

## Chapter I. Introduction

*PANIC.*

All I could think about was just that. I was resting, dreaming of the clear, crystal-like water that I loved so much, until it drained into a bottomless pit. That's when I tried to wake up but felt myself letting go. I remember dozing off. My parents were shaking me, calling after me, but then

*POOF.*

I could no longer see them. I could only hear and feel what was happening around me. I could hear my parent's cries for help and their hands desperately holding me, but that was all I could do. I could only listen and feel the chaos around me.

The sound of the nurses coming in to save me, hopelessly trying to revive me, gave me hope, but I knew it was too late.

## Chapter II. History

My story begins three generations back, in the time where people were not aware of all the problems that would later foreshadow the events that would lead to my demise. The year was 2017, my beloved great grandmother was a seafood fanatic. I mean my

*GOSH!*

My mom would always talk about how she would always go fishing with my great grandfather, who at first did not like seafood, but came to love it because of my grandmother. My mom would say how on the weekends or on their free times, they would go to the restaurant around the corner called "Seafood Fanatic" where it was "all you can eat seafood." (Which I found really funny because that's where my mom and dad later met. But that is another story.)

Anyway, at that time, people were kinda stupid, if I'm being frank. They knew the consequences that waste brings to the oceans but for some darn reason they didn't take action to prevent its further damage. I mean

*COME ON!*

There were already a bunch of existing programs that tried to prevent ocean pollution during the 2000s such as Surfrider Foundation (1984), Heal the Bay (1985), 5Gyres (2008) and Bow Seat (2011) and some of them even dated back to the 1970s, such as the Ocean Conservancy (1972) and Californians Against Waste (1977). So I find it really idiotical that people back then, never took action to better safeguard the beautiful ocean that I love so much. I mean, you would think that with all of these programs people would at least consider that something is wrong. But, no, despite these programs efforts, people did not listen, and it foreshadowed the ongoing epidemic that will ravage the 2100s.

But before I get to that chaos let me go back to my great grandmother's story. Since she love love loved eating fish, my great grandma ultimately decided that she had to run a seafood restaurant. She knew how hard it was to start a business, so instead of starting a new one, she solicited the "Seafood Fanatic's" owner to sell her the business. To my grandma's surprise she successfully convinced, Maria, the owner, to sell, and this became our famous family business; and you know what happens to family businesses? They are passed down from generations to generations.

Now, that sounds great and all, but this is what solidified my fate. A family owned seafood restaurant meant that all of its members were constantly eating seafood for generations and generations, and I mean back in the 1900s this would have been ok, when the world was not overpopulated nor was trash so abundant, but this wasn't so. It was the 2000s and the world was

## *OVERPOPULATED*

and it was

## *FILLED WITH TRASH,*

and although people knew the typical consequence of ocean pollution (it ruins biodiversity, kills many sea animals because they mistake plastic for food, makes swimming in the ocean unsafe for both sea animals and humans because toxic waste from fuel pollute the water and etc.) the people back in my great grandma's generation and even just a generation before me, didn't know the

## *DEADLY AND GRADUAL*

effects of the plastic toxins we were eating through our seafood, until it was too late.

### Chapter III. My Story

I was named Lisa Massari at 6:59 A.M. of May to the greatest parents a girl could ask for. My mom and pops always encouraged me to try every possible activity out there and when I ended up loving something they supported me 100%.

It was no surprise to my family that the activity that I loved the most was swimming and fishing because of our whole ocean background and all. I just have always loved the water and the calamity it made me feel. I remember when my family and I would come every summer to our beach house, and I would watch the remaining seagulls left in existence fly by and fish for the remaining fishes in the ocean. I remember my grandma telling me stories about how much more these creatures roamed around only two generations back, but because of ocean pollution there was barely any left thriving. I also remember how hard it was to find a safe area to swim and enjoy the beach, because of all the trash that has accumulated within the oceans. Despite

these facts and downfalls, the water was still a source of escape for me and I lived to see it every day. But this is not what happened.

#### CHAPTER IV. Heartbeat

I was sitting in class one day while Mr. Brum was handing back everyone's homework.

*BOOM.*

That was when I fell to the ground. Within a second, the lights went out. The next thing you know, I woke up at the hospital and my mom jumped up from her chair the moment she saw me open my eyes. Then, in a flash, the doctor came in. He asked what I remembered, how I felt, and anything that could help him determine the source of my collapse.

Me: I just remember looking at the board, and my chest started to really hurt. I felt like I couldn't breathe, and then everything went blurry. The next thing I knew I was here.

