



# The Tail of Emily Windsnap

By Liz Kessler

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**A young girl learns she's half mermaid and plunges into a scheme to reunite with her father in this entrancing, satisfying tale that beckons readers far below the waves.**

For as long as she can remember, twelve-year-old Emily Windsnap has lived on a boat. And, oddly enough, for just as long, her mother has seemed anxious to keep Emily away from the water. But when Mom finally agrees to let her take swimming lessons, Emily makes a startling discovery — about her own identity, the mysterious father she's never met, and the thrilling possibilities and perils shimmering deep below the water's surface. With a sure sense of suspense and richly imaginative details, first-time author Liz Kessler lures us into a glorious undersea world where mermaids study shipwrecks at school and Neptune rules with an iron trident — an enchanting fantasy about family secrets, loyal friendship, and the convention-defying power of love.

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## The Tail of Emily Windsnap By Liz Kessler Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-6--Seventh-grader Emily Windsnap has never learned to swim, in spite of the fact that she and her mother live on a houseboat. When she finally takes a swimming class at school, her legs turn into a fishtail. She tries to hide her strange affliction, but something draws her to the sparkling surf. Soon, she is secretly gliding through the water as a mermaid. Below the waves, she meets Shona, also 12, who takes her to mermaid school and leads her on several adventures. When Emily learns the intriguing history of the Shiprock community and of illegal marriages between humans and merpeople, she begins to look for her merman father. Danger, humor, confrontation, and even a trial before Neptune all play a part in her search. Eventually, she finds her dad and comes to understand the truth about her oddly controlling neighbor, Mr. Beeston; her mother's dislike of water; and her parents' love affair. All ends well when the family is reunited and swims away to live a new life on a secret merfolk island. This fantasy has some delightful moments, but not enough to keep it afloat. Characters are not fully developed, the plot wavers between complicated and oversimplified, and the transition from merworld to human is not smooth.--*Beth Tegart, Oneida City Schools, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-7. This first novel opens with a classic teaser: "Can you keep a secret?" It turns out that the secret is a particularly juicy one. Though outwardly a normal seventh-grader, Emily Windsnap transforms into a mermaid when she goes swimming. The phenomenon worries her but thrills her, too, especially when she discovers an underwater "mer-city" not far from where she lives, and begins to learn the answers to nagging questions about her origins: Why did her father abandon her when she was a baby? Why can't her mother remember details about her husband? After a new mermaid friend mentions "illegal marriages" between mer-people and humans, readers will guess where things are headed--long before Emily herself does. Emily's eventual reunion with her merman father seems overly reliant on luck and coincidence, but her determination keeps things cruising along, and the premise of someone slipping easily into a shimmery underwater world has considerable allure. Light, imagination-tickling fare ideal for middle-grade girls, with charming ink-wash illustrations scattered throughout. *Jennifer Mattson*

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## Review

A great read ... we were gripped from the first chapter Mizz Wonderfully inventive Daily Express Fresh and funny The Times Wonderfully imaginative ... like real life, the story has an everyday cheerful bumpy side, and a hidden side of deep loves and poetic longings INIS Rich and strange Independent Weekly This magical book is perfect holiday reading Week Junior An enchanting, original and hugely enjoyable fantasy about a high-spirited girl who discovers she's a mermaid -- Francesca Simon An absolutely enchanting debut - a salty splash of something fresh within the tradition of the mermaid world. -- Amanda Craig 10/10 NAYU'S READING CORNER

## Users Review

From reader reviews:

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