

The Ocean

THE STORY

Imagine you are on a vast ocean. The sky is a gorgeous blue, spotted with soft, white clouds. The beautiful colors are reflected in the water. A soft breeze dances all around. You float on the bright surface. It's calm here, with long, slow, smooth waves gently rolling through, rocking you as you float. It lulls you into peaceful bliss. You think, *I would like to live on this ocean forever.*

But soon, an immense storm blows over the ocean. The skies turn dark and wild. Rain pummels the surface. The winds are howling, creating giant, thrashing waves. The swells of the water pick you up, and crash you down, over and over. You can't control the panic that surges through you. You slip below the surface, struggling to get back to air, but the ocean pulls you down. And you sink.

Down you go, further into the depths. But to your surprise, you can still breathe. You don't seem to need the air you thought you did. With panic gone, you notice that the water here is calm. It's quiet. So still. So peaceful and beautiful in this ocean.

You look back up to the surface and are surprised to see a storm still rages above you. You can see the waves thrashing and crashing, churning the waters. But down here, you don't feel them. *How can this be the same ocean?* You wonder. And you realize that the surface of the water will always be controlled by the weather. It will always be a changeable place, volatile and erratic.

You are so happy to have found this deeper place, with its quiet and stillness. You think, *I would like to live in this ocean forever.*

But soon, you begin to miss the surface. You remember the beautiful light, the soft breeze, and the peaceful lull of floating on the waves. And so you return. You enjoy the beauty at the surface. And when the next storm comes, you learned how to swim more strongly, because you're not afraid of being pulled down. Still, when it becomes too hard, down below the surface you go, deeper and deeper. You love seeing that storms and peace can happen at the same time.

And over time, traveling from the surface to the depths, you began to feel less like you, and more like the ocean itself. You are the quiet depths and the thrashing waves. You think, *I would like to live as this ocean forever.*

Until one day, you see someone on your surface. Your waters are calm and they float peacefully. But soon a storm comes and your waves start to thrash. And you see them begin to panic. And you realize that it is you. And so you pull yourself under to discover once again what it is to be on the ocean, in the ocean, and as the ocean itself.