

My Love Letter to the Jersey Shore

You're so greedy, you know. Constantly taking and giving. I've always thought of myself as a hopeless romantic although my definition is quite blurred. Without you, I don't believe I'd ever trust the concept of having a soul mate. But, I am not the only person to love you, and you certainly love more in this world than you could ever love me.

And I truly do feel that this romance stems from my childhood, a time where I chased seagulls and lined up sea glass on my dresser counter, counting seashells after a long day with you. Growing up in a tiny town only blocks away from you, everything seems so simple. Everything you see is your world, a bubble that you see the same way it sees you. But, I had everything I could want in that safe little bubble, so there was no reason to pop it. Even when I left behind my surfboard to snowboard or to travel far away, you welcomed me home with a soft embrace. Never angry, never impatient, never questioning why I left you. You were always there, waiting to be my greatest confidant and best friend. And even though winter means hibernation for Point Pleasant, locals still flee to you past "Closed Beach" signs or snow covered dunes. You're a magnet, a force to be reckoned with. New Jersey has learned what you are capable of, the destruction you can cause in the lives of those around you. Sandy used you to her benefit while you were with her and I've forgiven you for the things that she made you do. So many people were upset with you after their lives were flipped upside down and I wonder how long it will take for their hearts to heal. You reminded me, even during the worst of times, to recall the simple things that make life worth it.

The shore, beach, ocean, it does not matter what you are called. What you mean to me, is nearly everything. You've influenced my character, changing like the tides and impulsive like the current. You gave me rose colored glasses I use to see the world around me. Yes, New Jersey has the glamour of New York City matinees and excitement of boardwalks, but you mean so much more. Without you, summer in Point Pleasant would feel cold as December, lively Asbury would fall silent. The Jetty's would not be a playground for fishermen, nor would Atlantic City be considered "Atlantic". No amount of saltwater taffy or pork roll sandwiches could make me take you for granted. I could never leave you for another sea. Do you remember all the times we watched fireworks together? Or bonfires where we all sang and shouted into the night? We've shared sandcastles and beach balls and sand crabs. You would beckon the smallest crabs out of hiding, and I'd let them sit gently in the palm of my hand. From the very first moment I met you, I knew we were in it for the long run. You've always been good to me. You seemed too good to be true.

Our relationship is one of mutual respect, I hope you agree. From dolphins to sharks to minnows, you've taken care of everything in your possession and given unconditional love out into the world. You provide for all, and expect so little in return. All you ask is for people to care for you as well, and to treat you with the care

you deserve. Yet, people treat you like a waste bin and mishandle you. You're polluted, overfished, and ignored. You're withering away and there are times where I feel there is nothing I can do. There is so much I owe you, so much I want to do for you. You taught me to trust sea creatures in order to gain trust back and to put my best efforts into anything I care about. I care about you, I care about the Shore, I care about New Jersey. One day I will find a way to repay you for the life you have given me.

Despite my changing world and passions I somehow always come back to you. So I sit, watching how currents and waves go hand in hand, and everything becomes so simple once again. How everything I see in this tiny bubble is a reflection of the world outside Point Pleasant, outside New Jersey, it's just waves after waves. Growing up with you at my side gave me perspective and hope. You've taken a piece of my heart yet given me so much more. You are a more suitable soul mate and a more caring soul than any person I've ever known. I could spend eternity by your side and never get tired.
