

## The Necklace

The ocean I was in was cold and dark. It swirled around me and tossed me in different directions. I clawed frantically towards the surface, unable to reach it. A heavy chain wrapped around my foot, dragging me deeper into the murky depths. Deeper and deeper and-

"Olive! Olive Chesterfield! Come down to eat!" my mom yelled. It pulled me from my nightmare.

"Coming!" I managed to get out, still shaking and breathing heavily. I reassured myself that I was in fact not in the ocean, but in my bed. I got out. I have had recurring dreams like these ever since the passing of Grandpa Joe.

I stared in the mirror, and a pale, skinny girl, with tousled long brown hair and blue eyes looked back at me. My cheeks were still flushed from my dream. I sighed and brushed my hair. Then I tied it into a high ponytail, and put on my necklace as I headed downstairs.

My necklace was a gift from Grandpa Joe right before he went on the boating trip where he drowned. I only took it off for bed in case it broke. It was my prized possession, not to mention the most expensive thing I owned. It had a silver chain, adorned with sapphires and one small pearl in the middle. Everything on it, even the sapphire, had been retrieved by my grandpa himself on his journeys.

"I made waffles!" my mom exclaimed as I walked in. Cooking was her love language, and I was not mad about that. No matter what was happening she always had food in the oven. I remember the day of my grandpa's funeral. The whole house was filled with food because it was how she was coping. We ended up having to donate it because it was too much to manage.

But that was too sad to think about right now, so I grabbed a waffle and began to head out the door. "I have work at the diner today!"

"See ya later!" My mother's reply was distracted as she took another waffle out of the machine.

I hopped on my bike and rode. It was a misty day, like it usually is in coastal Maine. It was probably not the best place for someone with a fear of the ocean to live. The waves were always a constant reminder of what...no, *Who* I'd lost. There was a slight chill in the air, a clear sign that fall was on its way.

The diner came into view, the bright yellow coffee cup sign on the roof making it hard to miss. I locked up my bike, and as I walked in, I threw on my ugly mustard yellow apron and began to clean the counter.

Like clockwork, my usual customer Mr. Jones came in. He was a retired naval officer, a short and stocky man. His wife had died this year, and I felt bad for him, but he was well off, with a house on an island in a cove not far from here. Recently, he had seemed sadder, like a permanent fog was shrouded over him.

"The usual?" I asked him.

"Mhm" He mumbled. He eyed my necklace like he always does, a weird habit of his. I have learned to brush it off though. Someone with that much money has no need for my necklace, so I assume he thinks it is pretty. Another thing, he never stayed in the diner. He was always too busy, in a rush to get somewhere. It made no sense to me as he was retired. But who am I to tell someone how they should live their life?

I prepared his order, an americano with a packet of honey on the side. It was an odd order. He would drizzle the honey into the coffee and walk out without drinking it.

"Here you are." I handed him his drink.

He rummaged through his wallet, put cash on the counter and left.

"Have a nice da-" He was already out the door.

The rest of my day was slow, and soon enough I was biking home. After dinner when I was in bed, I had a slight panic when I couldn't find my necklace. I found it on my dresser. I was a very paranoid person. I sighed, and went to bed.

That night my dream was worse. This time I was in a boat out on the sea, the water clear, when out of nowhere a huge wave dragged me underwater. Like usual I couldn't swim up, but when I looked down there wasn't an anchor bringing me down. It was a hand.

I woke up panting. It was 7:00 AM. I was off work today, but I decided I wanted to go for a walk. It was cold in my room. The breeze was coming from my open window. That was odd, I didn't remember opening that last night.

I headed towards my dresser only to realize my necklace wasn't there. *My necklace wasn't there.* I frantically searched my room. Not under my dresser, not in my bed,

"Mom! Have you seen my necklace?" I yelled.

"No, It was on your dresser last time I saw it!" she replied.

As I sat on my bed, worried, I heard something making noise in the wind. There was a crinkling sound coming from outside my window.

Something yellow flashed in my view, a packet of honey.

"No, he wouldn't. Would he?" I inspected the window closely and I realized that it had been forced open from the outside with a wrench. The dots connected. Who else eyed my necklace like he did? And nobody else I know carries honey packets with them. I knew who took my necklace. I knew where I had to go.

