

The background of the cover is a child-like drawing. At the top is a solid red band. Below it is a large, bright yellow sun with a green outline, set against a dark blue sky with concentric circular scribbles. The sun is positioned over a light-colored beach area. In the foreground, there is a dark brown silhouette of a gazebo or pavilion structure with several pillars. The bottom of the drawing is another solid red band.

Universal Scribbles Oceans of Possibilities

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INNER WORLD

BY ANDES FINCH



SPECTRUM
BY JAE TUDOR

Miles below where the birds soar higher
And worlds apart from another living being
She sits hunched there, knees to her chest, at the depths of the ocean.
She sees nothing; she feels nothing; immune to life or death itself.
Water poisons her lungs, yet she does not feel it.
Darkness swells and swallows her, yet she does not feel it.
Hot tears escape from her closed eyelids, yet she does not feel it.
They mix with the ocean water until no evidence of her despair remains.
Her and the ocean: a joined consciousness; a river of numb and cold things.

Flowing, flowing, flowing--
Until they are both silent.

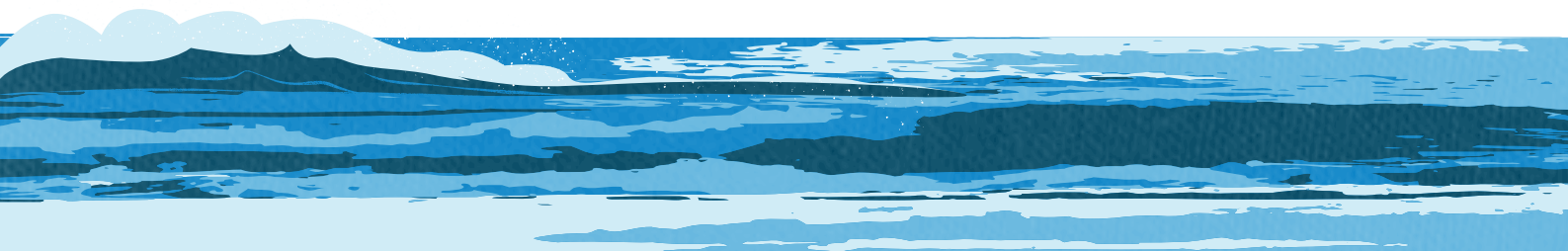
But wait.

She opens her eyes, and the salt of the ocean and her tears bring scorching
pain, and this should be a bad thing.

But the pain is so wonderful because it is something to feel;
something other than the horrible numb feeling that swallowed her before.

This mere realization motivates her to at least try,
and so with a surge of energy, she kicks off from the sand.
She paddles her way up, up, up, her eyes above, her doubts below.

But it's too far.



She is miles below the surface; the light--
She'll never make it there.
She lets herself sink back down to the sand,
A mix between anguish and anger settling into her heart.
She closes her eyes.

When she makes it to the bottom where she started, she doesn't stop sinking.
She falls through the sand, wading through land instead of water.
It is strange; it is impossible; yet she allows herself to gain back a bit of faith;
conviction.

When she falls onto the other side of the Earth,
And opens her arms to the wonderful sun above her.

And she has hope.
And she is alive.
And she is new.

Author's Note

The meaning of this poem is not set in stone, but for me, it is a message to look at problems and find unlikely solutions or to look at something ugly and see something beautiful. The person in this poem faces the challenge of feeling trapped. If she stays on the ground, she is doomed, but if she tries to escape, she is doomed further. However, it is pain that motivates her to try. I think this is because, in my opinion at least, a stormy sky is better than no sky at all. She tries to swim to the surface, but it's too far and she can't make it. In the end, she doesn't save herself; the world does.

This conveys that sometimes the universe is kind, and you will rise out of your troubles stronger than you were before. The sun is even brighter on the other side of the Earth than on her side, and its rays purify her into something greater than she was before. You are not your troubles, so do not allow them to keep you at the bottom of the ocean.

THE SECRET SOCIETY OF SEA MONSTER SLAYERS

BY ARDEN LOWDER

I stared at the setting sun and the picturesque scenery of the beach. The warm ocean waves lapped at my ankles as the tide picked up and carried away numerous shells. It was such a beautiful evening that the beach should've been packed, but there was no one around for miles. Or at least I thought there wasn't.

This part of the beach had become known as "Dead Man's Shore," because no one had ever heard of alliteration. And because eight people had died there in the last year.

Crack!

The sound of a snapping twig was enough to send me running. I sprinted as fast as I could across the sand.

"Ahh!" I cried out in pain as I fell. While I was running, I hadn't noticed a massive hole in the sand. I quickly ascertained that I'd sprained my ankle. I limped as quickly as my good leg would carry me, but I wasn't fast enough.

My stalkers surrounded me. Two of them grabbed my shoulders to prevent me from escaping, though they didn't need to worry about that. The other, who seemed like the leader despite the fact that he was the youngest—only about thirteen—glared at me.

"Rachel, what are you doing here? You know it isn't safe." His voice was filled with disappointment.

"You know what I'm doing here, Noah."

His eyes softened. "Finding out what happened won't bring her back."

