YOUR NAME Word Count: 1,300

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“TITLE HERE”

Little Suzie skipped through the cool darkness, humming happily to herself. She followed the carpeted pathway down further into the cave-like room. Barely seen on the walls were the fake embellishments of rocks, plants and even the occasional hint of freshwater fish. Deeper still she skipped ever closer to the glowing up ahead, her excitement growing. Her humming had stopped and she now walked with widening eyes as the blue ambience filled them ever more. She stumbled to a stop in front on the center large acrylic window.

“Come closer, Child.”

The creepy voice made her look over her shoulder. Nothing seemed notable but the dark corridor and the blinding brightness of the entrance; no one else was here. She had left her parents behind at the door as they sat on a bench, relishing the air conditioning just inside the attraction. They had encouraged her to venture alone, to take your time so that they might recoup from the searing heat outside. Seeing no signs of anyone else joining her adventure, she turned back to the viewing window.

“Oh!” She gasped.

There before her hovered a massive heap of grey flesh. She giggled as he reminded her of an enormous grey potato with whiskers. A frown crossed her lips; manatees weren’t as exciting as everyone had made them out to be. The whiskers twitched and a few bubbles rolled out of the nostrils on his squishy round muzzle. Its bulgy little eyes rolled to peer down at her, as if disappointed in how tiny she was in comparison to himself.

“Will you join me, Child?” Again, the mysterious voice.

Suzie flung herself around, but once more found herself alone in the blue glow of the aquarium window.

“H-hello?” Her tiny voice echoed as she squinted at the dark corners of the room and corridor.

“No, Child. Behind you.” A thumping brought her back around to stare at the manatee who had moved closer to the window.

A smile crawled across her little freckled face. Excited that the grey potato was so close, she too joined him. Her nose pressed firmly against the acrylic made her look like a pig from the manatee’s side. Now she could count the whiskers in his snout, see the rolls and folds of grey flesh that made her giggle to see he had not one, but four chins adorning his neck. He flapped a fin, thumping the window and she jumped back. After a shocked pause, she laughed and ran back to the manatee. With a hardy slap, she high-fived her new potato friend.

“Stop that!” Bubbles rolled from the manatee’s nostrils. “I command you to stop your buffoonery at once!”

“You can talk!” She gasped, clapping her hands excitedly. “No one told me manatees could talk!”