Doctor: (Had a worried look on his face) Alright, I am going to take a few tests on you, ok? He then took out a series of tools and began to take my BP, my heart rate, and a tube of my blood. After this was done, he made me get a series of MRI's and X-Rays and left. After a few hours, he came back.

Doctor: The pain you felt was it here? (points to the middle of my chest)

Me: Yes.

Doctor: And did it feel like your heart kept skipping a beat?

Me: Yes, something like that, but I'm ok right?

Doctor: (with a sad look) Honey, before I answer that (looks at mom and pops) may I have a word with you guys outside for a moment?

Pops: Yes, yes no problem.

Mom: (kisses me on the forehead) We'll be just outside, okay honey?

I just smiled, as I watched them go outside and into the hall through the glass window, but right then and then I knew there was something wrong. Out of nowhere my mom looked at me and turned away. My pops just held her tight. They were out there for 10 minutes. I had an odd feeling, I couldn't breathe again and those same chest pains came back.

*lub-DUB, lub-DUB, lub-DUB*

I woke up again. The doctor couldn't look me in the eyes. At the time, I did not know what specifically was wrong. Did I scare him? Did I have to stay at the hospital for a long time and he's scared of how I'll react? I wasn't sure what the answer was until my mom explained that *I was dying*. When I heard those words it was like the world stopped spinning. I couldn't comprehend anything else that my mom said. I couldn't process what was happening around me. I was just in a limbic state.

My parents were even more devastated. All I could remember from that day was my mother holding in her tears. She looked done with life, like as if she was dying and not me. They asked if I felt well enough to go through tests to make sure they haven't missed anything. These tests concluded that my blood was a combined 80% of lead, cadmium, mercury, and endocrine disruptors, all of which can be acquired in seafood or could have been hereditary. [1] He explained that it was impossible for me to have almost an 80% rate of toxic chemicals in my body with just one of those two factor, so it must have been both. This means that the generations before me has gradually been getting poisoned by seafood and has passed down their toxic levels to me. The doctor then explained why these chemicals were so horrible for my health.

DOCTOR: You had an excess amount of lead in your body, and this affected the growth of basically all of your organs, especially your heart.[2] It slowed the growth of your heart and this was crucial to your growing body.

He keeps on looking at his chart.

DOCTOR: Cadmium affected your blood pressure greatly, it increased the your heart right, thus making your heart work much harder.[3] Mercury, can produce serious effects on the nervous system including psychotic reactions, hallucinations, suicidal tendencies and delirium.[4]

Endocrine disruptors greatly increases your chances of heart disease. And then there's...

I blanked out after hearing those last three words. "And then there's!" The fact that there is even more!

*AHHH!!!*

All I wanted to do was cry. How could this happen to me? A young girl, who is barely living her life, is now told she will not culminate or graduate or even go to her prom. She will not be living for so long to even meet her prince charming, or watch her kids grow into amazing adults. She will just die. Nothing good can come out of that.

## CHAPTER V. The Awakening

As the days went by, my family decided to go into a family trip for the last time, although, they said there was more to come. We went to the beach house, and I couldn't wait to go for a swim, but it wasn't until perhaps the 100<sup>th</sup> time of begging, that my parents finally let me go. I instantly ran into the ocean. The touch of the water felt just right, and I went in a state of bliss, but I realized a disgusting truth. I was dying because of these oceans! I was dying because people were too stubborn to realize the truth! I was dying because people continued to pollute the oceans, despite its horrible consequences! I was dying because sea animals were so malnourished

from poor trash disposal and affected by oil spills that when I ate them, I also ate the chemicals that they did!

*IT'S THIS STUPID OCEAN'S FAULT!*

I took a last dip into the water and as I was trying to think of ways to drown my horrible thoughts I couldn't come back up. I felt and heard my heart beat for the last times.

*lub-DUB.. lub-DUB..... lub-DUB.....*

I woke up next to my great grandma and I knew I wasn't in the land of the living anymore. I never met her, of course, I only saw her in pictures, but I recognized her instantly. We talked for a little bit about what has happened to me, and she made me realize that, no, it wasn't the oceans' fault that I died, but that of the factor that made the oceans' so horribly sick and messed up; and that factor were the humans. That factor was us.

*WE MADE THE OCEANS SICK!*

And, thus, made the first (me) of many little girls and boys to die, as this epidemic continued to happen long after I was gone; and only then, did people start to care about ocean pollution. Only then, did people take action, and I have one question for all of them:

*DID WE REALLY HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE DEATH OF MANY, TO START CARING ABOUT*

*A CAUSE?*

## Bibliography

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