"There has to be some justice in the world."

Now would probably be an appropriate time to explain all of this. First things first, my name is Rachel Summers, Sea-Monster Hunter. Well, Sea-Monster Hunter in training. I'm part of an organization called "The Secret Society of Sea-Monster Slayers." You see, that's alliteration.

The organization is composed mainly of children because adults just refuse to accept the truth. Noah-the one helping me limp across the sand-is my superior officer, although he's only six months older than me, and my best friend. And finally, the beach I wasn't supposed to be at was where my sister was killed by a sea monster almost exactly one year ago.

Since that day, I'd vowed to find the monster that killed her and prevent it from hurting anyone else. Except, after Ella died, the beach had been strictly off limits to any hunter with lower than a level-five authorization. I, being a hunter-in-training, probably had less than one. That raised a question in my mind.

"Hey Noah, don't you only have level-three authorization?"

His eyebrows went up at my question. "Well yes, but in the event of a rogue hunter, I am allowed to--"

"No. You're not supposed to be here either."

"Stop! Did you hear that?" Noah had stopped arguing with me to survey our surroundings.

"Don't try to change the subject. You're gonna be in more trouble than I am. At least they expect this kind of behavior from me."

"But I swear I heard something."

If he hadn't seemed so scared I wouldn't have believed him.

Roar!

That time I heard it too, the sound of a sea monster. My heart pounded in my ears.

For the first time, I noticed that the other two hunters were gone. They'd run back to headquarters the second they heard something. I hoped they were getting help, but deep down I knew better.

The sea monster rose from the water. It was twice the size of anything I'd ever seen.

"Noah, do you have your emergency kit?"

Each hunter was equipped with an emergency kit filled with cool gadgets that, after an unfortunate training exercise, I was not allowed near.

"No," he said, panicked, "it has a tracker in it!"

"Come on!" I complained, "The first rule of sneaking away is that you rip out the tracker and tie it to a chipmunk!"

"Why a chipmunk?"

"Cause they're cute!"

I rifled through my supplies, which contained a tranquilizer gun, a pocket knife, two granola bars, and a rubber duck. How a rubber duck made it into my bag, I don't know, probably someone's idea of a joke.

"I have a plan," I said, which was about 45% true. I passed him the tranquilizer gun. "I'll distract it, and you just keep shooting until it goes down. Then, I'll use the knife to finish it off."

“But I’m a terrible shot,” he protested.

“I’m worse,” I said, and on that, we were in complete agreement.

With no time to waste, I took the granola bars and the rubber duck and hopping forward, I threw them into the air. The monster lunged for them, giving Noah a clear shot. He never took his finger off the trigger.

The monster howled as it collapsed into the water. I charged, so full of adrenaline that I didn’t even feel it when I stepped on my injured foot. I gripped the handle of the knife so tightly that the back edge dug into my palm.

I held the monster's limp body steady as I pierced its soft belly with my knife. Red blood mixed with the ocean water. I kept stabbing at it, till there was no chance it would ever wake up.

“Rachel, let’s go,” Noah said softly. He stood back, almost as if he were afraid.

I didn’t look up. I kept stabbing at the monster, wanting it to feel some fraction of the pain it caused me. That thing had killed my sister, and it would pay.

“Rachel!” Noah stepped closer and grabbed my arm. The warm, sticky blood ran down my arms as I turned toward him, brandishing the knife.

