

1. Hannah Packard

February 22, 2023 at 2:54:10 PM

Love the countdown layout!

2. Hannah Packard

February 20, 2023 at 3:58:44 PM

Deleting because she eats it in two meals later, and a tiny crab wouldn't be enough meat for that.

3. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:14:54 PM

It doesn't have to be childhood trips, necessarily, but it helps anchor this as a nostalgic memory in her life.

4. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:16:01 PM

Why would she want to live on the beach if the ocean was so scary to her? I'd recommend changing the language here to more awe-inspiring rather than scary or deleting this entire sentence altogether.

5. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:27:16 PM

In the companion story it seems like she lives closer? That's a little far to walk both ways for coffee on a Saturday.

6. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:28:48 PM

Not totally sure that the MC in the companion piece is a woman, just a guess.

The Queen of the Sea

1

12

I look out my window and see the waters rising ~~up~~ outside my house. The sea is almost to the yard today. I can tell ~~that the~~my apricot tree is anxious but excited. It's been awhile since it had this much to drink, though I don't know if the coming water is sweet or salty.

2

Tomorrow, the sea might be at my door, and I wonder what strange creatures could come to stay ~~knocking~~. Last week, a ~~tiny~~crab visited my home and I welcomed it with open arms. She's mostly harmless, although she does like to hide from me. Yesterday, an albatross made a nest in my chimney. I didn't like the idea at first, but I figured ~~that~~I wouldn't need a fireplace anymore. ~~Not~~ with the water rising.

3

I open my front door and take a step outside. It's windier than usual, a sea breeze like I remember from ~~the~~childhood trips to the beach. I always wanted to live on the beach ~~and~~—look at me now. Just beyond, the green grass of my lawn turns slowly into white foam from the soft waves. ~~I used to think the ocean was monstrous, something untamable and foreboding, but here it seems gentle~~. It's softly coming to my home, a subtle advance, surrounding me.

4

The water is warm when it touches my bare feet, but it's not like the beach. There's no sand at the bottom, it's just grass and rocks. It's salty, ~~though~~. I can tell.

I look out into in depths and wonder where the end of my driveway went. I suppose it's long gone, along with the little gnome that guarded the property. I still see the mailbox with its red flag raised, but I haven't seen a mailman for weeks. I doubt there's much mail to be delivered anymore. I don't even know how they would get it here; maybe if they had a boat.

Further out, I can see higher waves against the setting sun—, it's beautiful at this time of day. I think I see a dolphin jump in the distance, though it could've been a trick of light. I'm always fooled by things. I never thought the water would come this far, ~~a~~ lot of people said it never would, but it's here and so am I.

Not that I'm complaining. I'm not! I'm excited. I've always wondered what it would be like to live in the water ~~on a boat or at the beach or underwater~~. I think it would be magical. When I was younger, I would always pretend to be a mermaid. I wanted to swim the ocean deep and find hidden treasure and talk to fish. Maybe this is my chance.

11

I head back inside and close the door. Not all the way, ~~though~~, just in case the crab needs to get out for the night. ~~I never know what she needs, but I know that I need dinner~~. I open the cabinets with dinner on my mind and am at a loss. There isn't much ~~else~~left. I would go to the store, but ~~I can't drive in the water and~~ without a boat, I'm stuck. Even if I had a boat, how would I know which direction to go without the roads? I can't tell where anything is anymore.

5 6

My closest neighbors lived about a mile away, but ~~she~~they left earlier this year before the waters came. ~~It's so sad that their gone~~I'm sad that she's gone. I would have loved to talk to her

7. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:33:02 PM

The narrator comes off as childish throughout the story, but especially here. It makes me wonder how they've gotten through life this far that way.

8. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:42:27 PM

Deleted because it's repetitive.

9. Hannah Packard

February 14, 2023 at 3:43:20 PM

Find a stronger adjective or delete this phrase.

~~them~~ about the ocean at my door while ~~we drank~~ ~~drinking~~ coffee and ~~eating their~~ ~~ate her~~ homemade cookies. It was our routine for many years, but I suppose things change unexpectedly.

I find a can of diced tomatoes in one of the lower cabinets. I must have forgotten about them. I open it up with a knife. My electric can opener doesn't work anymore, not since the power was cut off, but it was old and on the fritz anyway. This is more fun. ~~It~~ reminds me of camping.

I sit on my couch and eat ~~my can of~~ cold, diced tomatoes and ~~daydream~~ of being a creature of the sea. How majestic and wonderful it must be to breathe under the depths, to swim with whales, and dance in the sunbeams in the shallows. I would ~~been~~ the ~~q~~Queen of the ~~s~~Sea ~~and would~~, reigning over all the oceans. ~~In my kingdom, there would be no cold cans of tomatoes and everyone could enjoy time with their neighbors on the porch.~~ It would be paradise.

