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The Sea and the Stars

2025

“Ahhh! So cold!” I yelped at the sudden presence of water. But it didn’t bother me - the warmth in my mind overpowered the chill in my body. “I’m so excited!!!” I screamed, my arms out as I spun in circles. That was until I felt something dent my foot. “What’s this?” I picked up a foggy blue rock - no, a foggy blue sea glass. I moved it up and under each finger, feeling every curve and smoothed corner. “Looks like a sapphire from far away,” I beamed as I held it up towards the sun. “Look at that sky,” I smiled - unable to contain my joy - as I lowered my hands to admire the baby blue above me. “I can’t wait to see all the phenomenons that are past it!” The sun shone into my eye, and suddenly everything looked golden. I slowly looked downwards, my eyes shifting between the sea and the sea glass in my hand. “How many years has this been in the ocean? Changing and morphing throughout time, hidden under water,” I pondered. The ocean crashed down again, abruptly ending my wondering, and instead replacing it with the memory of the celebration I had last night.

Congratulations! My little girl is going to be an astronaut!

Thank you guys! I promise I’ll take you all to see the stars with me one day.

Alright honey, don’t get ahead of yourself. You have to get through college first.

I chuckled. My eyes rounded with my softening face from the thought of my grandmother.

Congratulations honey.

Thank you grandma, seriously. Thank you for all you’ve taught me about astronomy, about astronauts, and about anything and everything space-related.

I’m glad you at least listened to me if not your mother.

I giggled remembering the suffocating embrace I gave her.

I like to think I got my passionate personality from you.

Oh, I know you got it from me.

Though, I couldn't quite place how the way she hugged me back seemed. Something in the way that she held me felt like she was desperate yet fulfilled.

Granny?

Yes dear?

If taking a rocket to space and walking on the moon was all you could have ever dreamed for, why didn't you make it your reality? You have the desire and brains for it.

Because the world I lived in wasn't ready to make my dreams come true yet.

I frowned, staring at the faux sapphire resting in my palm. I wondered what life was like for her, back when this sea glass was probably still rough, back when it was probably just glass. I know she wanted to see the stars like me, but what made her stop shooting for them?

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The crystal ocean crackled against the sand, as the sea foam, like white lace on each wave, rolled back to sea. Like a hammock, my arms gently nested my head. "It's all so unfair," I spat out, staring at the empty deep blue bottle in front of me. I reached forward and held it up towards the sky, peering through: everything looked so warped and blue. My eyes narrowed as I recalled the conversation I had with my parents mere minutes ago.

And what are you going to do? There are no jobs for women in the space field.

I'll find something! I'll figure it out!

Dear, you're getting ahead of yourself again.

Please, I want to help research and discover what's beyond Earth! Don't you guys believe in me?

It's not like you can go to NASA, think of some other major for college. Think of your future.

I want nothing if not space.

I smashed the little glass bottle on the rock next to me. It crumbled into several spiky pieces. I hissed when I reached for one of the shards, slowly acknowledging the stream of red now coming from my hand. I grit my teeth. "The world can be as rough as you, huh?" I asked the glass, hoping it would whisper back, "It's not." But it didn't whisper back, and my hand was still bleeding from the cut. I stood up, shard in hand, and walked closer towards the sea. I stared at its sapphire hue once more, before chucking it into the ocean. "It's all so unfair," I sighed. For my goal, I'd be shooting even farther than the stars. So for now, I'll have to settle for letting it sink to the bottom of the sea.