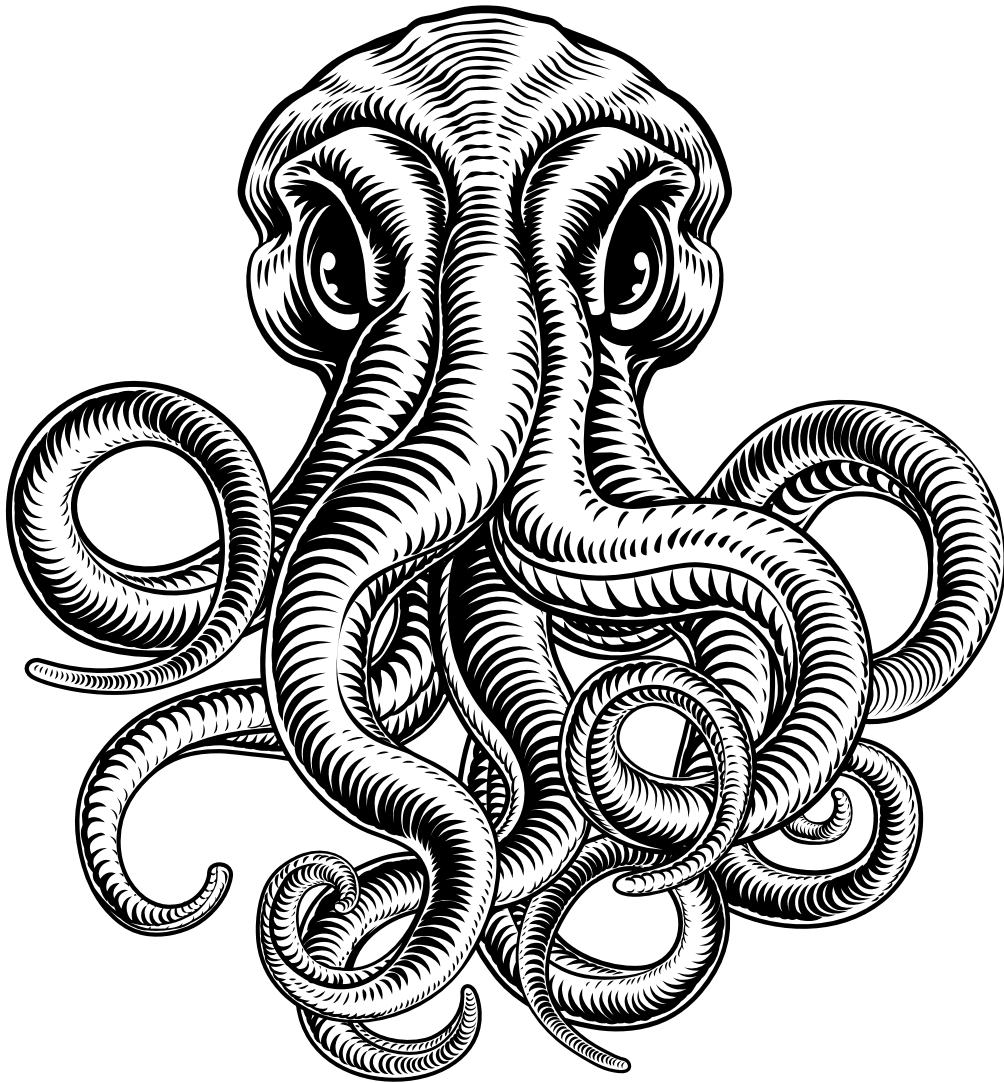
“Leave me alone!”

Noah’s face fell, and he stepped back. I collapsed into hysterical sobs as I continued attacking the already dead sea monster.

I looked back at my friend. His mouth was set in a grim line. He slowly raised the tranquilizer gun, a look of determination on his face. Something sharp pierced my shoulder, and I felt him lift me out of the water before my vision went dark.

I awoke sometime later in the infirmary back at headquarters. Someone I didn't recognize fussed over me with bandages.

Noah stood watching me through a window, his expression indifferent. How long had he been there? I managed a smile and a small wave. He nodded, acknowledging the gesture, but made no effort to return it. Things weren't going to be the same between us for a while.



ARTWORK

BY ELISE SCHEIDERICH



WATER, PEANUTS, AND SOME SNEAKY KITCHEN SNEAKS

BY MEGAN NGUYEN

A hunched-over figure stood in a completely deserted kitchen, not knowing someone was observing them. There was a gentle clink of glass on metal as thick white steam billowed from in front of the shape. The mysterious silhouette slowly moved to the side, revealing the glass beaker they had been concealing. The profile opened the refrigerator, making light flood the kitchen for a fraction of a second. Then it was dark all over again. The hidden and uninvited visitor could not see what the shape was doing once more. It was nearing midnight. Perhaps Mysterious would go to bed now. She was done with his job.



The morning before the mysterious person brewed strange concoctions in the kitchen, the sun rose steadily over the quiet town in the countryside. Inside a little cottage, Mrs. Maple was stirring. Normally she would have still been asleep at this time, but her phone disturbed her well-needed sleep, you see.

“H-hello?” she said, stifling a yawn with her hand. “Annabella? What do you need?”

Mrs. Maple frowned. Her sister didn’t call her very often. Each time she brought bad news with it. Like last time, she asked Mrs. Maple to babysit her six rowdy boys. Sure enough, this time Annabella had called to ask yet another favor from her elder sister. She had called to ask Mrs. Maple to take care of their house and her kids so she and her husband could spend the week in New York.

“What about a babysitter and a housekeeper? I know one right by here. They would be very happy to help. They could take your kids.” Mrs. Maple said, determined to avoid the wild kids. “And there will be lots of other kids and a professional is way better than me.”

"We've planned this trip for ages! We're leaving for the airport in three hours! I can't afford to start dealing with people! Sorry, Isabella, you have to take my kids."

"I'm not looking after your children, Annabella," Mrs. Maple said. "This is my final word. No is no."

"Please, Isabella, please!" Annabella pleaded. "If we cancel, we'll have to pay a cancellation fee! We got the place really cheap too! We'll never get such a chance!"

Mrs. Maple shook her head, thinking hard. Who else was old and responsible enough to look after six wild boys and a house that had to be in perfect condition for the owners?

Of course, her daughters, Eileen and Eleanor.

Mrs. Maple hung up and bounded up the stairs, into the guest room. It was so lucky her children decided to visit this week.

"Eileen! Eleanor! Get up!"

Two girls stirred from inside a tangle of blankets.

"M-m-morning Mom. Have we missed breakfast?" asked the older of the two.

"Oh, no, Eileen! I'm going to have some bacon and eggs on the table. Maybe some waffles too. No time for pancakes! You two go on down, I'll get your father."

