

If I wasn't so terrified, it would have been funny! I watch Mr. Obiki flail, dip under the water, surface with eyeballs bulging, and I stare and try to will him not to drown. I want to help him, but I can't.

The pull of the ocean is still dragging me and it feels stronger now. I try to swim toward the shore, vigorously kicking my legs and swinging my arms. But the best I can do is just stay even. How long can I keep this up? My breath is coming fast, I feel myself getting weaker. Apparently even warriors get tired.

As I looked around me I feel so helpless. Suddenly I noticed that my little sister Naomi is pretty close. I hadn't realized she'd been caught in the waves too. She was screaming, her eyes filled with fear. I doubt that I can help her. But I have to try. I put on my brave face and struggle to get close to her. Finally I am able to grab her arm.

"It's okay, Naomi. It's going to be all right," I say to her loudly enough for her to hear me through the crying.

Just then I see my dad! He is swimming straight toward our panicked group. And he's carrying a ton of inner tubes. I always knew my dad was fun-loving, kind-hearted, wise, but now he is soaring to new levels. He's a genius! What a beyond clever idea to bring us all inner tubes so we can stay safe and floating until we get rescued. And he's also at superhero status. He is plummeting into danger with no thought of himself. I see the determination in his face, and I know I am safe. I know Mr. Obiki is safe. I know we are all safe. Except Merian? I can't see her anywhere!

I watch my dad as he makes sure every single one of us has an inner tube to rest on. Then untiringly he comes to each of us and pulls us to the shore. Except Merian. I can't see her anywhere!

I am feeling mixed up and upside down. My dad is a hero! Because of him, we are not going to get sucked into the ocean and get lost forever.

But did Merian get all trapped in those ocean twisting snakes and is now trying to survive way beyond where we can see? As my dad pulls me to the shore my relief is hidden under my worry about Merian. I'm too afraid to even ask my dad about her.