

# Children of The Ocean

By Indiana Salsabila

When I was little, I met a girl who came from the ocean.

I was taking a walk along the beach when she surfaced from the body of water, her walk graceful and her footsteps so light it was as if the tide carried her to the shore. The first thing she did was look at me with her eyes—eyes so blue and deep that they were 50% oceanic and 50% drowning. Then, a smile stretched across her coralline-pigmented lips as her hand extended towards me.

“Is this yours?” Her voice was a blanket of tranquility, enveloping me in a feeling similar to that of being underwater. Resurfacing from my flood of thoughts, I looked towards the object she was holding out: a plastic bag.

“Oh,” I replied, dumbfounded, as I came to notice the nearby convenience store’s logo etched on the plastic. “Ah, yes, it was mine. I just got back from buying ice cream...” I trailed off with an uncomfortable smile. It felt like she was implicitly calling me out on littering, so I felt my face getting warm from embarrassment. She continued to smile and handed the plastic to me, which I took awkwardly. I let the plastic bag dangle by my side, my fingers gripping it loosely. My eyes had not left her hand, which was still extended. I blinked before lifting my gaze up to look at her face, questioning her wordlessly. She stretched her hand closer to me with her palm out in a gesture of invitation.

“Would you like to dive in with me?”

The events following that encounter were a blur. I can vaguely recall being underwater and witnessing more children. Some were exploring or playing with the sea creatures while others were picking up various kinds of urban waste to dispose of. I remember reaching the ocean floor and placing my hands on its sandy surface, feeling a pulse against my palms that beat in time with my heart. The moment we resurfaced, I questioned the girl about the ocean’s pulse that seemed to beat along with mine.

“That *is* your pulse!” she exclaimed, voice lilting with enthusiasm. “Take a look at your wrist. What colour is your vein?”

I paused for a moment before slowly glancing down. My vein stood out against my pale skin, a bright blue crawling down my wrist. I couldn’t remember my vein being that blue, but then again it could be because I had been underwater for so long that my skin had paled and that let the colour of my vein pop out more than normal.

“If you’re thinking that it’s blue because your skin has paled due to the long dip in cold water, you’re wrong,” the girl interrupted my thought as if she had read it, leaving me flabbergasted. “Blue veins belong to the children of the ocean, while green ones belong to the children of the forest. Long ago we protected our respective homes according to our veins. But today we protect both the ocean and the forest regardless of the colours wrapped around our wrists. The colours, however, remain as a reminder that we are all children of nature and that its destiny is in our hands. Humans, they tend to only care about things that are part of themselves. Now that you’ve learned that the ocean beats alongside your heart, you know

that it is a part of you. Many other children, the ones you saw swimming around and exploring earlier—very much like you who started off unknowing, ignorant—will come to this understanding as well. In the future when you’ve all grown up, you can claim that the ocean is the heart of our Earth; for the Earth in the future is made up of the children of today.”

Her little speech struck me, so much that I could recite every word. Which is weird, because the memory of that day is mostly blurry and my logic keeps trying to reason with me. Do you know that feeling of not being able to tell between a childhood memory and a dream? Sometimes certain memories feel too vague to be real but vivid enough to be a dream, hence that is why it is so easy to mistake a dream for a memory. Well, meeting the children of the ocean feels like a dream. It most probably was, for whenever I recount the story, people always look at me weird or smile and say I had a wonderful imagination.

But the blue of my vein still stands out against my skin and my pulse still resonates with the ocean’s.

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I remember the message left for me by the girl who came from the ocean; that I should tell people about how the ocean is the heart of our Earth. I had wanted to share my experience the moment I got old enough to be called an adult. By a universally accepted logic, it is mostly certain that an adult’s words are taken more seriously than a child’s. Is that true, though? Would you say that you believe me if I tell you my story is real? Because I know many would not, and that’s okay. It is completely your choice to believe my story or not, and I have no right to force anything onto you. There is, however, one thing that I would like you to really take to heart: The ocean is in need of our help.

If you don’t believe in the children of the ocean, then believe in the scientists, the news, the articles—all crying for attention to be drawn towards our ocean. If you don’t believe my story, then believe the murky water, the crumbling reefs, the fish floating sideways on the surface. We are all children of nature, and if you ever need a reminder, let me ask you one thing:

Take a look at your wrist. What colour is your vein?