

The Most Beautiful



by: Olivia Harvey

The Most Beautiful Place in the World

Written By Olivia Harvey



About the author:
Harvey is a talented Marshfield High School student who wrote this story for a Sophomore English assignment.

About the book:
Design & Production by Mary Taylor with Photographs from Jill Powers and Taylor.

"Are you asleep yet?" I whispered softly. "No," Paige paused, "Are you?" "No." I stared in the pitch-blackness inside the tent. Slosh slish slop! "Did you hear that?" My soft whisper turned frantic. "Yeah. Is someone outside?" I turned on my back and the two of us became dead quiet. All we could hear was the constant breaking of the waves. Slosh slish slop! "Hello? Is anyone there?" I called into the dark. "It sounds like wet flip flops. I think someone's trying to scare us." Paige gathered her sleeping bag closer to her chin "I don't know about you, but I'm about ready to run inside." I sat up and grabbed my pillow and reached for the zipper on the tent. "Liv! 'Wait for me!"

It was midnight on Saquish Beach, the least scary place in the world. Paige and I had dared to camp out in the sandy driveway of our family friend's eccentric beach house. This was the one and

only time either of us had attempted to camp. After waking my snoring bear of a father, he investigated and



found out that the 'peace' flag was banging against its pole, making a very mysterious noise. I think back now at the terror we felt, and laugh. How could the most wonderful place in the world cause me harm, or



COOL BREEZES

fear? Saquish is the God of all beaches, the keeper of my home away from home, and the central source of our

ed by the dry hotness of the sand rushing between my toes, after having been baked by the sun for hours.



A cool breeze kisses my forehead and wisps my hair away from my face with its gentle touch, leaving its mark with goose bumps trailing up my arms. The salty, wet air is infused with the smell of charcoal, as fire pits are filled with new log prisoners, ready to meet their doom at dusk. If the tide has gone out, I race down to the water's edge, feeling the sand become colder and more compact with water. The waves have left their rippled tattoo on the desolate shore, which plays with the arches of my feet. I maneuver myself towards the water's pe-



rimeter where I introduce my toes to the chill of ocean. It's usually much too cold for swimming. Not far away is a field of rocks. Built up over the years, boulders of all shapes and sizes, sit perfectly for mermaid perches;

rimeter where I introduce my toes to the chill of ocean. It's usually much too cold for swimming. Not far away is a field of rocks. Built up over the years, boulders of all shapes and sizes, sit perfectly for mermaid perches;



their aged barnacle texture makes my palms rough as I climb on top to get a better view of the world. The massive brown and black bodies of the rocks create a shady habitat for sea creatures that harbor themselves in reoccurring tide pools underneath. Drying seaweed engulfs me with its salty smell as I sit; and grits of sand create friction between my feet and the rock. From here I can see everything that goes on, whether it be a horseshoe game at the neighbor's house, or someone boogie boarding a mile away. When night falls, the landscape changes. Bonfires, with their dancing orange flame, line the shore. Burning wood bites my nose and instills its sweet taste into my mouth. Beachgo-



Roaring laughter

Friendly faces



ers encircle each flame with their multicolored folding chairs, the metal legs practically rusted away from salt water. Like a ritual, this all falls into place. Everyone takes a seat and the story telling begins. Deep voices turn loud with roaring laughter and then soft with despair as the stories go on. The teller's face, lit by the flames, reveals his expression, and emphasizes the anecdote. I grab a cushy marshmallow and jam it on a stick. The warmth of the fire heats my face and limbs as I inch closer to cook my treat. Sugary, white liquid spurts from the crusted shell inside my mouth. The sweet sticki-

ness puts a smile on my face every time. This strip of land is so familiar to me, and the sight of it brings me comfort, but nothing is more comforting than the beach house in the dunes. Better known as The Sand Dollar, this beach house belongs to my parent's closest friends and is what I consider my second home. Climbing up the pathway to The Sand Dollar, the dunes muffle all noises from the lower beach, calming the scene. Friendly faces greet my parents and me when we appear upon the front porch; its gnarled, weathered boards are a cause for many splinters. Close to the door is a woven hammock chained to the



shingled house and a wooden pole. Because of its age, the woven rope of the hammock, is rough and rigid, but still manages to form to your shape perfectly to provide ultimate comfort. But the crowd usually seems to gravitate to the side porch, because of the way the sun hits in the afternoon. A set of mismatched steps from the edge leads to the grill platform, where the constant smell of barbecue sauce always lingers, and the driveway, where Paige and I spent that horrifying night. Splinters of

wood flakes off the single, gray picnic table in the driveway, and the bench pricks bare legs, but no one seems to mind. The deck is the Mecca of food and gathering, where constant chatter and laughter can be heard. But inside the cottage, a completely different realm is revealed; the cool, sandy floor relieves my feet from the heat of the beach and the wood and white kitchen counter displays pasta salads and tortilla chips, the appetizers from the afternoon. My favorite area is an alcove with two guest beds;

soft mattresses and salty smelling jean comforters provide a resting area for weary bodies. The beds are surrounded by seashell and sea glass decorated windows, and underneath a net of treasures found on the beach. The gas lamp between the beds, and above the lobster trap table, provides a warm light, with a slight odor of the aging wick as it partially lights a wall of photographs of friends and family, who wear smiling, or silly faces. From this area of the house, I can see all that goes on inside, since the



couch is only an inch away from the foot of the bed. The Sand Dollar is truly my home away from home. Saquish beach is such an important place in my life because of the people, who are like my family. These people are much more than 'my parent's friends', because they love and care for each other, as well as me. Of course, I love the landscape, and having the privilege of going to this beach, but if these people weren't a part of that, I don't believe I would want to take part in it. Being the youngest of all the children who grew up on Saquish, I spent more time with the adults than with the older children, creating a greater relationship with them. It has come to the point where I have realized that this 'extended family' will always be there, looking out for me, giving me any support I need. Saquish brings us all together. It's the place where we bring visitors from out of town to make them feel welcome, and a place we go to celebrate, and, less often, to mourn. I wish everyone could

have the opportunity to have the loved ones I have; in some way, I feel spoiled. I'll never forget how lucky I am to spend time with people who care so much about my family and me. This is why Saquish is more than just a beach. It is like a mother and we are her chil-



dren, flocking to her because we know we will always be welcomed into her arms. Going back to Paige and I in the tent, hearing our approaching victimizer brings back all memories of Saquish. I remember my friend from Minnesota, Wren, and I taking our an-

nual pilgrimage to the Saquish candy store, hidden in the back roads of the beach. I remember setting traps with my cousins in the sand during the fourth of July. But besides the specific memories I remember what a wonderful place Saquish is. The murmur of the waves call to me, and the warmth of the sand relaxes me, everything about this shoreline community helps me enjoy the summer even more. I wish everyone could enjoy this special place and behold its natural beauty. Growing up on Saquish has taught me lessons about being independent, by getting lost in the back roads and finding my way back before dark. It had taught me that family does not have to be blood related, but just made up of those who care for you. I have learned to love nature and respect it in every way. Every time I return to this beach, I remember my childhood and look forward to many summers yet to come. Saquish Beach is truly a sacred place to me.



HARRY
BIRTHDAY
BETH