"I'm going to go for a walk." I hollered to my mom. Not waiting for a response, I rode towards the diner. I camped out in the bushes until I saw Mr. Jones walking in. This was my window. I hurried towards the dock. I parked my bike and grabbed one of the many rental kayaks left on the shore from the busy season. I frantically paddled towards the island Mr. Jones lived on, trying my best to ignore the fact that I was in the water.

Around halfway out I realized I was not wearing a life vest. I shuddered, but kept paddling. The ocean was calm right now, but I saw a storm in the distance. I knew I had to work fast. Docking my kayak, I inspected the house.

It was a white cedar house, with old windows and a decaying dock. The navy front door was locked, but the back sliding door was cracked open and I slipped in. I paused, guilt shot through me briefly.

*"Am I really breaking into this man's house?"* I asked myself. *"He's old, and sad"*

*"Do it for the necklace"* My head shot back.

The house smelled like mildew mixed with salt air. As I headed towards the kitchen I scanned the room I was in. There were bills scattered on the dark pine table. All of them with big red "LAST NOTICE" signs on them. The stained light blue couch had even more pieces of paper. These ones photographs of jewelry with descriptions and prices below the images.

The kitchen was a mess. There were cans of food in broken cabinets, but no bills here. Something silver caught my eye. Piles of jewelry littered the table. Intrigued, I stepped closer when I saw a familiar sapphire. My necklace! I rushed towards it, grabbed it, and immediately put it on. I started to take a look at the other jewelry on the table. Where did he get this from? Why does he have-

"Click" A door unlocked. Oh no.

"Who's there!" A voice boomed. Mr Jones had come home. I rushed towards the back door.

"Come back! I hear you!" He yelled. I sprinted out, shutting the door behind me. I dragged the kayak off the patch of grass it was on. The sea was now choppy. I climbed in while attempting to stay afloat. I began to paddle when-

"You! It was you who broke in." Mr Jones yelled.

"You stole my necklace!" I fired back from the safety of my kayak. He couldn't reach me out here.

"You're well off, you can do without it!" He shouted. Or at least I think he did, the wind was so loud I could barely hear.

"It's mine! My grandpa gave it to me!" Anger flashed in his eyes and he made his way towards the dock. Realizing he was going to get me from his boat, I paddled away. As he struggled to start his boat I got closer and closer to the shore. I was around 100 yards away when-

*Whoosh* A wave knocked me into the water. I fell out of the kayak. Beginning to panic, I thrashed in the water. My kayak was swept away. As if the water was pulling me down I began to sink. Amid the chaos, my hand went to my necklace. I heard my grandpa's voice in my head

"Ollie swim!" He told me. I pushed up towards the surface, gasping for breath and beginning to adjust to my surroundings. I felt light, I wasn't afraid. It was as if my grandpa was there, guiding me. The telltale clunk of an engine starting up snapped me back to reality.

I swam like I have never before. The waves pushed me forward instead of pulling me down. The water worked with me, not against. When I made it to the shore, far away from the dock. The bright lights of police cars quickly caught my eye.

"What do you think you're doing here kid?" A burly police officer asked me.

"Why are you wet? Were you at the scene?" A skinnier one questioned.

"I was just going for a swim. What happened here?" I lied.

"Mister Jones over there stole a boatload of jewelry in order to pay his taxes. Turns out he's not as rich as he let on.." The first officer said.

"Jimmy! That's confidential!" The other one exclaimed.

"You go on your way now." The sheriff ordered me as he walked over. "Both of you, back to work he's escaping!"

The sheriff wasn't wrong. While I had been talking to the two cops, Mr. Jones had made it into the open ocean. He was flooring it as far away from the cops as he could get. As the police chased after him, I began my walk home. The cool wind no longer felt bitter, but refreshing on my wet hair and skin. Picking up my pace, I began to run. I ran as if I was floating, feeling 10 pounds lighter. I felt like a weight had been lifted off my back. As I snuck back in through the open window, still panting from my impromptu workout, the skies opened up. I was soaked and shivering, so I went inside.

Later, after a very warm shower, and double locking my windows. I found myself putting my necklace under my pillow before bed. Nobody would take it from me now. As I laid down I felt no fear of what was to come in my dreams. The water was no longer my enemy. Instead something that could help me.

That night, for the first time in a while, I had no dreams.