



The Secret of the Shimmering Shore

Paul Bonham - Dolphin Sr PS (1553)





Leo lives in a charming house in the heart of Oakville, but he always takes the long way around town to avoid the vast, blue horizon. To him, the lake is a giant, unpredictable mystery that feels far too big and deep for comfort.



At night, the sound of the waves crashing against the distant shore reaches his bedroom, sounding like a low, rumbling growl. He pulls his blankets tight, imagining what strange and shadowy creatures might be hiding beneath the dark, churning surface.



His friends often gather at the lakeside pier to skip stones and laugh, their joyful voices carrying on the summer breeze. Leo watches them from a safe distance behind a row of trees, wishing he could join them but held back by an invisible wall of fear.



While exploring his grandfather's attic, Leo discovers a dusty leather journal filled with vibrant watercolor paintings of the very lake he fears. The pages show sun-drenched waves, golden sailboats, and friendly schools of fish shimmering in the crystal-clear light.



A handwritten note in the journal says that the lake is a mirror of one's own heart, reflecting back the courage you bring to its shores. Leo feels a spark of curiosity beginning to outweigh his dread for the very first time.



The next morning, Leo walks slowly toward the waterfront, his heart drumming a nervous beat against his ribs. He stops at the edge of the green grass where the park meets the sand, watching the water sparkle brilliantly under the morning sun.



He notices a small, brightly colored bird diving playfully into the shallows, emerging with a tiny splash and a happy chirp. The water doesn't look like a monster anymore; it looks like a peaceful playground for the brave and the small.



Leo takes off his shoes and feels the soft, cool sand between his toes as he inches closer to the rhythmic, incoming tide. The air smells of fresh rain and cedar, a refreshing scent that feels surprisingly like home.



As the first gentle wave washes over his feet, Leo realizes the water is cool and kind, not cold and scary. He looks down and sees his own smiling reflection in the ripples, clearer and brighter than he ever imagined it could be.



Now, the winding path by the lake is Leo's favorite place in all of Oakville to walk, think, and dream. He realizes that the things we fear the most often hold the most beauty, if only we are brave enough to stand by the shore and say hello.