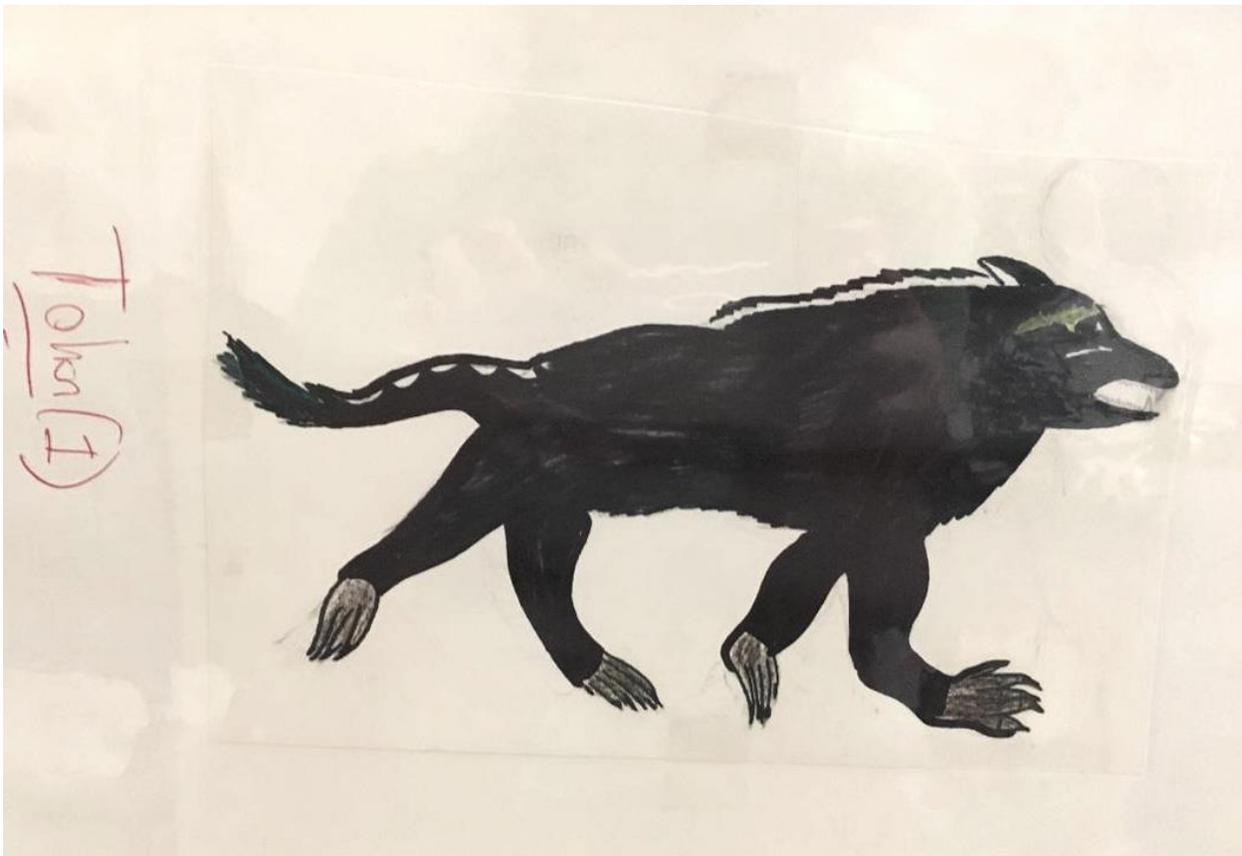
What sacrifices will come of this war?



Tohon Concept Art:

Long Island is plentiful in both Native American history and culture. Almost every town is named after a tribe, including Patchogue, Manhasset, Shinnecock, and Massapequa. I was never fortunate enough to attend a Shinnecock powwow, but I always begged my parents to take me to [Garvies Point Museum](#). Filled with history and artifacts, I became interested in Native American culture at a young age. Although the novel takes place in Washington, I primarily focused my band of wolves around the eastern Woodland tribes, especially the cultures of Long Island and Connecticut, where I took many family trips to Mystic, the Pequot Reservation, and the Mohegan Reservation.

