

# ⚡Electric Waters⚡

Envision yourself clueless in the ocean, unknowingly getting hauled out farther into the sea. Meanwhile, there are evident bolts of intense electricity striking the deep, cool, water. That's easy, at least for me, because I experienced that very moment. You are probably thinking I am insane right now, and you might be wondering, "Why were you in the ocean? Aren't lifeguards there for a reason? How did you not see this coming? What about your parents--where were they?" All of these questions will be answered, but we have to start from the very beginning.

"Hurry up mom! Everyone is already at the beach!" I say in a rushed tone as my mom packs the car as if she were a snail plunged in quicksand.

"Hold on, I just need to grab the umbrella," she replies calmly.

It takes us a lengthy 10 minutes to get down to the beach, and another 15 minutes just to find parking. What can you expect in Manhattan Beach on a balmy, sunny, breezy, summer afternoon? It's about 2pm, and my mom is gathering all of our beach gear from the back of the car. Umbrella, check. Beach chairs, check. Towels, check. We continue to grab out items. Beach bag, check. Boogie board, check. I don't know how we are going to carry this all down to the beach. I see my mom struggling to find something in her car.

"What are you looking for, Mom?" I ask impatiently.

"My keys, I know they are in here somewhere." I see her searching through the middle compartment, the cubby under the driving wheel, and finally she checks in the beach bag.

"Here they are!" she exclaimed.

"Great," I say. "Can we go now?!" I rush her once more.

"Yes," she replies. We schlep our beach items down the stairs and finally reach the sand.

"Ouch!" We yelp in unison. The sand burns our feet. We have to sprint, even while wearing our sandals, to the group. I immediately jump into the water to join my friends.

My friends and I spend hours on end in the ocean, splashing, playing, diving under prodigious waves, only leaving the water to get a drink, eat a snack, bury each other in sand, or dig up handfuls of sand crabs in the grainy, wet sand. We talk about insane things that are happening in our lives, and Peyton and I get into occasional arguments over the fatuous things.

"I am the best swimmer! I swim like all the time. It my favorite thing to do! I bet I could beat any of you!" exclaimed Peyton.

"Well I'm pretty good at swimming too--" I reply getting harshly interrupted.

"Are you on a swim team?" she asks. I realize she knows the answer, but I answer anyway

"No but--" I add, getting cut off once again.

"That's what I thought," Peyton says arrogantly. "Just face it, you will never be as good as me."

"Okay Peyton," I utter under my breath, moving on from the conversation.

Peyton and I get into many meaningless fights, but one of us always comes waddling back to the other, and we hug to make up.

"I so so sooo sorry! Please don't hate me!!" Peyton declares loudly as she drowns me in a wave, attempting to give me a hug.

"It's okay Peyt, I forgive you," I reply while hugging her back, after I finished choking on a gallon of saltwater.

Peyton and I made up and everything feels great. My friends and I are smiling and laughing in the water. I love going to the coastline with my pals. We go to the sandy beach regularly since we live in the South Bay, and it has been an immensely hot summer. When I am in the water, I feel peaceful, as if all my worries just float away. However, sometimes, I feel like I am swimming in a pool on steroids. I bounce, I play, I tumble and get washed around, but I still love it.

Suddenly I hear an ear blasting shriek. "GET OUT OF THE WATER, SHARK SHARK!!!!!!!" I hear Peyton's mom, Kristie, holler.

At first, I was skeptical. I believe she is just trying to scare us, and she will stop soon. But she didn't. She kept roaring, trying to get our attention. I question myself; if it is a real emergency, wouldn't a lifeguard come to save us? Then I realize the time: 7:45. There aren't any lifeguards on duty at this hour. The only way to be saved is to swim back.

I feel my heartbeat rising, my adrenaline pulsing through every cell in my body. I start to kick and splashed my arms towards the warm, dry, sandy, shoreline. However, after I've been kicking and paddling with all my might, I have gone nowhere. I try to kick off the bottom of the sea floor for a boost, but my feet don't touch. I must have drifted out too far. I knew in that moment I was in a riptide. I am stuck in the ocean frantically attempting to get back to shore. As if things couldn't get any worse, I hear a loud bang.

"CRACK! RUMBLE, BUZZ!" I perceive.

Congruently I am blinded by a bright white flash of electricity. Lightning, *great*. I take a deep breath to calm myself and begin to paddle once more. I paddle with all my being. I start to make progress. My lust for dry land is how I am able to push against the current. I am almost to shore, and I can almost feel the cool, fresh, water soothing my

raging throat. I have swallowed way too much salt water in just the past five tiresome minutes. I place my feet on the moist sand and let the delightful sand crabs massage my feet. I did it!! I made it to shore, WHOO HOO! I let out an overdue sigh of relief. I am just about to go drink a sip of water when-

“Help! Help! I can’t move!!!” cries Ruthie, another one of my friends, as she is struggling to swim out of the riptide.

I know that the right thing to do is to go and save my friend from the deathly arms of the electric waters. However, I am petrified to go back out there. I have to decide soon because she could become a crispy french fry an second now.

“CRACK! RUMBLE, BUZZ!” I hear more banging thunder. I sensed what I have to do what is right.

I dive back into the freezing cold water and cut through the waves, determined to save Ruthie. I make it to her in no time, but that’s the easy part. Now I have to manage to get two people to the shore while fighting the current. I manage to do it. I have her hold onto the boogie board she has been using to keep herself afloat, and heave her past the immersive waves and back to our parents.

I get barraged with loads of hugs and kisses, the parents still frantic about the recent events.

“I am sorry for lying to you guys about the shark. I just needed to get your attention,” Kristie says while laughing. I don’t know if it is the laughing you do when your relieved or it’s just funny.

“There wasn’t a shark!” I exclaim with a small annoyed tone.

Everyone laughs. The parents begin to clean up and it is time to go home. I am taking home my friend Zaara, so we stick together. We say our farewells to our friends. Peyton, Ruthie, and Cleo are riding together, Charlotte is alone, and I am with Zaara.

Zaara and I laugh, talk, and reflect on *everything* that just happened that evening. We are both still a little shaken up; despite that, everything was normal again. I was still unsure of why we were at the beach that late in the day, especially in those conditions. One thing I do know for sure is that I will never forget that night--the night in the electric waters.