

Summers at Seaside

Consider the child, a mere toddler, running alongside the coast of the Jersey Shore with the one man who will never hurt her. She skips over the lightly colored shells that line where the waves break, while her father, with a bushy mustache and tanned face smiles at her playfulness. Only his bottom lip shows, but she can see that he is smiling by the way his skin crinkles around his eyes. He looks at her and gives her the go ahead. The two of them dive into the ocean over the large white-splattered waves. The water is cold and stuns her body in a refreshing dip, the way it had for other visitors that summer.

Suddenly, the blue and white creature attempts to engulf the child, only to be prevented by the arms of her father. His large, well-worked hands grab her waist and toss her over the wave in a swift motion, almost like her favorite ride on the boardwalk—the Pharaoh's Fury. The pair laughs at the ocean's failed attempt and proceed to challenge the next wave.

As the pair grows tired, they shift back to the coast, where they had walked earlier that day. The sun's beams remain just as strong as they were that morning, create a slight burn on the child's pale skin and crispen that of her father. They walk along the ocean enjoying the company of one another. She admires how the boardwalk forms a break in the sand and stares at its rows of games and rides. Her gaze shifts back to the water as it rushes over her sandy feet. She spots a shiny object lying beside a shallow pit of water just feet from the walkway formed by her father's much larger feet. The object sparkles and creates a green mist when the waves crash onto it. In a quick motion, the father snatches up the piece of worn down glass and hands it to the child—her first piece of sea glass.

The sun soon begins to set across the ocean, illuminating its waves with a broken reflection of pinks, purples, and oranges; a pastel masterpiece. In the distance, the girl watches as the boardwalk's lights turn on, allowing artificial lighting to take the place of the sun. She pulls on her father's arm and begs to return to the Windjammer Motor Inn, in order to prepare for a night at the boardwalk.

She puts on a floral tank top, cropped jean skirt, and navy flip flops, and makes her way to the boardwalk, determined to win a large prize at the water gun stand. Minutes later, she is seated on the red leather surface of a chair in front of a bright green water gun, making intimidating glances at her opponents. "Ready, set, shoot!" the man behind the counter says, queuing her to begin splashing water into the clown's large mouth. Alarmingly, her tube fills up first, triggering the bell to end the game. She smiles at her father and points at a large, hot pink, zebra-striped hat. The man working the stand places the hat on her head and congratulates her, while her father proceeds to take her to Khor's for an orange vanilla swirl ice cream cone, creating the perfect end to a perfect day.

For many years after, the pair would return to the Jersey Shore, bringing with them friends and family, to relax and enjoy one of New Jersey's prime locations. The father would aid his daughter in sea glass searches, while her older brothers and cousins would accompany her on Pharaoh's Fury, Tilt A Whirl, the Haunted Mansion, and many more of

Seaside's most popular rides. Beginning with that summer, the Jersey Shore created a tradition of Taylor ham egg and cheese breakfasts, sandy afternoons, and fun-filled nights at the boardwalk eating Kohr's ice cream, never to be forgotten, even twelve years later.