

EXCERPT FROM *DESCENT (SON OF A MERMAID, BOOK ONE)*, BY KATIE O'SULLIVAN

The blue-green coolness swirled around him as his body tumbled through the water, arms and legs flailing. He struggled to hold his breath. Millions of tiny bubbles of precious air traced the path of his descent, escaping from his clothing and through his nose.

Eyes wide, he watched a huge school of shimmering minnows part down the middle as they swam around him, surrounding him like a silvery box. Turning his face upward to the surface, he could see the blue sky receding further and further while he sank deeper into the water's depths.

His throat and lungs burned from the effort of holding his breath. Darkness pressed hard against his eyes, and swirls of strange colors danced in front of him. His whole body strained against the lack of oxygen.

*I need to breathe*, he thought wildly, his whole body feeling like it was on fire. *I can't hold out much longer*. His feet hit the mucky bottom with a thud, coming to a stop. The mud swirled around his legs.

There, hovering before him in the water, swam a beautiful woman with flowing golden hair...and a green fish tail, golden flecks sparkling among the scales.

*A mermaid.*

Her big green eyes looked familiar, just like the ones he saw in the mirror every morning. She smiled at him, reaching for his hand. His head pounded while searing pain ripped through his throat, as if his entire body would tear apart any second from the effort of holding his breath.

The mermaid squeezed his hand and the pain receded. Shea stared into her eyes, lost in their green depths. He opened his mouth to exhale the stale air that pounded like a jackhammer in his lungs. Large bubbles rushed to the surface. He struggled to breathe, but there was no air, only salty ocean water rushing in to fill his mouth, his lungs, his body...

Shea woke with a start, clawing at the sheets and disoriented for a full minute before remembering where he was. At the Hansen's house. Because his own home – the farm where he'd lived and worked all his life – was gone, swept away and crushed by the freak tornado.

And his dad was nowhere to be found.