Mrs. Maple roused her husband and hurried to make the breakfast she had promised her family. She had just slid some warm eggs on the last plate when her family walked in, still dressed in their pajamas and bathrobes. Mr. Maple pulled out a chair and sank into it, yawning. The girls did the same. Mrs. Maple settled herself on the only remaining seat.

So, did you have a good sleep?" Mrs. Maple asked, without waiting for an answer.

"Well, you know, your Aunt Annabella and Uncle Connor? She's going to New York for a week. I need some volunteers to look after her boys and keep her house clean and perfect. So, anyone?"

The Maples sat silently, only making sounds of chewing and clinking glasses. Eileen especially seemed determined to remain silent.

"Okay, then! I'll just assign some. Eileen, you're older so you can probably manage the lunatic boys. Eleanor, you can do the house. You're old enough to go alone and you're pretty organized."

"Why me?" both girls said in unison. "Why can someone else do it?"

Mrs. Maple glared at the two of them.

"Mom, why can't I do the house? Those boys are my worst nightmare!" Eileen asked, angrily stabbing her now lukewarm eggs with unnecessary force.

"Because I said so. Now eat up. The Sycamores² are arriving soon."



At 9:00 am sharp the doorbell rang, just as anticipated. Mrs. Maple tottered to the door, anxious about seeing the state her house would be in once the week was over. The door swung open and there stood the Sycamores. Annabella quickly patted her sister before ushering her children through the door. Immediately, the house was filled with a hubbub that was certainly not present before. The girls grimaced. This was not going too well.

Eileen threw herself onto the couch and whipped out her phone. What a boring job. It would've been way better if she was in the Sycamore's empty house. She could use their TV, eat their chips, and best of all, clean up at the end of the week. Instead, Eleanor was getting all of this fun.

While Eileen was busy, thinking about how unfair the arrangements were, Eleanor was lounging in the Sycamore's house, chatting on the phone animatedly to her best friend, munching on a bag of *Cheetos*.

The sun reached its highest point at around midday. By that time, Eileen had given up trying to do anything and was laying on the couch with a pillow over her head, muffling the noises of chaos. Eleanor, however, had made herself a ham and cheese sandwich using the ingredients the Sycamores left in their house. Soon, the sky darkened and it was nighttime.

"Oh, Eleanor! You came back just in time for dinner," Mrs. Maple said, hurrying to pull out another chair for Eleanor.

Dinner that night differed from the usual in many ways. For one, they were all so jammed in together they couldn't move at all. Another was that everyone was very busy. Mrs. Maple had to feed the two youngest boys, Peter and Philip. These two were very loud and messy. So messy that Mrs. Maple had to wear a bouffant¹ cap to avoid flying chunks of baby food from ruining her hair. Mr. Maple hadn't taken a single bite of spaghetti because he was restraining the two oldest, Victor and Virgil, so they wouldn't start punching each other for some silly reason. They were very violent. They started using fists every time they didn't agree on something as simple as pizza toppings. That left the two middle boys, Ted and Terry, who were fighting over toys. Yes. They were at least sitting still, though squabbling over the red truck in Terry's hand. Eleanor was trying to calm the two of them down while Eileen sat twirling her fork absentmindedly. She seemed to not have noticed anything.

"Okay, bed! Boys! Go get ready for bed!" Mrs. Maple finally shouted, to the relief of her family.

Mrs. Maple tried to wipe up Peter and Philip, but they wouldn't sit still enough. Mr. Maple was giving Ted and Terry baths as they splashed bubbles and foam in his face, while Eleanor was dealing with violent Virgil and Victor.

"That's enough! Go upstairs right now and take a shower!" she screamed.

Virgil and Victor slouched off to the upstairs bathroom. Eleanor followed them, waiting outside the door. If she didn't, they might have started wrecking the bathroom, too.

Mrs. Maple, meanwhile, was so relieved she had finally completed cleaning up Ted and Terry that she pulled off her bouffant cap, which was a mistake because the boys had then started to yank her once neat hair. Mr. Maple was not dealing with two little boys, but four because Virgil and Victor had started to argue about who got to shower first and Eleanor couldn't control them. Mr. Maple and Eleanor were busy running around upstairs, trying to catch the wild boys.

Everyone was so busy, that no one noticed Eileen rummaging around in the kitchen.

At last, every boy was all cleaned up. Mr. Maple directed the boys upstairs. The Guest Room was now theirs. Four cots and a bunk bed were set up in the room so each boy would have a bed. Now, he had to deal with his nephews arguing over who got the bunk bed. Mrs. Maple, meanwhile, was getting the pullout sofa bed ready for her girls. Once that was done, she could go to bed.

"Okay! Well, I think that Virgil, Victor, Terry, and Ted should take the cots while Peter and Philip take the bunks," Mr. Maple said, as the four older boys glared his way.

At long last, the boys had gotten settled. Mr. and Mrs. Maple climbed longingly into their warm beds that were free of trouble.

Downstairs, Eleanor sank into the bed, half asleep. Eileen waited. Minutes passed. Those minutes formed hours that slowly drifted by. Finally, the coast was clear to carry out her ingenious plan. Eileen silently slipped out of bed and tip-toed to the kitchen. Rummaging around in her pockets, she found what she needed: peanut powder. Soundlessly, Eileen tipped them into a glass beaker she had found earlier. That would be good.

