

Isabell Baughman

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### Seaside

Marcie Williams hated almost nothing more than seeing the dull glint of a plastic bottle poking out from the otherwise-pristine white sands. A grumble of irritation crawled up her throat, and she angrily snatched the litter from the ground and continued tromping down the beach. The ocean at her side swayed languidly, exuding a low roaring that was akin to a lullaby for the blonde-haired woman. Her black, heeled combat boots sank slightly into the sand as she walked, but she acted as if she hardly noticed at all.

A short minute later and she had arrived at one of the many trashcans that dotted the public beach. Dropping the bottle into the black bin, she narrowed her sharp blue eyes into a glare and scanned the area. “Why is that so hard to do? There are literally trashcans every ten feet.” Brushing her hands together to rid her skin of any lingering filth from the trash she had picked up, Marcie turned in place and stared almost adoringly out at the waves cresting before her.

A few long moments of silent contemplation passed before Marcie began trudging on again. She had made it a few yards further down the beach when something below glimmered in the sun's light, catching her eye. Bending down, the young woman gingerly plucked a conch shell from the earth with her fingers. She smiled softly. “Wow, this one's in tact.” However, after flipping the shell over, she was surprised to find the occupant of the shell was actually still at home. “Must've washed up with the tide last night,” she murmured quietly to herself.

Glancing around to take in the large and steady growing number of beach-goers, Marcie decided it would be best to return the crustacean to the ocean, rather than leave it to be taken

home by an ignorant vacationer. Stepping forward as close as she would dare without getting her boots wet, Marcie leaned forward as far as her body would stretch and ever-so-gently dropped the conch shell into the frothy white waters. “Hope you make it home okay,” she whispered to the shell, and with a small wave and a grin, she backed away and continued her vigilant trek down the shoreline.

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