

## The Forgiving Powers of the Ocean

I was seething. Simmering, bubbling in my anger. I despised her- how could she do such a thing? I glanced at her- my sister- and instantly, my anger flared up again. I strolled, feigning casualty, to the window of our hotel room that was letting in the summer sunshine. I looked outside the window and replayed what had just happened in my head and decided that none of it had been my fault. As I stared into the distance, at the far away Virginia Beach, I vowed to never forgive her.

It had started out as nothing more than just a little bump in the road between my sister and I. The tension began after my family got off the car after a six-hour car ride- I never knew exactly how far away Virginia Beach was from Hershey until then. The car had been stuffy and hot, and everybody- particularly me- was irritable and tired. At the moment, I felt particularly hot-tempered- and unlike myself. The luggage was as heavy as a boulder, and as my family made our way up to our hotel room, I felt fatigued. My only wish at that moment was to fall into a velvety soft, warm, bed to sleep. Finally, all the way on the sixth floor of our hotel, my family entered the hotel room.

Then, it happened. It. The spark on the bomb of our now exploded conflict. My sister, Nancy, jumped on the perfectly made, prim and proper hotel bed with her shoes. These shoes were unlike any other- they were her most filthy, gum-on-the bottom shoes. With that, I erupted and screamed at her. With that, our tensions escalated until now- when our conflict was so palpable, it was almost tangible.

“When are we going to the beach?” my dad asked, glancing worriedly at my sister and I.

*Uh oh*, I thought guiltily. I had completely forgotten that my family was supposed to go to the beach- it was several miles away from the hotel we were staying at- until now. *Well, no matter what, I am NOT going to ride in the same car as my sister*, I decided.

“We’re definitely not going to the beach when Erica decides to cooperate,” said my sister sarcastically.

I was stung- what did she mean, when I decided to cooperate? To prove that I would, I replied, "Well, I AM cooperating, so why don't we go?" *I am NOT difficult- am I?*

My sister snorted. "Yeah, right," she muttered.

During the car ride, the air between my sister and I felt as icy as the Arctic, and it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. The conflict between my sister and I seemed all but incessant. It felt like an eternity before we got to the beach, although it really was only a few minutes. As soon as my dad expertly maneuvered the car into the parking space, I burst out of the car, gasping for breath- even though the car had plenty of air. I breathed in the salty, tangy, slightly pungent scent of the ocean. I quickly dropped my bag onto the chair that my dad had briskly set out onto the sand and ran into the ocean's choppy, dark blue waves.

Half an hour later, I climbed out of the water, absolutely ecstatic. I snuck a glance at my sister beside me. *Was she still mad at me?* I thought worriedly.

"That was amazing!" my sister laughed. Her smile was like one of the sun's rays to me- radiant and warm. Immediately, the tension drained out of my body like water swirling down a drain and I laughed too, relieved. "I'm sorry about what I said earlier," she added softly.

"Me, too," I replied. I knew that I could be hot-tempered, and I had been then. As we walked to the ice cream stand, I thought, *I can't believe this. Not even an hour ago, I didn't want to ever even SEE her again. Now, I'm forgiving her? Then again,* I considered as I reached into my bag for money, *I always have forgiven her. After all, she is my sister.* I smiled to myself as I prepared myself to face the enormous crowd waiting for ice cream with my sister by my side.