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The lock-in was going fairly well until Marisa unleashed her cronies and chained herself to the main entrance.

No one really noticed right away, busy as they were taking part in a number of lock-in-related activities: laser tag in the parking garage, a sanctioned food fight in the cafeteria, a photo shoot tutorial with a renowned YouTube influencer.

Once a year, in April, the doors at Central International School's K-12 campus closed—though they didn't literally lock—to allow the high school students to roam free for the whole night. Having the next day off school was nowhere near the best part. Nor, strictly speaking, were the activities themselves, though they were extravagant and wonderful and distracted everyone from what Marisa was doing.

People fell in love on lock-in night. They stumbled upon new passions that would shape the rest of their lives, discovered friendships they could not imagine living without, before or after. Traumas were resolved on lock-in night, anxieties disappeared, never to return, not even after the buses arrived in the morning to take the students back home.

This was well known to the few students who had been lucky enough to have attended before, or who had siblings who had attended in years prior. At Central International School, the student body ebbed and flowed, changing drastically from year to year, and often even more frequently. It was common to have different classmates every semester, and sometimes students would find the person who sat next to them in class—the alluring redhead who scribbled song lyrics on the margins of their textbooks, who one time turned and asked to borrow a pen they never returned, though they had offered a smile that carried with it joy beyond a simple gesture; the redhead who might have one day soon become more than just a classmate—was simply gone from one day to the next.

Even by international school standards, the turnover rate of both students and faculty had always been high, though it had a great academic reputation, and the city in which it sat was a diverse and world-class cosmopolis. Yet people never seemed to stick around for long, as if families were carried in by the seaside breeze, and carried away by the same. Most students had multiple passports, and their parents were multinational, or transient because they were diplomats, or titans of industry, or missionaries, or digital nomads, or teachers within the international school world. They had roots in many places, thought of no one place as home—or rather, thought of everywhere they'd been as home.

So it was rare for a student to be around for several lock-in nights. Even the locals, who made up a mere fifteen percent of the school's population, often temporarily relocated during their high school years—a boarding school exchange in Switzerland, a South American road trip in a van with their family, a missionary excursion in Central America.

Despite all this, the lore surrounding lock-in night was always momentous, starting as an excited murmur the first day of school and building to a frenzy by the night before the event itself a month or so before the end of the year. Students wondered how, exactly, their life would be improved by the evening. There was no question it would—they could feel it on their skin, their heartbeats thudded with the knowledge that things were about to change, they had absorbed the gossip, not just a rumor or two, but dozens and dozens of first-hand accounts or verifiable secondhand stories, so many of them that it did not feel like hearsay but like fact—it was the how that was exciting. Would the redheaded classmate return to slip a hand into theirs during the movie marathon on the roof garden? Would their fear of heights be cured by the trapeze the school had set up on the football field? Or would it simply be a night of such fun that the joy would sink into their bones and change them into happier people?

Lock-in night, simply put, was magic. Even all those who had never experienced it knew it to be true.

Which, of course, was why Marisa planned her protest for that well-loved night. To make people pay attention, disrupt what brings them joy.

The mad desire to act had existed long before her plan did. Marisa loved the water as a baby. Her parents told the stories to anyone who would listen. She always feigned embarrassment at their anecdotes about her hour-long baths and surprising performance in toddler swimming classes, her dark, curly hair unfurling in the water behind her like a mermaid, her brown eyes huge within the goggles she always carried around. But the truth was that she loved the stories. They confirmed this was not a passing fad, not a childhood obsession that would lose its significance over time, not a baby blanket carried around charmingly until age ten, when

it was shoved into a box and donated.

When she discovered snorkeling and, later, diving, that love blew wide open. This? This had been possible this whole time?

Though Marisa was only seventeen, her parents' constant relocations for work meant she'd seen a hefty percentage of the world's waters. She'd snorkeled in Mexico, Fiji, the Philippines, the Great Barrier Reef, Belize. And the more she did it, the more her heart broke. Human beings had found a way to kill water.

