

The Beach – Caitlyn, Year 7, WA

PART I 20 YEARS BEFORE

The waves sail and crash gently on the shore.

Blue as the sky, foam like white clouds, leaving abandoned treasure for seagulls to sweep up in their claws. The breeze smells of salty seaweed, dark and curious.

Your heart beats in time with the turquoise waves as you watch children play upon the golden sand, wet with laughter. A barbecue is smoking in the distance, and you wonder whether you could have some of whatever it is.

The sand is baking in the sun, but the evening is rising. The waves watch the moon rise up and leap to try to reach it, each leap higher than the last. The stars arrive and the waves spring up majestically as darkness smothers the sun.

You watch the ever-darkening sky as it shades from the lightest pinks to the deepest shades of blue. The waves, leaping to the full moon, reflect the glittering expanse of stars above, and you watch in awe as fireflies take off around the full moon, spiralling up, up, up.

Fireflies take off, lighting up around the trees. They dance, with the cricket's song as music, graceful and smooth movements that the stars smile upon.

The waves grin, the moon giggles, and glows with the luminescent light of a thousand stars.

You know that there is one thing for certain as you sit in the midst of the beautiful night – there are images of beaches, but none as beautiful as this.

PART II 20 YEARS LATER

The waves pounce and churn, stealing plastic from the greying sand. The blackened waves abandon once beautiful shells upon plastic bags of human waste, discarded into the ocean. In the sun, you can see the earth-poisoning plastic. It is of all colours, some fading, some still vibrant from recent deliveries. You tuck your knees up to your chin and lean against the withered oak tree, once healthy and filled with fireflies, as you watch a truck drive by. You know its driver is oblivious to the beach as it drops another collection of old fishing nets, chocolate wrappers, and empty water bottles.

You gaze upon the endless mountains of plastic bags, and you feel tears prickling your eyes. This beach was once your paradise, your safe place, the most beautiful place in the world.

Now it is ruined, as are the shores and the turtles and the fish.

The sun is lowering, the moon rising. You watch in horror as the waves strengthen their tide, stealing more rubbish to feed the turtles, fish, and sharks. There are no stars tonight, or any other night.

Just a pollution-clouded sky.

As the waves pounce, a moth flutters across the empty expanse of blackened trees, including the one you lean on, and your heart cracks as you remember that they were once filled with glowing fireflies.

The beach, once a beautiful paradise, awaits the cleaning of the sea, as ice melts, smoke smothers the sun, and humans and animals alike...

Are dying.

And you know that there must be *something* that you can do about it.

INTERLUDE

DAY 1

Dear Mr Stapleton,

As you are the Head of the Department of the Environment, I would like to bring a matter forwards.

There is a beach (the address is included below) that has been suffering the forces of plastic waste. I would like for this to be cleaned up. I know that you have done it in the past for other beaches and would urge for you to do the same for this one.

~

I have read your letter. I will consider it, but we simply do not have the resources or money for this kind of expedition. I'm sorry.

DAY 2

Dear Mr Stapleton,

I believe that you do have the resources. I researched the banking income of the Department of Environment and did the maths, and you have more than enough money that will be needed to run this expedition.

~

*First of all, we are fixated on global matters, such as global warming.
Second, those statistics on the internet are wrong. Please do not bother me again.*

DAY 375

Dear Mr ~~Simpleton~~ Stapleton,

You MUST consider this issue, you ~~IGNORANT IDIOT WITH A BADGE!~~ This is a serious matter and could affect your economic attraction from other countries. This beach was extremely famous, you ~~load of spinach~~, and if it was cleaned up, there would be more international income.

~

I have had enough of your pestering. DO NOT BOTHER ME AGAIN.

~

OUR BEACH IS DYING.

Volunteer to help save and restore the beach, or else our oceans and animals will die.

Meeting of Action: Come to 30 Newton Road to volunteer and assist us on the first of December if you want to save the beach, save the oceans, and save the animals.

PART III
5 YEARS LATER

The waves lick the ankles of children as they make a game of placing the discarded rubbish into disposable bags.

The adults are divided — some clean with the children, while others help transfer the rubbish into a large truck which will be taken to the brand-new recycling centre.

You watch with hope-filled eyes as passionate volunteers organise the introducing of turtles and a jetty.

After years of petitioning for the beach to be cleaned, you have put together a group of devoted volunteers, and you will do everything to preserve your beautiful paradise once again.

You clean along with the others, helping load the truck to the recycling centre, design the new jetty, and place waste in disposable bags with long metal tongs.

You and the other volunteers work dutifully and determinedly throughout the day, but the evening is rising. The waves leap up to try to touch the moon, a glowing orb in the sky. Then,

just as the night meets the evening, a flurry of fireflies sweep across the darkening sky and onto the barren trees to their old home.

The volunteers are suddenly filled with hope and your heart lifts at the sight of them. And then the children are cheering, and the adults are smiling, and you know that everything is going to work out.

For days, weeks, months, many clean the littered beach until there is

Nothing left

To clean.

PART IV 2 YEARS LATER

The waves sail and crash gently on the shore.

Blue as the sky, foam like white clouds, leaving beautiful sea treasure as a gift for cleaning its waters. The waves wash out shells, and more come to replace them, each shell more beautiful and unique than the last.

Sunshine envelopes the sand, lighting up the beach's shimmering turquoise waters. People set sail on their boats while children build fortresses of golden sand near the playfully pouncing waves.

You stand upon the jetty's clean wooden planks, leaning over the rail and watching the turtles swim alongside the dolphins and the orcas from afar. You observe the recently returned seagulls soar through the endless blue sky and smile, although you can't seem to push away the memories of the beach, covered in mountains of plastic.

The reusable cup in your hand is filled with your new favourite drink. It is from the café that opened three months ago at the beach, which sponsors many environmental charities and has a hire for kayaks near the jetty.

You watch as the night takes over, and the expanse of silhouetted trees are suddenly filled with the glittering light of thousands of fireflies. It fills the hearts of everyone at the beach; the beautiful display of nature blossoming before their eyes.

Home – your home. The place where you belong, the place you fought so hard to save. The place that will never stop being your true home.

And everyone at the beach knows in this moment, at once – there are beaches, but none as beautiful as this.