**Saving Strangers**

**By: Lily Nguyen**

I look outside, gazing at people walking by. To most people, they think of them as strangers, anonymous people taking a nice walk. But those people could really be heroes. When you think of heroes, you might think of someone fictional, like Superman. Or, you might think of a person in real life, like Harriet Tubman.

Those are people who save others because of kindness. Of course, random people on a sidewalk couldn’t save lives. Right? Well, they definitely could. Just picking up a piece of trash could save a life. But how could that effect lives?

Well, here’s a story about a baby sea turtle named Mila. Mila was born on a sandy beach under a bright moonlit night. Predators were watching the huge cluster of hatchlings. Birds flew overhead, sharks swam silently in the water, and scavengers dug to find the unhatched eggs. These newborn turtles have to traverse their way through these obstacles. Even when reaching the water, predators could still eat them.

Despite all these challenges, Mila didn’t lose hope. Mila waited for more hatchlings to hatch and they waddled across the sand, oblivious to the looming predators. Soon the beach was flooded with shells. Birds swooped by scooping up some unfortunate turtles.

Mila used the crowd as an advantage. She quickly crawled to the awaiting water, ignoring her siblings chirping for help.

It was survival of the fittest. She finally felt the comfort of the lapping waves. Exhausted, she rested and adapted to the cold water. A screech came from overhead as a bird swooped down right beside her. Luckily it caught the hatchling beside her. Frightened, she dove into the water, scanning her surroundings.

A few other baby sea turtles had made it. *The struggle is over,* Mila thought. Just then, a shark lunged at her. Her life flashed before her eyes. But Mila was just able to dodge the sharp teeth and saw a piece of coral. She swam to the safety of the coral reef, hearing the snapping of bones behind her slowly fading away.

Hungrily, she bit into the coral, enjoying the taste. After having her fill, she lay down on the sand, and slept. This became her daily ritual. When she reached a year old, she started eating things like jellyfish and crabs.

Her favorite food was moon jellyfish. While swimming around, hunting for food, she spotted a jellyfish, hanging like a ragdoll. She quickly swam towards it and bit into it. Instead of the usual gelatinous texture, it felt tough. She tried to spit it out, but it was too late. The weird animal was stuck in her throat, choking her. She struggled to breathe.

Mila closed her eyes, fear striking her heart. *This is it; this is the end. After all my struggles at the start, it’s wasted because of this*. She gave up, too tired to fight. Her last breath withered away. Her heart stopped and her brief life had ended too soon, all because of a simple piece of trash.

That’s what could have happened, instead, a girl named Emily and her mother were walking across a beach, on a sunny day in Florida. The little girl saw a trash bag on the sidewalk. Her mother led her around it. Emily turned her head as they walked by, wondering why it wasn’t where it belonged. “Mom, can we stop for a second?” The girl asked. Her mom nodded and was about to ask why, but the girl turned around and grabbed the bag by its handle.

She walked to the nearest trash can and threw it away. Emily smiled, proud of her accomplishment. “Come on sweety, we best get going.” Her mom called. The girl ran back towards her mom.

The piece of trash Emily threw away, just saved a life. Maybe even hundreds of lives. Mila never really encountered that bag because the girl threw it away. Mila lived happily and the next year, she laid her own beautiful eggs. Those eggs hatched and the circle of life continued.

Emily saved all of those lives without even knowing what could’ve happened. She didn’t know who Mila was, she just did it to help the community.

By just having a kind heart, like Emily, you can save strangers. That’s what an everyday hero is about.