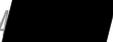


# A TURTLE IN NEED

BY THALIA 

Harmony was stuck. Minutes before, she was swimming in the ocean looking for food as the cool calming water washed against her forest green shell. Now, her long neck was stuck in a clear, plastic can-ring. Harmony loved her home located in Fort Myers Beach, Florida, but many people would throw their dirty plastic trash into the beautiful turquoise ocean gleaming below. This caused many of Harmony's friends to get stuck in the plastic with no way out. Unfortunately, it was now her turn to get stuck in the mucky pollution. Harmony's bony stomach growled; all she wanted was some lunch, but instead she got a plastic can-ring to the neck. Harmony was often quite frisky when she didn't get food, and now her attitude was close to bubbling over. She was also very talkative, so she was starting to get bored out of her mind. She looked around but it was as if someone had erased all of her water friends.

Harmony sighed. Her eyes were sagging and her face drooping, but before she gave in, she saw something in the corner of her eye; another turtle swam over and exclaimed "Harmony! Do you need help?" It was her best friend Lila! Lila clamped her jaw on the can-ring and pulled, but it wouldn't budge. Harmony held her head low in disappointment. "There's no point," she sighed. Lila looked into her friends eyes, saw sadness and slowly drifted away. Harmony sat there tears streaming down her face. The can-ring pulled as she lowered her head. How would she be able to eat if she could barely move?

Days passed and Harmony's stomach growled louder and louder. She was slowly starving and was whimpering in pain. Every time Harmony tried to move, the can-ring would pull tighter, choking Harmony. Her fins were limp, neck scarred from the ring and shell graying from the stress of the passing days. She breathed her last few breaths and let out a final whimper, giving into her fate.

Meanwhile, above the glittering ocean, on the sandy shore, a group of divers gathered together arranging a schedule to figure out how they could clean up the ocean and beach for Earth Day.

Among the group was a young diver named Jenna. Earlier she had taken a swim in the ocean and saw a turtle stuck in a can-ring in the water, but because she didn't have her surfing gear, she couldn't help. Now was her chance; as the other divers walked into the water, Jenna took off for the location of the turtle in need.

Jenna dove into the teal ocean and swam down near the bottom of the water. She turned her head until she caught a glimpse of the trapped turtle. She slowly halted next to Harmony who shivered at the sight of a human, and carefully pulled off the can-ring freeing Harmony from her misery. Harmony stretched out her neck and quietly swam away, careful not to get stuck in any more plastic. Harmony was finally free in her ocean home, and Jenna helped clean up the plastic to ensure Harmony's home stayed safe for as long as possible. 🐢🐢🐢🐢