A couple of drops of water. Steam billowed from the beaker. Eileen had not read the instructions *too* carefully, you see. The unexpected vapor obscuring the beaker was a little too scary. She jumped and collided painfully into the half-open dishwasher.

“Owwwww!” she screamed.

Eleanor woke up with a jolt. What was that sound? Without giving her sister any clue she had heard, Eleanor clambered out of bed and peeked around the corner. There was a pajama-clad Eileen standing at the counter of the dark kitchen, rubbing her back painfully as she got to her feet. The clouds of steam had dispersed and Eileen could see again. She sniffed the concoction gingerly and nodded. It smelled about right. It was semi-dark in the kitchen, but the next thing Eleanor knew, Eileen had gotten something out of the refrigerator and was haphazardly stuffing it back. Eleanor crept away. Tomorrow she would be the one to sneak around the kitchen at midnight.



The next day came and was nearly over when Mr. and Mrs. Maple had to deal with several tiring things. Not only did they have to stop the boys from wrecking their house, but Eleanor had broken out in a series of severe hives. Luckily, the hives vanished as quickly as they appeared. However, the Maples had to switch the jobs around so they could keep an eye on Eleanor.

Night came and this time, Eileen fell asleep savoring the day's events. Oh, she and her best friend, Georgina, went to the mall instead of looking after the house. Eileen was busy thinking about her secret shopping spree while Eleanor sneaked around the kitchen. By the time she climbed back in bed, Eleanor Maple had two clues as to who had caused her to have the allergic reaction and why.

Mrs. Maple woke up, debating whether she ought to let Eileen go to the Sycamores or Eleanor. Of course, Eileen was already trying to persuade her mother to let her go to the Sycamores. Mr. Maple was also awake, thinking along those lines.

"Mother, remember, I'm in charge of the experiment involving allergic reactions at the lab. You ought to keep an eye on her for a while. We've been doing some very important experiments and collected data from our volunteer testers," said Eileen. "I've concluded at our official meeting last month that anyone with the symptoms may break out again even if they're feeling fine. Mother, you should really keep her here. I'll be most happy to fill in for her. You should really listen to professional advice."

It was true that Eileen worked at a lab. And it was true that she was the head of the team that led the Department of Allergic Reaction Experiments. Perhaps she should listen to—

"I'm fine and I know what happened," said Eleanor, suddenly appearing. "Want to explain or shall I do the honors, Miss Eileen Maple?"

Eileen made an unconvincing poker face. Mr. and Mrs. Maple looked alarmed.

"Go on, dear, before those rowdy boys wake up and interrupt us! Does Eileen have anything to do with this?" Mrs. Maple whispered, eyes widening.

"What happened?" Mr. Maple prompted. "Nora?"

“Well, everyone knows I’m allergic to peanuts, right? You thought it was my food. Well, no,” Eleanor said, pulling out a water bottle and metallic wrapper. “This here is my plastic water bottle. The night before I had the hives, I had put this in the fridge to keep it cool. When I went to drink it, I found the seal was broken. It was intact when I put it in. Someone opened it in the middle of the night.”

“You can’t prove I had anything to do with it!” Eileen said, indignantly.

Eleanor plowed on, “It so happens that *someone* went and banged themselves into the open dishwasher, causing me to wake up and film this.”

She held out her phone, which was showing Eileen dumping the contents of a tiny jar into her beaker. Then she tipped it into the water bottle.

“I was getting a sip of water!”

“That doesn’t look like ‘getting a sip of water. I found this wrapper and jar in the trash. It’s peanut powder. You used this to make a peanut liquid to put in my water.”

Eileen opened her mouth to argue, but Eleanor answered the unsaid question.

“I can prove it was you because we saw you using the products in the video and I found them in the trash. It proves you used them!”

Mr. and Mrs. Maple turned to Eileen.

“Young lady, you have a lot of explaining to get on with, but it still doesn’t explain why you even did this,” Mr. Maple said.

“Oh, fine,” Eileen huffed. “I did it because of you, Mom. You made me look after the wild boys while Eleanor gets to enjoy peace and quiet.”

“But you’re older and more resp—”

“But still, I wanted to do the house! So if Eleanor didn’t look fit to go halfway across town, maybe I could go. I wasn’t trying to hurt anyone! I technically wasn’t poisoning the water.”

“Enough. If you want to clean up a house you can clean up our house when the Sycamore boys are gone,” Mrs. Maple said.

“Hmph. That’ll be the last time I even put anything in anyone’s water to get to go and clean a house,” Eileen muttered.



¹A loose cap, so called because of its puffy shape, is typically secured around the head with an elastic and is frequently used in cleanrooms, food service, and other settings to contain loose hair.

²A Sycamore maple is commonly referred to simply as sycamore in Europe, though it is actually a type of maple tree.

POUR OIL ON TROUBLED WATERS

BY CHRISTINE LE

From the very beginning, ocean tides have crashed against the surface of the earth for as long as I've been told.