10

The sea is ~~a bit~~ closer now, almost at the bottom ~~stepstair~~ of my porch. I step outside, sit down, and dip my toes in the gentle foam. The ~~grae~~y-green swirl of the grass beneath ~~my feet~~ ~~the~~ water reminds of what it was like just a few weeks ago. I miss my front yard. ~~there isn't really~~ anywhere else for me to go now. ~~But~~ the porch is enough, and the sea breeze is nice. My hair likes the salt air, although it's started to rust the chains on my front porch swing.

Every so often, I can see ~~the~~ albatross flying out into the distance, searching for fish. I wonder if it ~~will~~ ~~can~~ find any. Maybe I can find some too ~~one day~~. ~~There's nothing that~~ I can't see ~~any~~ from the porch steps, but maybe ~~they are~~ just beyond. I should ask ~~the~~ seabirds how to ~~can~~ catch fish before I run out of food.

The ocean teems with ~~the~~ living things, even when almost everyone on earth has gone. I wonder where those ~~who are~~ still alive have gone. Did they leave their homes like my neighbors? I can't imagine everyone did. Should I have left too? ~~I want't convinced the ocean would come this far, but that's the way the world works.~~

Come to think of it, the fish are probably seeing ~~this part of the world~~ for the first time. So much has been reclaimed by the waters, ~~it all must be amazing for them.~~

I can see a rainstorm in the distance over the waves. I ~~decide to take my toes out~~ ~~move up~~ a step in case a bolt of lightning decides to take a dip. I've always wondered what happens to the sea creatures when lightning strikes the water; I don't want to find out for myself.

9

~~Well~~ ~~the~~ front porch swing fell down a few days ago. It's been sitting in the water, which is now up to the front door. I thought about taking the swing and using it as a boat. I could take a couple of my sheets to make a sail, use the arm-rests as paddles, and take the rest of my things somewhere else. I would, but there is nowhere else. This is my home. ~~I have nowhere else to go.~~

10. Hannah Packard

February 15, 2023 at 10:58:17 AM

I'd recommend changing this word. Mostly because if these stories will appear together, it will be noticeable that it's been repeated in a few of them.

Besides, the waves have been rougher lately. I can see out ~~the~~ ~~eremy~~ windows how tall they've become, and at high tide I've heard a few crash on the side of the house. Once, ~~time~~ a huge wave came and ~~it~~ hit the door so hard that some water got in. I sealed up the door with my shower curtain and some duct tape. I can't go outside much, but I open up a few windows ~~every-~~ now and ~~again~~ then to watch the sunset or see the currents moving debris to and fro.

I worry about how ~~much~~ longer my food will last. I've got some apricot preserves that I've been saving for a special day, a few cans of mixed vegetables, and a ~~package of dried some-~~ ~~pastanoodles~~. If I could figure out how to start a fire without burning the place down, I could boil the salt water and make pasta. I may have to boil water anyway, since the pipes don't work anymore and I'm almost out of bottled water. I should find some matches.-

8

10 The crab made an appearance today. She scuttled out from her hiding place and into the kitchen. She must have seen something she could ~~devour~~ scavenge. ~~I went after her and decided I should eat too.~~ I wanted to eat with her, to ask her about herself, but she ran away as I got close.

The can of mixed vegetables isn't as appealing as the apricot preserves look, but I'm ~~want to~~ waiting to eat those. I laugh when I see the ~~ean~~ label boasts about having natural sea salt. ~~I have~~ There's plenty of salt all around me, do I really need more? I wash the green beans, carrots, peas, corn, and lima beans down with my last bottle of water, making sure I don't drink it all right away.

~~When I~~ Looking out the window, I can see the beautiful orange and purple sunset reflecting on the waves. ~~When~~ I see the albatross fly back to the roof, then hear the footsteps before it settles,- I smile.

Then I look down and see the water just below the windowsill.

I check the door, and the seal is tight, but I add more duct tape just to be safe. I can hear the wind howl against the house as ~~and~~ the waves begin to rise. I go to my room, shut the door, and hide under the covers.

7

The last few days have been horrible. The roof is leaking from all the rain, ~~and~~ there's a cool air current that's dropped in and made it impossible to get warm,- ~~and~~ I'm out of water and food. I'm so hungry and thirsty that I don't know what to do anymore.

