

A Place for Posterity

My trip to the Maldives was the most unforgettable experience of my life. Although the journey itself was fraught with challenges—three transfers and a twelve-hour delay due to a poor pigeon caught in the engine—stepping off the final flight made it all worthwhile. The Maldives greeted me with a breathtaking view: the sea glistened under the setting sun, and the water was so clear that every detail beneath its surface was visible.

I traveled with my family and cousins, which made the experience even more special. My brothers encouraged me to try snorkeling, a prospect that initially filled me with fear.

“Irene! Just come down, it’s not going to be that bad. It’s not that deep either,” my brother called out. Despite his assurances, I hesitated, uncertain about the freedom he seemed to enjoy so effortlessly. My cousin, already in the water, urged me to give it a try, promising to hold me so I wouldn’t be scared. At seven years old, I reluctantly donned a floatie, still apprehensive about venturing into the sea without it.

We didn’t need a boat to snorkel; a staircase beside our swimming pool led directly to the sea. My initial plunge was disheartening as cold water seeped into my goggles, prompting me to retreat quickly. “I have water in my eyes!” I complained, glaring at my brother and cousin for leading me into this predicament. Patiently, my brother adjusted my goggles, urging me to try again. Though skeptical, I felt I had nothing to lose.

The first time I dipped my face into the sea, water seeped into my goggles, but once adjusted, I opened my eyes to an underwater wonderland. Despite the shallow depth, the variety of marine life was astounding. I swam slowly, mesmerized as schools of tiny fish darted around me.

That moment beneath the surface remains etched in my memory. The vibrant marine life unfolded before my eyes—a kaleidoscope of tiny fish, starfish, and other colorful creatures I had never seen before. Captivated by the underwater world, I couldn’t get enough of snorkeling. I begged my brother to join me every day, spending hours in the sea discovering new fish and eagerly sharing my finds with him.

Now, as a teenager, I am acutely aware of the Maldives’ plight. Rising sea levels threaten to submerge this paradise, and having witnessed its beauty firsthand, I long for it to remain when I return as an adult. Hearing about the island’s potential disappearance due to climate change fills me with a sense of urgency to protect our environment.

Reflecting on the wonders I anticipate seeing in Iceland, I am reminded of the Maldives. Both regions face the peril of climate change, and witnessing these changes firsthand heightens my awareness and concern. It is crucial for individuals to recognize their role in preserving the environment for future generations. I hope that our children will experience the same joy I once did in the Maldives and that I will have the chance to immerse myself in Iceland’s beauty.