Stirred by pure imagination we all experienced as children, I pictured sea critters of all sorts roaming free underneath the crystal clear waters.

But I wondered why some of them are shipped away to aquariums or have been resold?

Of all the endless possibilities unthought of, why do we decide to fill our oceans with wastewater and hurt baby otters?

Are we no different from pirates so notorious in fable tales we've all been warned about?

Taking earth's gifts for granted and trading those of value for temporary prosperity.

People have always been afraid of potential monsters in this void of an ocean and frighteningly shout

But fail to realize that our kind contributes to the coral bleaching severity.

This is the time for reformation and reflection upon our oceanic extractions.

Prolonging expansions will damage our precious yet meagerly filled oceans.

Every life deprived of the ocean is eventually exchanged for monetary transactions.

Seeing videos of straws stuck in innocent turtle's noses evokes my inner emotions

It tells me that this isn't just another post I should scroll past

Because in the end it'll just hurt future generations and cause it to be the last.



Photograph by John, Wikimedia Commons

Author's Note

The title of this sonnet is an idiom that refers to doing or saying something in hopes of alleviating arguments about a certain issue. Here, the issue I'm referring to is oceanic threats caused by humans such as coral bleaching, climate change, animal cruelty, and oceanic pollution to say the least. The picture I included represents that an oil spill may look pleasing to the eye at first glance, but in reality, it's more of a nightmare dressed like a daydream. Similar to how humans are depleting Earth's oceans for their own advantage and ignoring the devastating effects. The oil spill in the shape of a rainbow symbolizes that there's still hope left in relieving the damage done to our oceans. It's never too late to act and let's remember to not take anything for granted!

- Christine

OCTOPUS BY ANDES FINCH



THE DEAD SEA

BY SEEYOUNG LEE

It was 1945 in the midst of World War II, a woman was carrying her baby down the mountain, chased quickly by two other men from wherever they were from, they had guns. She made her final stand at the Dead Sea. After being chased by the gunman for four years, she decided it was time.

But she wasn't ready to let her baby go. She gave a final blessing for her baby in her final stand and sat there for a while.

"There she is," said one of the gunmen. "Martha Johnson."

But as the gunmen drew their firearms, time sloooooowwwwwllllly stopped. Like, literally. And then it went back to normal again. Weird. But as soon as the gunmen went back to position again, the woman lifted her cloak and revealed herself, or they say, "himself".

"No," said one of the gunmen, "This is impossible. Jinx Douss, the murderer of time."

The gunmen screamed and ran for their lives, but the murderer of time wasn't fooling around, and shot them both, and ran back to kill the baby. But he couldn't. Because the baby was gone.

The murderer of time soon panicked, and then calmed and smirked. He knew his death was coming, but he already accomplished something. "They" were late. Soon, helicopters came buzzing around him. He was captured. And the helicopter had the sign, "U.S. Army Forces".

"Time's up," the captain of the helicopter said, "That's our third one. Now we have murderers of Wind, Facts, and Time. This one was hard to find. Now, where's the baby....."

10 Years Later

"Mr. Ali, when are we going to get out of this place?" asked Jacob.

"Just wait," replied Mr. Ali, calmly, "We will get out of here sooner than later. When I first found you..."

"Yeah," interrupted Jacob, "I know, you first found me in the Dead Sea and you found me, you ran away from this helicopter thing and blah blah blah."

"Good," replied Mr. Ali, "You already know all of it."

Even though Jacob had some temper and interrupted Mr. Ali a lot, he didn't mind but acknowledged Jacob's genius brain of asking so many interesting questions.

"Poor Macy," Mr. Ali quietly muttered, "I wish she was still here to see this...."

But before even Mr. Ali could get another word out of his mouth, a loud buzzing sound began, and soon, the face of a helicopter came into their vision only a couple of hundred feet away. But this was not the same plane 10 years before. This one had a sign "Mr. Udoss' Day Care".

"Oh no," gasped Mr. Ali, "Jacob, I think it's time for you to run. We've been tracked down."

"Wait, what?!"

"Just whatever you do," yelled Mr. Ali, "Never trust that helicopter! Look for an entrance back there! I have loved you always and treated you like a son, and now, it's your time to repay me! Never forget me after all of this Jacob!"

"I...", Jacob muttered, then yelled, "I will!"

"Good boy," said Mr. Ali as tears rode down his face, "That's my boy. He will always be."

You might think, ok, he's in a huge city in front of the tallest building in the world. Normal. But no, when Jacob left his hiding place just seconds ago, it was 1955.

"How did I come to the future?" thought Jacob. Jacob couldn't think of that any deeper, because he had a bigger problem. He was standing out.

Jacob was dressed up very poorly, and people did seem to notice him. Embarrassed, and freaked out, he went to the nearest mall and hid in the corner. But then, a woman came by him, and Jacob got alarmed.

"Don't worry," said the woman, calmly, "Jacob, right?"

Jacob nodded slowly, making his move to see if he should run away or not.

"Oh don't run away," the woman assured Jacob, "We're not going to hurt you. You know Mr. Ali, right?"

Jacob nodded again, this time even more slowly.

