

## Shifting Sight

By Caroline Culp King

As I sit on the squishy, moss covered rock gazing at the pink bubble next to the kelp forest, I think back to the fateful day when I had jumped into the ocean.

It started the day we got to that hot, sandy beach. My family and I had just arrived at the beautiful blue beach house with yellow shingles. I had finished piling my junk out of my pink suitcase onto the bed. Suddenly, I felt a strong urge as a faint humming floated from the pile on my bed. "What is going on?" I thought as I slowly crept towards the heap of clothes and then felt my hand tingle, plunging into the pile and pulled out my bathing suit that my grandmother had bought for me from an odd vendor in a tent on the boardwalk. A two-piece white top with lace, and bottoms that start off white, then fade into a navy blue, also lacy. Scared, I automatically pulled it on and put my clothes back on over it. I tried to turn around to take off the swimsuit, but my legs yanked out from under me and swiftly walked me out of the bedroom. I try to open my mouth to scream for help, but my teeth felt barred together.

As I entered the kitchen, I felt my mouth jerk open and a voice that sounded like my own but more monotone expelled, "I'm going to look at the sand Mom, okay?"

"Okay, honey!" she said over the top of the red milk jug. "Oh, Ava? Just don't get in the water. We have to wait for your cousins, and besides, I saw this weird pink sphere thing in the water. I think it might be jellyfish, and I don't want you to get stung." She finishes, closing the fridge and grabbing a bag of crust-free bread.

I quickly run out of the house, onto the boardwalk, the hum growing into a steady buzz. As I run, I yank off my shirt and shorts so I am only in my bathing suit. Stumbling occasionally, but always getting back up, I reach the rotted end of the dock and fling myself over the edge. I look down a second before I

land, and I manage to wrench my jaw open and emit a bloodcurdling scream before I land smack dab in the middle of a huge pink sphere.

The moment I go under, I immediately kick towards the surface. I feel my legs start to slow, and I feel as though someone is encasing me in a full body straightjacket. I look down and I am startled to see my bathing suit turn into tight seaweed. I feel my hair braid itself and wrap around my head. Although it felt like hours, the transformation was probably only seconds. I expected to feel my lungs burn with the need of oxygen, but surprisingly, I found I could take easy breaths underwater. I start to slide around in the wet sand, looking for a way to climb out. I see a few fish swim by, but that was all.

I turn around to see a dark-skinned girl with thick purple hair and a yellow seaweed outfit staring at a starfish. I jump as she suddenly zips around and stares at me. She looks normal, but something was off about her. Then I got it. Her eyes. They were a pale yellow and didn't seem to need to blink. "H-h-hello?" I stuttered. I noticed that when I talked, little bubbles escaped from my mouth and floated up towards the surface. "Welcome, Ava. HE has been expecting you." she says in a low, robotic voice. "Wh-Where am I?" I said, still nervous about this girl. "You are in the kingdom of the Oracle." she says. Before I can react, she darts out and grabs my arm. "It has been a VERY long time since we had one like you. The last one didn't last very long at all. Come. HE will be waiting." Then she drags me into what looked like a large bubble. It was a pink, translucent sphere with two small indentations in the bottom of the sphere. "H-how do we get into it?" I asked as she pulls me straight through the wall. I immediately shiver and wrap my arms around myself. I look down, and realize that the other girl had already sat down. For some reason her features looked warped, and her hair was floating all around her head. Then I noticed she was in a water bubble. I sat in the other indentation and sure enough, a water bubble formed around me too. POW! The bubble blasted off at breakneck speed and zoomed around rocks, corral, and brightly colored fish. This whole time the girl hadn't said anything.

“So, uh, what’s your name?” I nervously ask. When I spoke, it sounded a bit garbled. She could apparently understand though because her eyes suddenly blinked and turned a bright, crystal, blue.

“Melody. That’s my name.” she said in a happy bubbly voice. Suddenly her happy demeanor was gone and her eyes went back to pale yellow. “We are almost there.” she said in a robotic voice again. I stared at her for a couple of seconds then looked ahead. ‘Do you have any family?’ I try again. Melody turns to face me. Blue eyes, yellow eyes, blue eyes... yes! Blue eyes! “Oh! Hello, you asked about my family? I have a wonderful mom, and dad, and the most silly little sister, Claire.” Melody giggled. Yellow eyes.

“Uh.. what do you do for fun?” I blurt out, desperate. “Oh, well, I love a good game of shellball I suppose.” Phew. Back to crystal blue eyes. “Do you know your eyes turn yellow sometimes?” I ask her tentatively. “Yellow?... Oh no! Oh, no, no, no, no no.” she mutters. Looking around wildly. “What am I doing back in this bubble?!” She is taking deep breaths, “You have to get out of here! They’re going to take you like they took me!” Her eyes are flashing dangerously from blue, to yellow, blue, yellow. She puts her hands on her head and looks up. Her eyes are blue again. “You have to go now, you’re our last hope.” Then she thrusts her arms out and pushes me out of the bubble to the surface with amazing strength. As I’m flying towards the surface I look back and barely make out Melody’s eyes which are a pale yellow. I look forward again as I burst through the water nearly crashing into that rickety old dock. I slowly stand up and look back at the sparkling blue water and wonder, *Will I save Melody and the people of the Oracle?*