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WE'RE DROWNING
IN
PIG POOP

ve
our
Planet boycō
Bacon

PIGS
NEED
SPACE





1

Me

Something strange happened to me. It started a whole chain of events. It happened when I was scuba diving in Maui. I made a promise to a fish. And it changed my life.

Part of my therapy was to write about it. Well, it wasn't really therapy. But it was a suggestion from my shrink.

I agreed that it was a good idea to write about it. I wanted to remember it just as it had happened. I also decided that it was time I came out with it.

People think I'm driven. I am. And the promise is what's driving me.

The whole thing began with my parents' divorce. I'm an only child.

My mom's a pediatrician. I think that has something to do with why there's just me. My mom sees kids all day long. And she sees them at their worst. Who'd want to come home to more of that?

My dad's an anesthesiologist. He puts people under and checks on them during surgery. He's very precise. He knows the human body and how it reacts to things.

Anyway, Mom and Dad hadn't said much to each other for a long time. I guess the divorce was in the cards.

After the divorce, they both started paying more attention to me. Mom changed her work schedule so she could be home to fix dinner. Dad started planning things we could do together. All this when I'd rather be somewhere else—with someone else.

Dad got this idea to take scuba diving lessons. He signed us up at a dive shop. For a month, we spent every Saturday in a swimming pool.

They made us do things you wouldn't believe. One thing we had to do was jump in with all our gear in our hands, including our air tanks. Then we had to stay underwater while we put it all on.

The whole course was a lot of work. There was a written test too. That was fine for Dad. All he had to do was go to work. But I had school and homework too. Anyway, we both passed.

As a reward for passing the course, Dad decided we'd go diving in Maui. I thought that was kind of weird because that's where he and Mom went on their honeymoon. Maybe Dad thought that if he went back to where it all began, everything could be laid to rest neatly. That's the kind of guy he is. Like I said, he's very precise.

So last summer, Dad and I went to Maui. It's one of the Hawaiian Islands. It has mountains, volcanoes, tropical areas, and some neat towns. And, of course, there were the babes in bikinis.

Dad and I really had a good time looking at the scenery. It was a real bonding experience.

I guess I need to tell you who the "me" is who's writing this. My name is Jonathan Matthew Olivera. I'm 14. And I'm in eighth grade at Hudson Middle School in Saratoga, Illinois.

I run track and belong to the Environmental Action Club. In fact, I'm co-president of the club this year. I had to be after I made the promise.

I'm also trying to start a scuba diving club. But not too many kids in Saratoga dive. There's no place to do it unless you want to dive in a rock quarry or a farm pond. I don't advise either—especially the pond.

THE MESSAGE, THE PROMISE, AND HOW PIGS FIGURE IN

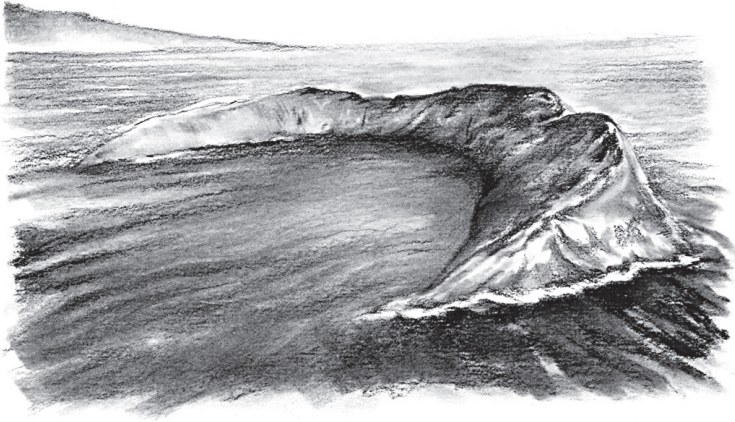
I brag a lot. Maybe because I'm a Leo. Or maybe because I'm an only child. I know I do it. And I know I shouldn't. But I can't seem to help it. I have a large voice and it just booms out.

I'm smart too. Oops—there I go again. I just can't seem to stop bragging.

Mom is Anglo with blond hair and blue eyes. Dad's Latino. That makes me Anglo Latino.

I have blond hair and brown eyes. I know the sun's bad for my skin, but I love it anyway. In the summer, I have a great tan. And my hair gets all bleached out.

I have to admit that I like my looks—except for my height. I'm only 5' 4". I wish I were taller. But I try not to let it bother me. Tom Cruise is short and it hasn't hurt him.



2

The Crater

Okay, that's enough about me. Here's the real story.

It was a beautiful, sunny Maui morning. The mist was clearing and the aqua water was calm. The air and water were both about 80 degrees.

My dad and I carried our scuba gear down the dock. We stopped at Captain Andy's Dive Boat.

Captain Andy was a crusty old guy. He had a red face and a grizzled red beard. He shouted, "Aloha, divers! Welcome aboard!"

THE MESSAGE, THE PROMISE, AND HOW PIGS FIGURE IN

There were six divers on board. That meant everyone would have a dive buddy. A dive buddy was someone who kept a close watch on you. And you kept a close watch on him.

I was the only kid there. Besides Captain Andy, there was Aaron, the divemaster. Aaron was Captain Andy's younger brother. He looked just like him.

During the dives, Captain Andy would stay on the boat. Aaron would lead the group underwater.

Captain Andy pointed out the snacks and drinks, the emergency equipment, the air tanks, and some books about marine life. He showed us how to flush the head (the toilet). Then he started the engine and barked directions over its roar.

"It will take about 20 minutes to get to Molokini Crater," he shouted. "Has anybody been there before?"

No one had. Captain Andy continued loudly, "It's a beautiful place. It's an extinct, submerged volcano dome with part of the rim above water. See that crescent shape out there?" We all looked and nodded.

"That's it. We'll dive on the inside of the crater first. Later, snorkelers and glass-bottom boats will take over the crater. Then we'll dive along the back wall where it's less crowded."

The Crater

“The inside of the crater is fairly shallow. But at the back wall, it’s 350 feet to the ocean floor.”

Dad broke in, “We’re not diving that deep, are we? My son and I are only certified to go 100 feet.”

“Our first dive will be inside the crater. You’ll go down and across the floor. We’ll go 70 feet deep. Then we’ll have a rest period. Our last dive will be a drift dive at the back wall. We’ll only go 50 feet deep.”

Dad nodded and looked at me. I knew that look only too well. It meant “follow directions and obey orders.”

I’d seen that look all my life. I didn’t mean that in a bad way. It was just a fact. I supposed when I was a dad, I’d probably be the same way. But it was a little hard to imagine at the time.

Dad had told me that Molokini was a vent from Haleakala. Haleakala was the big mountain volcano on Maui. We’d already visited it.

The volcano was a group of huge mounds. The mounds changed color as the sun and clouds shifted across the sky. Then the volcano looked like another planet.

We got closer to Molokini. I had this weird feeling that the crater could still blow. That made the dive more exciting than ever.