"Poor old man. Let me introduce you to my husband, Jason Xin. Be right here, okay? No one is going to hurt you."

But one thing the woman didn't know, is that as soon as she stepped out of his sight, a voice popped up that sounded directly in his mind that just sounded like Mr. Ali, "Run."

"Run where?" asked Jacob in his mind.

Then, he did the craziest thing in the world, he jumped into the fountains. Then, he just disappeared. By the time the woman was back with her husband, he was gone. No trace of him. Of course, they thought he jumped out of a window or something and kept searching for him. Who would have thought that the boy just took a dip in the fountains and then just disappeared?

Then, a rocket blew and launched into Mr. Ali, as he lay unconscious.

“No!” yelled Jacob.

But Jacob didn't have time to react. He went through the entrance, and what he saw amazed not only himself but the world. The Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world.

Jacob was shocked. He wowed in amazement, and when he looked back, there it was, the entire city of Dubai in its view. In one of the buildings, it said, “Welcome to 2022” sign, with tons of shopping gifts in the background.



Back to Jacob

He burst out of the door, running as fast as he could. No, he wasn't being chased by the people at the mall, he was chased by cops. Why? Because when he got out from the crazy "fountain dive", he ended up popping out of another fountain in a museum! (It even had fish that ran away as soon as he popped out!)

"Dive", said another voice that sounded like Mr. Ali.

This time, Jacob didn't even think. He jumped in the river next to the museum that seemed to be filled with fish, and then he was gone.

When Jacob woke up again, it was nighttime. Plus, he wasn't even in Dubai now. He was in a lake. Or a Sea. The Dead Sea. The sea where he was abandoned, or as they say, "mysteriously ran away from."

Jacob, too tired to open his eyes, went back to sleep.

When he woke up again, it wasn't the Dead Sea anymore.

He was in the middle of the ocean, riding a whale. In fact, sea creatures were swimming with them, and frankly, they were also talking. There were tons of them, a clownfish, an octopus, and even jellyfish! Even more amazing, sharks!

But before Jacob could question what was happening to him, he saw a distant light far ahead, a light that seemed to go as far as miles and miles. "How did I get here?" thought Jacob. So many questions, so many things to worry about. But for now, Jacob knew he was safe. And he was about to face another adventure, a new chapter that may change his life forever.

SANCTITY

BY ANDES FINCH



THE SHIPWRECK OF POSSIBILITIES

BY MEGAN NGUYEN

An adventure gone wrong this sure was. Rain pelting the ship while the sky swirled angrily did not seem to be what the crew expected when they agreed to leave the safety of home. Although it was quite unpleasant, the storm did not do lasting damage until—

BANG!!!

CRACK!!!

A bolt of lightning flashed through the air like a light switch had turned it on. Another appeared, but instead of hitting somewhere far on the horizon like the previous one, it struck the already drenched ship. Pieces of splintered wood lay littered around the impact area. The large crater on the deck wasn't a problem, for the crew could patch it up in a heartbeat.

As the team huddled together to repair the damage, they were unaware of fate tonight. At that very moment, besides their ship sat an iceberg. Unfortunately, it wasn't one of the softer ones. Oh no. It was a hard one. It also happened to be large. However, the staff was too busy hammering boards back together they hardly noticed the noticeable-unless-you-are-very-blind iceberg *innocently* sitting beside them.

"Captain Cole, I think we've fixed it all."

The captain nodded and began to steer the ship to the left when—

CRACK!!!

The iceberg had sunk into the side of the ship. The ship tilted slightly, then it was on its side. Soon it was under the dark, velvety surface of the murky waters of the sea. Gone and forgotten. At least it was.

Years had passed since the iceberg striking incident. In fact, the sinking was so long and forgotten no one bothered with it. Of course, until it *popped* up very unexpectedly on the shores of a beach.

Bright rays of sunlight streamed through the window of Anne-Marie and Adeline's room on the second floor of the Laurent home. The house sat on the shores of Normandy, France along with several others. It was built with beige bricks and had plant life blooming from nearly every corner of the cottage-styled building. Because of its family-like and calm design, no one would ever see anything more unusual than a rock in a different spot in Adeline's neighborhood. That is, with the exception of today.

Every morning, Papa would tell Adeline to run to the beach and grab some decent-sized seashells. Papa was an artist, but not the typical kind with brushes and paint across a canvas. Nothing like that for Papa. Adeline's Papa liked to engrave beautiful art on seashells and sell them to passersby. Maman would make treats to sell along with Papa's work if the customers wanted one. The Laurents were well known in the area for being the "Artist's Bakery". Every day, Adeline would help with finding shells while Anne-Marie *tried* to help in the kitchen. Her attempts never lasted long. Her record was only 5 minutes.

When Adeline returned with a basket of nicely sized seashells, Anne-Marie was offering random ingredients for Maman to add to her cupcakes. Maman was getting a teeny bit annoyed at this. Papa was finishing up some shells that were ordered yesterday.

"No, Anne-Marie. We do not put lemon in blueberry cupcakes. That'll be too sour. This batch is for Monsieur Blanchet. Everyone knows he has a sweet tooth," Maman was saying sternly, as she pushed the lemon away. "Sugar."

