

The waves washed ashore bringing sea ornaments to the coast, but Bethany remained in a state of flux. Humongous waves formed around her as she struggled to break free from the surfboard as it sunk deeper into the sea bed. A siren screamed from the beach, warning the swimmers to return to shore.

Bethany no longer felt the leash from the surfboard around her ankle, yet she still felt trapped, as if the sea was dragging her into its depths. The waves crashed down upon her with the force of falling boulders. She looked down to determine the identity of her captor. That was then she saw it; the sea had turned red.

Suddenly her whole body was dragged into the crimson cage. Adrenaline took control of her and ordered her to fight back. To kick the monster; to swim for her life. She kicked as quickly and as vigorously as she thought possible and then, just as quickly as she was captured, she was free.

She turned to search once more for the beach, but the sand was but a blurred line somewhere in the distance. Her only hope for survival was in a buoy that floated just 9 metres away from her. She willed her body to swim, to move towards the buoy, but it betrayed her and she felt her consciousness fading.

“I won’t die here” She told herself as she used the last of her energy to head towards the buoy. Every stroke, every kick was torturous, but she couldn’t look back. Bethany reached the buoy, panting madly, trying to catch her breath, to make sense of the situation. She looked down towards her left arm and took her first glimpse at her mangled, bloody flesh. However, she could not let her fear take control as she knew the smell of blood might entice her monster to return. She ripped the remains of her rash top off and wrapped it around her arm in an attempt to stop the bleeding.

The slow hum of a motor began to fill the air. “This is it” thought Bethany as her heavy eyelids began to close. She felt arms around her, pulling her up out of the water and the world faded to black.

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A year later, Bethany had returned to her surfboard and enrolled at university as a medical student. She did not let her accident or disability prevent her from living her life. In fact, that unforgettable day had many positive effects on her life; it taught her to be brave, to be resilient and never underestimate her strength.

Based on the true story of Bethany Hamilton