

I timidly placed one cautious foot in the icy blue water rippling below me. I immediately recoiled as a small silver fish nipped playfully at my ankle. My colorful swimsuit stretched over my body and my life vest pushed tightly against my chest. The rubber snorkel stuck in my mouth tasted of old people's saliva. As you might have already guessed, I was on a snorkeling trip with my family.

All around me was the cool, clear ocean swaying repetitively. I'll admit it, I was a bit afraid to go into the water. On the boat that had taken us out here to the middle of the ocean, I had felt excited, but now, not so much. I guess I was afraid of sharks.

"Are you chicken or something?" my brother, Alexander, teased behind me. I whirled around and glared at him. In case you didn't know, it's pretty annoying to be challenged by a kid four years younger than you.

"No!" I protested fiercely.

"Then go in," Alexander retorted.

"Fine!" I exclaimed, determined to prove to him that I wasn't just a big baby. Timidly, I dipped my toe into the icy blue water, forcing myself not to flinch at the shock of the coldness. It felt like the prickles of a cactus sticking into my flesh. Drawing in a deep breath, I thrust my body forward and splashed into the water.

Salty water bubbled down my snorkel and into my mouth, stinging my throat. The cold was unbearable. Coughing and sputtering, I squeezed my eyes shut as my head went under the surface. I swallowed what seemed like half the ocean and gagged at the taste. It was the most disgusting thing I had ever drunk.

I jerked my head up out of the water and gasped. This time I didn't sink under. My brother gleefully splashed in next to me. Smiling like a barracuda, he asked, "Having fun?"

I adjusted my snorkel over my face and glared at him, fighting the urge to strangle him. “No!” I couldn’t believe he was smiling. I had nearly drowned! Laughing, Alexander paddled away.

Part of me wanted to get out, the other part wanted to explore. Since I was already in the water, I decided to explore. I dipped my head in and gasped through my snorkel. I had never seen so many beautiful fish. There were yellow, green, blue, silver, and multicolored fish, all swimming around me casually as if I was one of their own kind. And now, swimming amongst them, I sort of did feel like a fish myself. The golden sunlight streamed through the surface of the murky blue water and created slanting patterns into the sea. The light reflected off the fish’s shiny scales, making them glow in a rainbow of dazzling colors.

I floated in the water in amazement, my eyes stretched wide inside my bulky goggles. The water was seemingly endless below me, dropping off into cloudy nothingness. I could see several rocks covered in brightly colored coral in some sections of the sea, and I could see fish darting through the coral. I even spotted several angelfish, their scales a beautiful swirl of colors that merged into each other. I inhaled a deep breath through my snorkel, staring at the circle of fish that darted around me. I had never known the underwater life was so beautiful.

After a few more hours, it was time to leave. I will never forget this amazing snorkeling experience.