~~I decide that~~ I have to start a fire, but I can't do it in the fire-place. I don't want to disturb the albatross. So, I figured the kitchen sink ~~is was~~ the best place. It's contained, ~~and~~ there's a window for ventilation,- ~~and it's in the kitchen so I can boil water.~~

It takes some effort, but I climb up on the counters, extend my arms out ~~the~~ window, and fill a pot with seawater. I find the matches, some scraps of wood from last winter, and a newspaper for kindling.

As the newspaper burns, I read the front-page headline: OCEANS RISING.

6

I sit in the living room and watch the waves while sipping on my warm water. ~~I stare out as far as~~ When I squint, I can and see what looks like a pod of dolphins, or maybe flying fish, jump up in the air. I look down at the edges of the windowsill, which I sealed with jackets and tape, and see krill and a few fish. ~~I think of the wonders of the ocean, h~~ How majesticmagical it must be to live amongst the sea people, to swim with the whales, and fight the monsters of the deep.

The old world is gone, ~~there is nothing but long live~~ the sea. I wish I ~~had could have~~ gills, then I could escape ~~my home~~ and be free. ~~Maybe one day.~~

5

The water came rushing in while I was asleep last night. My barriers broke when I least expected. Isn't that the way it goes? When I woke up, I had to wade through ~~all the~~ floating pictures and ~~little~~ trinkets to assess the damage. It was as bad as I thought—, there ~~was~~ no way to return to life before.

My matches got wet. There ~~i~~was no more fresh water. I was so thirsty, so I took a sip and let the salt water revive my dry throat, but it was never enough. I'm ~~hungry to~~starving.

I resign my home as the water levels out. ~~As~~ I swim around and ~~revel~~ play in the water, ~~for a moment~~ I feel like I belong ~~for a moment~~.

4

I saw the crab again today. ~~She~~ ~~It~~ was floating on a dining room chair, unable to hide from me. I crept ~~in~~through the water and ~~snuck up on it.~~ I grabbed ~~it~~her from behind ~~and,~~ bashed ~~it~~her against the wall. ~~It was the only way.~~

My mouth watered. I ripped ~~it~~her apart and ~~began to feast~~feasted. ~~She~~ ~~It~~ tasted so ~~good~~sweet. I savored every bite and washed it ~~all~~ down with salt water wine. I ~~am~~ ~~was~~ the ~~q~~Queen of the ~~s~~Sea and these ~~are~~ my delicacies. I saved a bit for later, to enjoy ~~the next day~~ with apricot preserves.

3

The waters swirl at my feet, and I practice holding my breath. My gills are growing in slowly. I can't wait to ~~be~~ reign among the squid and whales and schools of fish.

Coral is beginning to grow on the floor and the walls, bringing a new beauty to such a sad place. ~~I think I like it~~ The house looks better now, ~~though this is all there is.~~

11. Hannah Packard

February 20, 2023 at 4:10:00 PM

I would recommend reworking this part. Why won't she eat the fish? She didn't have qualms about eating the crab. I'd also add in here a final thing about the apricot preserves. If she eats them it shouldn't be "off camera." If she never ends up eating them (because of a delayed gratification thing) you should mention it again here so the

12. Hannah Packard

February 22, 2023 at 2:56:02 PM

No need to keep this language, but I would like to see it be a little more violent and punchy than "hit." In the companion story, she had a massive gash on her head so I thought the injury description should match.

13. Hannah Packard

February 20, 2023 at 4:19:30 PM

For some reason, this final line doesn't hit quite like I feel it should, it's not usually something said about oneself. Maybe something like, "I will live forever as the Queen of the Sea"?

14. Hannah Packard

February 22, 2023 at 2:54:26 PM

Love this pun every time haha

11 Tomorrow I will swim up the chimney and see if the albatross is there. I'm still hungry, but I can't barebear to eat the fish, so the bird it is.

2

I swim down to the entrance and up the tube that leads up to the bird's nest. I feel the dry air again and it on my skin feels like a lost memory. I climb and crawl until I'm at the top. The world looks so different here, there's nothing around for leagues.

The albatross is nesting on what remains of the roof. I want to devour it, but it flies away when it sees me trying to get out of the chimney. There is always tomorrow I decide to go back down and try another day.

1

12 When I went As I lowered myself back down the mouth of the chimney, I slipped and hitcracked my head against the bricks. I saw a kaleidoscope of colors as I fell down into the depths of the ocean, tasted the sweet salty waters, and took one last breath with my lungs.

13 Today, the waterocean won. Tomorrow, I will be crowned. My subjects are the starfish, my friends are the whales, my jewels the coral, my dominion the sea. Long live the Queen of the Sea.

14

fin