To start, I had multiple ideas of what I wanted Tohon to look like in human form. One of the inspirations for this character was Rick Mora, a Native American model and actor. Similar to Violet's design, I wanted Tohon to have some type of poisonous barbs on his tail, and his paws were claw-like and didn't have fur. Because this sketch is old, I had to laminate it, which is why the picture appears shiny.



In the next phase of character designed, I wanted a more natural wolf for the Skin Walker's form. I removed the weird poisonous tails but kept the paws without fur. This is one of my favorite wolf drawings because of the silhouette.



I remember exactly where I drew this next set of profiles. My Nana was very sick with Parkinson's and dementia. It was hard to see her like that, so while my parents spoke to her, I tried to keep my mind occupied with sketches. Tohon is a very expressive character, mostly curious and playful, but also loyal and extremely protective of his pack.

RIP Roberta Stan. I wish you could've been here to see my success as a student, teacher, and author.



I also wanted some movement inspiration. I found a picture online of a Native American and wolf statue, so I do not claim any credit for the concept. In this version, Tohon is running with one of his pack mates and his wolf ear is sticking out through his hair!

If you find this statue, send me an email. I'd love to have it on my desk.



Tohon's Final Image:

This is stock purchased on Adobe. However, I think it fits Tohon's characterization perfectly! Deadly, dangerous, charming, and gorgeous!



The Rogues and Skin Walkers

The Skin Walkers are a type of shape shifting being that can morph from man to wolf. However, they have been cursed by one man's poor decisions. *Poet Tongue* features a blend of two types of werewolf archetypes; the classic horror werewolf and the more modern day, full wolf version.

One of my favorite video games series is the Nancy Drew mystery computer games. There are moments where you will literally jump in your favorite gaming chair. The inspiration for this piece comes from one of the scenes where Nancy discovers a glowing set of red eyes in the bushes, watching her. Check out [this link](#) to learn more!



This is another image based off the Nancy Drew game mentioned on the previous page. This particular game focused on Lycanthropy, or the process of shifting from man to beast. There was a clue in one of the rooms that showed a book on this process, and this image always gave me chills. I tried to re-create the image to practice some werewolf drawing skills.



This is my most recent werewolf drawing from 2014. If you love werewolves who bite back and enjoy the taste of blood, then you will enjoy the Rogues in *Poet Tongue*.



Additional Promo Graphics:



You are a gift



From the Creator

Poet Tongue

October 2018 - by Kyla Stan

Learn more about the characters in *Poet Tongue*- take the personality quiz [here!](#) To see the teaser trailer, [click here!](#)

Author Biography:

Ever since she was a child, Kyla Stan enjoyed creating fantasy stories. In fact, she has a notebook from when she was a child filled with stories that are being updated for a modern young adult audience. Kyla knew at a young age that being a writer was her dream, and so she pursued it at the young age of sixteen.

Kyla hopes her writing will help other people with mental illness, such as anxiety and depression. Kyla also wants people to be aware of environmental issues, some of which are reflected in *Forbidden Tides* and her first self-published book about werewolves titled, *Poet Tongue*. She has a degree in communications, and a master's in English and creative writing. Her dream is to become an English professor and inspire others to write.

Kyla loves animals, and lives with her cat Chippy, a seventeen-year old plecostomus named Suckerfish, two adorable gluttonous goldfish; Lucky and Chance, and nine frogs; Fudge, Gordita, Milagros, Spot, Little Froggie, Prince, Tiger, Sirena, and Celeste. When she isn't writing, Kyla loves to watch baking competitions, play video games, and create various forms of artwork.

Thank you for checking out my concept art and for your continuous support. I look forward to creating more amazing young adult novels for you!

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