Adeline dropped the basket of fresh shells next to Papa's stand. Papa was comparing Normandy and Paris-grown apples with Monsieur Moulin, the next-door neighbor. Papa and Monsieur Moulin finished their conversation and Papa turned to examine the shells Adeline had brought.

"Adeline, dear, why did you bring these shells?" he asked.

Adeline looked at the shells Papa held out. They were itty bitty. You couldn't engrave an ant on it!

"I'll take them back, Papa. I saw something out on the far end of the beach. I want to have a look. I think that distracted me for a sec," Adeline offered, taking the basket.

Anne-Marie heard this and spun around pleading in her fake babyish voice, "No sissy. I do it! You don't!"

"Okay, but look for the thing out there for me."

Adeline handed the pile of little shells to Anne-Marie, hoping she was going to do it properly rather than play in the sand and come home 3 hours later. Anne-Marie skipped away as Papa began scribbling orders down on a piece of paper.

"Pink shell What do you want on it?"

"Can you put the Eiffel Tower on it? That'll be great!" Madame Dupont was saying, happily. "The usual color too. Oh, I think a big one should do."

Madame Dupont always ordered shells. She stopped by to order shells of Papa's creation every single day. Adeline was sure she secretly kept a collection of them. Madame Dupont was particularly fond of pale pink ones. Adeline always tried to pick pink ones for her. Papa jotted her request down, as Madame Dupont swept off down the street.

"Adeline, go help your maman with her cupcakes. Monsieur Blanchet should be here in a moment to pick up his shells. He wanted a chocolate cupcake and pastry along with his shell."

Adeline scurried into the kitchen to find Maman humming delightfully, measuring flour in a cup.

“Oh, good! I’ve been needing someone to help mix the batter. I have one ready for you,” Maman said, gesturing to a large yellow bowl.

Adeline snatched up the whisk just as Anne-Marie opened the door to the house.

“I saw your thing. It was a boat. It looked broken. Like a shipwreck.”

“No way!” Adeline said, incredulously. “You can’t have!”

“Yes, way!” Anne-Marie insisted, freezing. “Maman, I have to go take a look. I’ll help double tomorrow.”

Adeline followed Anne-Marie out of the front door. Papa was sitting in his Art Stand, talking to Monsieur Blanchet, who had come to fetch his masterpiece and treat. They were discussing recent news articles. Actually, debating.

Anne-Marie pointed to the sandy shore of the beach where a small ship lay. It had a large hole on the side and a patched floor. Crowds of people were swarming it.

“I called the reporters on the way home!” Anne-Marie happily explained. Raising her voice she said, “Attention everyone! My name is Anne-Marie Laurent. This is my sister Adeline Laurent. We found the shipwreck! Isn’t it amazing?”

The gasps that issued from the crowd confirmed that everyone was awed that two so young could find such a wonder.

“Hello Mademoiselle Laurent!” said the nearest reporter, springing up beside Adeline. “My name is Cristelle Dubois. Could I have a quick word?”

“Um, hi. I’m Jeanette Fournier. Could I grab an interview? Anne-Marie?”

The day consisted of different reporters turning up and interviewing both Maman and Papa as well as the girls. When the sunlight dimmed and the moon had risen to its full height, Maman finally shooed the eager interviewers away. They were really disappointed.

“Tomorrow, you can come back as early as when we have lunch.”

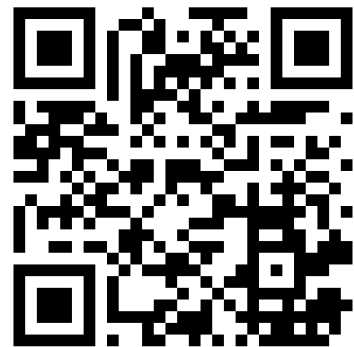
Adeline and Anne-Marie clambered into their bed and pulled blankets high over themselves like a cave. Wow, what a day. Adeline watched wispy clouds swirl around the crescent moon. If today’s destiny was finding a forgotten shipwreck, what was tomorrow? Treasure? Long lost items? It seemed to be an *ocean of possibilities* . . .



Universal Scribbles is the Gwinnett County Public Library's literary journal for teens, by teens. The magazine highlights the outstanding writing and artwork of middle and high school students in Gwinnett County. The magazine accepts original fiction, nonfiction, poetry, graphic stories, photography, drawings, and paintings. Teens in grades six through twelve are invited to submit their original works. Each issue of the magazine has its own theme. The themes for past issues have included space, the impact of 2020, animals, the future, and the ocean.

Universal Scribbles was founded in 2019 and is now being published semi-annually, with the program running in January and July. During those months, teens have the opportunity to workshop material with each other, receive writing and art prompts, and gain feedback on their works. Universal Scribbles is published in February and August, with print copies of the magazine being available for pickup at all 15 library branches and digital copies on the library's website. Past issues of the magazine are also available digitally.

To see past issues of the magazine, please visit:
<https://www.gwinnettpl.org/teens/>



The theme for the next issue of Universal Scribbles (January 2023) will be Winter Wonderland.