The places famed for their snorkeling were heart-- wrenching. The destroyed beige reefs littered the oceans like ornate gravestones. They should have been resplendent with color. Books and scientists told her as much, and other divers did, too. Of course, though, they weren't. Not anymore. The world had ruined that particular beauty before Marisa had ever had a chance to see it, killing the corals with spilled chemicals, suffocating the oceans with heat. Every time she surfaced, she would dive into the internet, trying to find a way to help. Changing her sunscreen to the reef-safe kind, cleaning up plastic on the beach, asking her parents to donate yet again; nothing felt big enough.

Then came the three-day weekend at the start of the school year that changed it all. She had convinced her parents to take the family to the beach, and the Cuevas, who knew their frequent moves could be hard on the children, relented de-spite the fact that neither of them felt settled in at work yet, and they would have really liked to stay in the city and run errands.

Marisa had heard amazing things about the snorkeling in the region surrounding the beach. She was always skeptical when she heard anything like that; she'd been disappointed enough. She was fine just swimming among whatever fish remained in the area and pretending this was what it had al-ways been like, this was the wondrous alien world other divers described. After their most recent move, she'd done her usual research and found on the most trustworthy sources that an untouched blip still existed, not too far from her new school.

She convinced her parents, who knew it was better to indulge Marisa than fight her, to take a boat to an island, then another, smaller boat to another, smaller island. Arriving at the clear, turquoise waters, which were peppered with butterflies from who knows where fluttering across the surface, whole waves of them outnumbering the tourists she had seen even on the mainland, Marisa allowed herself to hope. Well before her family was ready, Marisa was in her flippers and mask, and she sat on the edge of the boat and let herself fall backward into the warm waters. At first, her heart had soared: greens! Purples! Oranges! Bright colors in the reefs, finally. The schools of fish were more like armies, numbered not in dozens but in hundreds, maybe even thousands, various species all swimming in their separate schools, like great big flags unfurling mightily in the water.

Marisa followed them, kicking delightedly, her heart flooding with joy. Then she turned a corner around some rocks and her breath caught, as if someone had reached inside her chest and closed a massive fist around her lungs. Even here, she found murk and drudgery, the reef not on display so much as its dying was.

She emerged from the water and took off her mask, tears mixing with the waves. People and the trash with which they suffocated the world. She looked around, shading her eyes from the shimmering sunlight with her free hand. Maybe it was time to accept the world as it was.

As she turned to swim back to shore, she caught sight of something on the far end of the island. A construction site. Large, acres and acres of it, from what Marisa could tell, and a handful of bulldozers. She swam closer and saw the sign announcing the coming resort. Nearby, a trickle of brown-gray water weaved its way from below the makeshift wall around the site and dribbled onto the sand.

Yes, it was a travesty, an outrage that the world had been ruined before her arrival. But that trickle hadn't reached all the way to the shore, not yet.

As soon as she and her family made it back to their eco-hotel that day, Marisa decided she had to stop that waste from reaching the ocean. Whatever she could do for the reefs, she was going to do it. If it was just shutting down that one construction site, or if it was something much bigger, she had to try. What else was there but to try?

Months of stewing later, of planning, of seeing the ruined remains of the ocean floors every time she closed her eyes, of thinking of a way to make everyone else see what she saw. It all led up to this moment, when Marisa hoisted a chain from the duffel bag she'd hidden on campus a few days ago. She weaved it through the handles on the double doors that led into the main school building, then she wrapped it three times around her own body, uncomfortably tight, so bolt cutters could not break through the metal without snagging on her skin. When she was satisfied, she grabbed three giant padlocks from the bag and locked herself in, meaning to stay.

She set the keys in the middle of her palm, rubbing them each in a pad of butter procured earlier from the cafeteria, and which had warmed nicely in her pocket throughout the afternoon. Then Marisa, rehearsing her speech in her mind one last time, looked up. She expected to see a sizable crowd already gathering. What she saw instead was a lanky blond sophomore leaving the bathroom across the open expanse of the building's foyer. The boy was checking to see if he'd re-membered to zip up. He had not.

When his eyes met Marisa's, he could tell she had seen him checking, and he stepped quickly away from her line of sight, failing to notice the heavy metal chain wrapped around her torso.