

A Midnight Swim

I quietly sneak out my window that overlooks the glittering dark blue sea. It was ten o'clock and still kind of warm, after all it's always summer where I live. I jump down and the shock from landing causes me to fall on my hands and knees. The sand is warm and soft. The waves are like a lullaby, pulling me toward the ocean. Its salty smell tickles my nose. I make my way down to the shore and stick a toe in the water. I'm grateful that the porch light is on so I can see where I'm going. I decide the water is okay and I wade in. When the water surrounds my waist, I allow the ocean to melt my worries away as I fully submerge and float on my back.

I'm relaxed and drowsy, after a little bit I opened my eyes and looked at my house. Instant panic sets in. I thrashed around as a mouthful of salty sea water entered my mouth. My house is way too far away for my liking! I start swimming back to the shore and the closer I get, I see a dark figure standing with its hands on its hips. After making my way back to the shoreline, I see it's my sister wearing a robe and not looking very happy. I cautiously stay in the water, waiting for another long lecture as we stare each other down.

"You're not going to tell, are you?" I said it as more of a statement than a question.

"Maybe not, Zara, but I might! Just for the fun of watching you squirm as you get in trouble" She retorted back.

"What will make you change your mind?" I asked.

"Well... maybe you can invite me next time, silly!" And with that, she took off her robe to reveal her swimming suit. She ran to the shoreline and plunged in with a shriek.

My sister and I have a pretty good relationship even though she is fifteen and I am twelve. When it comes to secrets and all, we have each other's backs, for the most part. We splashed around in the water that was comfortably warm and talked about life. Before we knew it the stars disappeared and dawn was breaking across the ocean.

Ivy, my sister, noticed it just in time and said we have to get back inside. I agreed and we swam to shore as fast as we could. We grabbed our towels and dried off as best we could, while our feet collected sand as we ran inside. Our hands were pruney and we smelt like salty sea water so we went to our rooms. Ivy was freaking out because she said she had band practice in an hour and she could not bear the consequences if she was late, again.

Calming her down, I suggested, "Take a shower in your bathroom and make it as short as you can. When you get out, erase any sign of water like your bathing suit and then just say that you decided to wake up early to get a good jump on the day."

"Sounds like you've done this before." Said Ivy

Rolling my eyes I reply, "Well that's because I have"

We went to our rooms, took showers and freshened up. When I got out I made sure it didn't smell like the salty ocean and to do so I sprayed my room with my mother's pine forest scent. My sister had the same idea as she flooded her room with the scent of lilies. I got dressed for school and ate breakfast which was cereal and by that time our mom, Jana, was walking in the kitchen.

"Wow you girls impress me. Look at you waking up early, taking showers and ready for band practice and school! I don't think this has ever happened before" Ivy and I locked eyes and shared an innocent smile.

"Just wanted to get a headstart on our day!" I said. "Don't want to be late for a fun-filled day of learning."

When I made it to school, I quickly realized we had a pop quiz math test. Ugh, my least favorite subject. Before the test was going to start, we had a pre-test refresh. Like always, I zoned out because none of the questions made sense. But of course, the teacher had to call on me.

"Zara, can you tell me the answer to B 1 please?" Asked Mr. Quinn. The entire class was staring at me, waiting to laugh.

"Um B 1? Um... I, Uh." I stutter. I have know idea what to say! But I don't want to say that I wasn't listening because that is just going to embarrass me even more "I'm sorry, I wasn't..." "The answer is 24!" Interrupted my best friend, Faith. I gave her a very thankful look and told

Mr. Quinn that I will pay more attention next time. I was confident that I would fail this test as exhaustion set in.

After the math lesson Mr. Quinn gave me extra homework because I said the math sheet we had to do was too hard. And now I'm going to have to do homework when I get home. Not what I was hoping for. After that we had writing and I was so glad we had a half day because the teachers had to meet for some reason, but if it's a short day then I'm happy. We had to write a personal narrative and then share it with the class. I asked Mr. Quinn if it was okay that I didn't share. As expected, he told me I couldn't get out of this one. I said, "Okay." In my head I was saying, "If It's a PERSONAL narrative, then it is PERSONAL, meaning you don't have to share it. Duh."

After the school day was completed, I was waiting for my sister to pick me up. She walked to my school with her friends and I went home with her. They were talking about boys and stuff and that's boring so I skipped ahead. I don't know why mom won't let me walk to school by myself. I know the way to my house and I can get there much faster without my sister dragging her feet. I keep walking and It gets really quiet but I don't pay much attention to it and I just keep walking. I see my house and go inside and mom is in there waiting for me.

"Hi honey, how was your day?" Mom asked.

"It was fine but Mr. Quinn gave me extra homework because I didn't know the answer to the problem and he didn't bother to help me." I said remembering.

"Where is your sister?" Jana asked worriedly.

"Ivy was taking too long so I just skipped ahead."

"You mean Ivy didn't pick you up?" Said mom, sounding frustrated

"Oh no, she picked me up." I said quickly. "She was just talking to her friends about boys and stuff and you know how I feel about that. So I just walked ahead of them. They should be right behind me."

"Well then do your homework and then eat dinner." Said my mom. I walked to my room and looked at the homework.

"Ugh why does this have to be so hard!" I crumpled up the paper and threw it at the ceiling. It hit my head. I heard the front door open and close

and heard my sister going to her room. I grabbed my homework and shoved it in my backpack. I don't care if I don't do the homework.

Later that night Ivy came into my bedroom and asked. "Hey sleepy head, do you want to go for a swim again tonight?"

"You can, but I won't." I yawned.

"What! Why?" Asked Ivy.

"Because I don't want to. I'm very tired" I said with my eyes closed.

"Well the ocean will wake you up. And besides I keep seeing things glowing in the water." Ivy said excitedly.

"Ya right!" I murmured. "You're just trying to get me to go out there."

"No, I keep seeing things, I swear!" Replied Ivy.

Her tone was convincing, so I sprung out of bed, got on my suit and off we raced out my window to the ocean. Before even making it to the water we could see it was illuminated. I have been swimming late at night for the past two weeks in hopes that I would see this remarkable creature. I realized immediately that it was in fact, the firefly squid. This is an outstanding discovery. I have only ever read about these creatures and finally, I am seeing them. This is a once in a lifetime moment, well worth the sleepless nights and failed math tests. My life is complete.