

-----Between life and death-----

-----Original story by Melani Sintsova-----

All my life I had an ethereal connection with the ocean. I always found inner peace and answers to all my questions within the water. When I was five years old I tried surfing for the first time, my father was a professional surfer and his passion and love towards it made me fall for surfing too. When I was 12 years old he went on a surfing trip on some island and never came back. No one ever told me what happened to him, I spent years interrogating everyone and all they said was "Ocean can be a mysterious place". Since I was a baby I have been a big fan of travelling. I took a gap year and dedicated it to surfing and living on this island in the middle of the ocean. I have been going to this beach everyday for ten months and all I cared about is getting some tan, doing some surfing and going for a run at the beach. I would never just chill at the beach freeing my mind and enjoying the moment of calmness. I wanted to get the most of my year over there. However, the universe had some other plans for me. Somehow I managed to break my toe against the door stopper and couldn't do anything but stay at this beach club all day long working on my book and getting some rays of sun to keep my hair blonde. I suddenly got a lot of time to think, observe and recharge. I realized that the thing I miss the most from my usual life is gliding over the waves with the wind playing with my hair, my mind free and my heart the happiest.

On my break from surfing because of my toe I suddenly noticed this guy who has been working at this beach for awhile. We started talking, flirting and I realised that "thank

god” I am staying here for another two months, so getting to know this guy would be great. I started seeing positive aspects in my lonely blue days at the beach. I knew I could talk to him, listen to his crazy stories and see his handsome smile. In those three weeks of me wearing that cast I really got into him. I had this urge to see him outside his work. I made myself walk up to him and ask him for his social media page. My heart was beating fast and my head was really dizzy as I said “do you have iContact?”. His answer was pretty ordinary “Yeah... I do”, I panicked. I really did not want him to think I was hitting on him so I said the first thing that came into my mind “Me too ha-ha”. Thanks to the heavens above he asked to exchange our iContacts. On my way home I was really excited with all my hopes that he might be interested in me. I was in a car singing to Taylor Swift’s songs and taking cute selfies. That night I, as any other girl would do, decided to stalk his profile. It was the worst idea ever. His pictures were dark, ominous and he never showed his face. It felt like it was two different men, the one with an angelic smile and ethereal eyes from the beach and the mysterious and vicious one on that “iContact” page.

That night I dreamt of him, my dream was abnormal and felt too real. It went like this... “I went on my balcony to check the stars before I went to sleep, it was a full moon, warm, salty breeze. The vibe, no actually the ambiance felt really romantic and then out of the midnight fog and complete silence He appeared. It looked like he was hovering up in the sky. He gave me his hand and with no words lifted me up with him to the stars. It suddenly became cold, foggy and I could feel like we were lifting higher and higher.

While we were hovering over the fields of white and soft like cotton snowdrifts, he told me that he is here to protect me and that I should trust what he is about to say. I thought he was going to say that he likes me and wants to be with me. His words were different, all he said was just that I should never get close to water gain. For me it was weird as the ocean has always been my true love and my father always told me to give my whole heart to the ocean just like he had always done, but I did not really care about his words. Just the feeling of his arms around me gave me butterflies. After that he gave me a long passionate good night kiss and I woke up.”

Next morning I felt embarrassed and awkward to see him. It was just a dream, but it felt too damn real. That morning when I arrived at the beach he asked me how my night was. I know it is just a coincidence but it felt weird. My foot was already healed and I was ready for my surf sesh. He called my name and told me not to go as the swell was not that good. There were around 15 surfers in the water. I don't know what it was but I trusted his words and abstained from surfing.

That night he was in my dream once again. It was different... we were in the water, literally underwater swimming like two mermaids. We did not have any oxygen respirators, but somehow we could breathe. The water was warm... I had my eyes open but they did not sting. We were playing with jellyfish, talking with dolphins, riding turtles... my dream ended by him kissing my forehead and telling me not to go in the water anymore. My father always told me not to listen to anyone and follow my heart as

only it knows what really matters. Next morning I thought I was going insane. My dream seemed to be too real but too crazy and strange,

That day at the beach he was acting weird, he wouldn't stop looking at me. It was a boiling day, I wanted to go on a quick swim, but then I saw him run after me in the water screaming "DO NOT DO THAT!". I realised that his actions and words have to do with me going in the water and the only question I had now was "why". After that he was avoiding me the whole day long, I was not sure whether I did something wrong or he was trying to tell me something. That night I saw no dreams. In fact, I didn't go to sleep at all. The thought of what he might have meant and why he was acting so strange did not leave my mind. Maybe he did really like me but did not know how to tell me that. Maybe he was jealous that I would get with other boys, I always had surfers friends but they were like bros to me.

I was up all night, trying to solve this riddle but I was so tired of those pointless guesses, I just wanted to enjoy my summer. Early that morning with the dawn, I took my surfboard and went surfing. I arrived at the beach before anyone else to catch a perfect wave. There was no one else in the water. The waves were perfectly smooth and clean. As soon as I got on the water, I lost my cautiousness. I must have fallen or something but all I remember is me popping up and after that everything is just some white blurred chilled fog and someone's warm loving hands. Similar to those hands I have already felt in my dreams.

I woke up at the hospital, I had this scar-tattoo on my wrist that just said one letter "L". I thought maybe I was just not fully recovered and had bad vision as I felt dizzy and cold. The nurse came in the room and told me that I was alright and was ready to head home.

When I came home, I felt like a stranger at my own place. Everything was the same, but I was different. I did not feel anything. I suddenly was not worried or scared. I felt indifferent about everything. I spent the whole night at the beach listening to the sound of waves and enjoying the fresh breeze. I had this weird feeling that something was ending. I felt fulfilled and calm. For the first time in my life things seemed normal. As the sun went up I passed by the beach to see that godlike man. I asked where he was...but people had no idea who I was talking about. I was going to ask the manager if she knew where he might be, but my friend interrupted "Are you coming tonight? We are going to surf as only tonight the bioluminescent microorganisms will be lighting the water and it will feel like surfing a neon bright wave", I obviously said yes.

That night the water was surprisingly cold despite the air temperature being over 86 Fahrenheit. All my friends were laughing and having fun, but a weird feeling kept on bugging my mind. It was my turn to take the wave. It was perfect as I could barrel it and all the light from the microorganisms would be around me. The wave did not finish and at some point that freezing water become warm, I lost my board and the bioluminescent microorganisms became my guiding light. I lost gravity and suddenly felt someone's warm hand. I looked up and it was him hovering in the air with crystal clear wings. He

hugged me and raised me up in the heavens above. Only then I realized that he was my angel. He was protecting me from water as he knew that it will take me away one day. Just like it took my dad away. Now it suddenly became clear to me. This angel was sent by my dad to take care after me. I saw my body suffocating in pain and drawing in the water, but my soul has finally felt free. I knew I was on my way to paradise with a man from my dreams. I knew that he and I have already visited that place before. I now knew that all those dreams were true, he was preparing me to enter his world where I could finally meet my father.

We were now in front of a beautiful garden full of fountains, angel sculptures, white like pearl roses and an eternal circle on the gates. He looked deeply in my eyes, that gaze made me go weak and he pushed me closer to him and kissed me. When I opened my eyes the garden of Heaven was no more there and all I could see was flame, ash and devils. In the entrance I saw my father's lucky necklace on a pile of bones. I wasn't going to heaven, I was in hell. My angel, my savior was the one who made me a sinner. I was tempted and seduced by him. The devil took me and I was no more that wavy beach hair surfer girl, I became his prize and my soul was given to the devil. But I did not care. I found where my father went and now I was here with the man I love.