

A Magic Cube Prequel



Adventure Under the Sea

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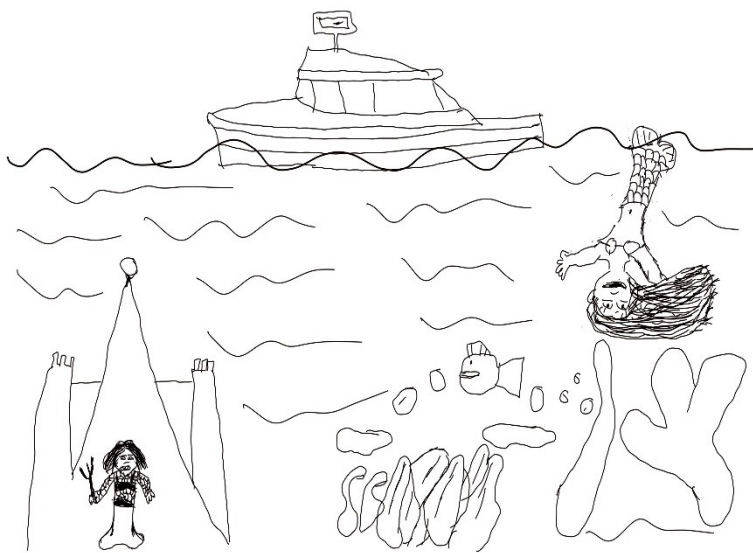
Chapter One

Something in the Water

“A fin!” fourteen-year-old Tom Jenkins called out excitedly. “Peter, come look, quick!”

Peter Watson hurried toward the side of the boat where his friend pointed. Sure enough, a single fin poked out of the water.

“Dad, come quick,” Peter called out.



“Grab the binoculars.”

Maxwell Watson appeared, binoculars already at his eyes.

“What is it?” Peter asked his dad.

“I only caught the tail end of it,” Maxwell laughed. “Sorry, a little joke there. Whatever it was, I only saw a glimpse before it disappeared below the surface.”

Maxwell, a marine biologist, adjusted the focus on the binoculars hoping the fin would resurface.

“Was it a shark?” Tom asked; tingles prickled his arms in excitement.

“It could be the Arcadia dolphins,” Peter suggested moving to check the sonar radar. “The GPS tracker doesn’t show anything. It should be sending us alerts.”

“We’re a good distance from the mating

grounds of the pod,” Maxwell scratched his beard.

“The Arcadia pod?” Tom looked from Peter to Maxwell.

“It’s one of the dolphin pods we’ve been tracking in this area,” Peter explained.

“I’m not familiar with an Arcadia species,” Tom said. He had only just begun his studies on marine life.

“It’s not a species,” Peter laughed. “Dad and I like to name all the pods we track. Shortly after we discovered this pod, a boat named *Arcadia* sailed by. The name stuck.”

“We could go down and take a look,” Maxwell suggested, still staring over the side of the boat.

“Scuba diving?” Peter asked excitedly.

Maxwell glanced down briefly, estimated

the depth. "The water is about twenty feet deep here. I suppose we could dive down and survey the area. Tom, you okay to keep watch up here?"

"You got it," Tom nodded, taking the binoculars from Maxwell.

Peter had already pulled on his wetsuit and was checking the tank. For as long as he could remember, he loved being in the water. Diving was his most favorite thing of all.

"Let's go," Peter secured the tank onto his back and took his place on the lower swimming platform.

Maxwell was just pulling his wetsuit from its hanger when Peter flipped off the boat and into the water. Maxwell rolled his eyes and began the long process of shaking his large body into the tight-fitting suit.

Peter sank below the surface, taking in the underwater landscape. Schools of yellow and blue fish swam around the clusters of pink and orange coral lining the ocean floor below him. To his right, he could see several large rocks jutting out in a jagged line. He knew from the sonar images a large drop-off lay just beyond those rocks.

Suddenly, he felt a movement behind him. Quickly, he whipped his head around, expecting to see a turtle swimming past. His eyes widened as a fin disappeared behind the rocks.

“What was that?” he thought. He had only caught a quick glimpse of what looked like a giant fishtail.

Wanting a closer look, Peter glanced up toward the boat above him. No sign of his

father yet; he knew it could take a while for Maxwell to shimmy into his wet suit. There were strict rules, set in place by his father, for swimming and diving in the ocean. These rules included never diving or swimming alone.

There it was again. Peter could make out the shape of something bobbing up and down behind the rocks. Was that a human? It looked human. Female. Where was her tank? How was she breathing?

The creature came around the rocks, and for a minute they simply stared at one another.

What in the world? A mermaid? Half-human, half fish, no, it couldn't be. Mermaids were legends, fairy tales.

The mermaid motioned toward him,



signaling him to follow her. Peter knew this was crazy; no, this was insane. Did he swallow some seawater? Why was his father taking so long?

The mermaid was swimming back around the rocks. She peeked through, motioning again for him to follow. Even though he wanted to, Peter was not allowed to swim off without a partner. If he did, he would never be allowed to dive again. Groaning in frustration, he wanted to kick himself for not bringing down the camera.

The mermaid disappeared behind the rocks. Peter punched the water with a fist and kicked angrily toward the surface, heading back to the boat. As he began to ascend, a sound tickled his ears, stopping him in his tracks.

The song, a beautiful melody, sounding like harps and waves mixed into a tune he couldn't ignore. The music felt familiar, as if he had heard it before, though he couldn't quite place it. His body began to relax, the frustration and anger melting away. His arms and legs felt like jelly, making it difficult to swim.

Turning slowly, he saw the mermaid a few feet in front of him. Her eyes burning into him. He couldn't look away; he was mesmerized. Her mouth was open as the melody poured out of her. Without realizing what was happening, Peter began to follow the mermaid, the song leading him further and further from the boat.

End Chapter One

I hope you enjoyed the first chapter of *Adventure Under the Sea*. Sign up for my newsletter today to receive a free PDF download of the entire novella. My newsletters come full of exclusive content and first looks at illustrations, cover reveals, and even excerpts from upcoming projects.

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Illustrations:

Thank you to my children for creating the illustrations in this book. I simply told them what I was looking for and they did the rest.

My illustrations are: Maddex, age 10; Mila, age 8; and Khaleesi, age 6.

Illustration Credits:

Chapter One:

Boat and sea: Maddex, Mila, and Khaleesi

Athena: Mila