



Item Code: 695

Participant Code: 063

That discovery led to a betrayal by the trusted one
* This story contains murder, violence, etc. Readers may find this upsetting.

"No you can't do this! Do you know how many marine species are killed each year, just because of our greediness? I did not become a marine biologist to destroy our ocean." Elenor screamed at her dad. Her family owns the marine research industry called Orca. Orca is well known to people for their amazing discoveries and programs. Yet all they do is what every human does — discover, then destroy. They're now going to ~~re~~ conduct examinations on marine ~~mammals~~ species to invent a cure for illness as well as anti-aging properties. Elenor felt a sharp sting as her father's hand met her cheek. "If we discover it, we'll earn millions or maybe even billions, and I'm not wasting an opportunity like this!" Her father barked at her. Tears flowed down her cheek. She had to prevent this. But how? Thoughts flooded ~~their~~ her mind.

"Kate... I have to tell you this and you have to stay with me... please, I've got no one else and I trust you the most." Elenor whispered to her best friend who also worked for Orca.

"You can count on me! What is it?" Kate asked, already sensing the matter. "Okay I need you to listen carefully: The shark-Adema that we have been observing gave birth to a calf, and I think the

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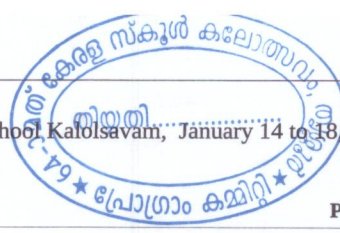
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...calf is about two months old. In the recent firing, it was killed, and further examinations shows they are not makes! They could be a whole new species!" Elenor explained to Kate, as she led them to the private lounge area of her bed room. "You've got to be kidding me." Kate exclaimed in a daze. "Nope, I ain't. Both Adena and her calf are much larger and faster swimmer than Makes, who are indeed one of the fastest swimmers in the world of sharks. Their nostrils are protruding, means they've adapted to fresh waters too. It's crazy as hell, and my dad is going to explore for more of Adena's kind, and you know what will happen next..." Her voice trailed off at the end. "So what are we gonna do?" Kate asked, her eyes glimmering with an intensity that can only be named as fierce determination. "First, we're going to escape. I want to see what and how daddy dearest could do without his chief marine biologist." Elenor said with a hint of sarcasm in her tone. Kate caught it, of course. "He'll need someone to differentiate from a dolphin and an orca", she replied, carrying the same tone as Elenor.

x x x

^{Elenor}
~~Kate~~ shot her a thumbs up before diving into the ocean. Kate

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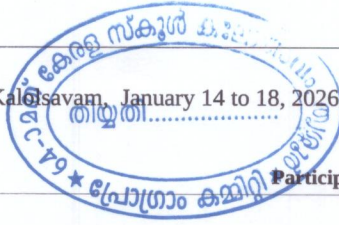
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followed next, her body slicing through the ice cold waves. "You good?" Elenor asked her through the speaker inside their mask. "You're asking that to a pro diver, babe." Kate replied, shooting her an "I'm done with you" look. "Yeah, yeah. I'm just making sure. Don't die on me." Elenor said swimming away. A school of fishes welcomed them. The beauty of the ocean was breathtaking. Kate had her jaw dropped in awe. "If it wasn't for the glass mask that's covering your mouth, a fish might have swam right through it and exit through your ears considering how hollow your head is." Elenor joked as Kate huffed in mock-annoyance. "You know how much I hate you?" Kate shot back. "I know, and I love you too, even though you're an idiot for a friend." Elenor replied. Kate was about argue when she saw something move. "What was that?" She asked, pointing towards the under water cave. "Let's go see what it is." Elenor replied, swimming towards it. "Wait! what if's an unknown creature, or worse, a monster like leviathan?" Kate started blabbing nonsense, anxiously. "You coming or what?" Elenor asked impatiently. "Uhh, fine you got me." Kate replied, swimming towards her.

The sight inside was even more amazing than outside. Biolumiscent

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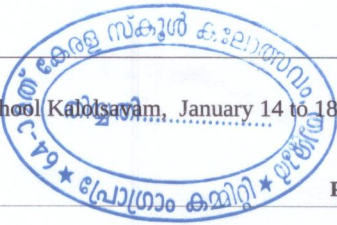


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algae and fishes along with corals covered almost the entire cave. The more deeper they went, the more darker it became. The girls waited to return but curiosity got the better of their scruples. Faint rays of light fell over them: sunlight. "Hey girl! you saw that? This cave has emerged above the ocean surface over ~~here~~ here, and also has that underwater entrance!" Kate exclaimed as the ~~immersed~~ reached the surface. A sudden movement caught both of their attention. "Okay, now what the hell was that?" Elenor whispered. They stayed still for a long time; do not scare the creature, the intention was clear. Few figures emerged from water. Humans? No, they looked like humans but also very different from ~~they~~ them. They had weird shaped ears, webbed hands, and gills. "What the hell? El, you seeing this?" Kate asked her best friend, eyes wide and petrified from the shock. Elenor's expression was no different. "pre historic petrified fossils!" She blurts out in shock. "Ok now, what was that?" Kate asked, her question meeting with her friend's silence. One of the figures, who seemed to the girls as the oldest, came forward and stared at them for a while, and then ~~smiled~~ smiled. "I see you're different from others," he said, shocking the girls even more. "I hope you are and I look forward on our

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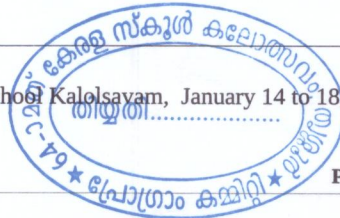
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mutual friendship." he finished. "Holy Mary of grail! What the hell was that? He spoke!" Elenor said, taking in the fact.

"So...you guys - mermaids and mermen - are real, and the stories about you are also not false? Why did you hid your existence?" Elenor asked. "We hid our existence from you, to be safe." one of the mermaids - Merlin, as Kate named - spoke. "Can you explain how you guys can speak english?" Kate replied. "That's one of the specialities of mermaids" Merlin said. "You guys are one of a kind, truly!" Kate replied, mesmerised.

They had gotten closer to the mermaids by now. Merlin was their closest friend. Merlin was talking about their culture when Elenor's eyes widened suddenly. "The ships! They're coming!" She didn't get to finish the sentence before her father's ship entered, destroyed parts of cave being the witnesses of the grand entrance. Gun fire echoed as the mermaids were shot down. "No!" Elenor screamed, but she could do nothing. "Good job Kate! I knew you'd be useful!" Elenor's father said as Kate grinned victoriously, walking past Elenor, shooting her a pityful smile. "I meant it when I said I hate you."

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Kate's whisper echoed in her mind as bullets pierced her body. "You betrayed me!" Elenor said through gritted teeth, struggling to breathe. "Oh darling, you sound like a drama actress on her verge of death. Isn't it pitiful? You trusted me blindly, and didn't even care to check if I had a tracker and a recorder with me : : :". Kate said with mock-innocence, holding out a tracker and the recorder she had used to betray Elenor. "Rest in peace, Elenor Azen. . . ." Kate said, as Elenor took her last breath.