

SEABOH33

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Cowboy scratched at the flecks of salt between sunbleached follicles on his scalp as he stared down at the purling water. The afternoon currents were gentle and the brine in the air smelled sharp as he slid the grist down along a couple of lank strands before rolling it between thumb and forefinger. My mouth is so dry and I'm covered in salt and secretions but I'm alive, he thought. He turned back towards the others. Mania was yawning as she UV-cured the algae tanks while Leech cradled his LRAD harpoon and scanned the distance for predators, resources, entertainment, or supper.

He watched Shellbourne stretch her pussached neck and gather beachgubbins to make saleable folk crap and splash ornaments for Mania's true blue hair. He imagined a caption for the tableau before him: "a pretty classy water moment, another cool day on the breeze".

The polypool was flush with florid seatrash, Shellbourne having spent most of the morning tide trawling for cute old plastics in the trash gyre. She had sailed back with two full nets and further flotsam rolling across the floor of the dinghy to scoop up when she docked, satisfied she had gathered enough for crafting following the day's afternoon broadcast. She noticed him watching her and crouched down beside the larger of the two nets.

"Can you massage my neck?" she winced, "I got a crick and half".

"You shouldn't have been playing smash so long." Leech answered before Cowboy could speak. "All mushed up together pashing on deck, like lionfish loose in the algae paddock."

After several requests from premium subscribers the girls had broadcast their own session without him or Cowboy and his tone made it clear that he felt he should have been invited anyway.

"Excuse me if I don't need you to crack a fat. She made me float like a boat" Mania giggled.

Cowboy glanced at her before turning back to the ocean and the motes beneath his fingernails. He tried not to think too much or too deeply. When they had first beached at SeaBOH33 he had felt as swirly and content as the lumps of plastics butting against the platform out by the gyre. Life was placid and he had relished its salty flavour.

Look how clear that water is, like a sea whose wealth our fisherman will never exhaust.

Shellbourne turned back to her haul, placing an ancient piece of orange dense beside a younger plastic that might have been a vessel for some bitching industrial refreshment. She had always cared about a complimentary palette and the fresher piece was thin-mist blue, it would go nicely with a bit of synthetic flake (shark flesh) that she would print out later. They sold the crafts that she and Cowboy made to supplement the sessions, which worked beautifully as a buffer front for several of their more nefarious activities. The quad were ostensibly a camming pod, getting clicks for licks and stacking an impressive digitworth for a few hours of depravity a day. Water-trash people, sealicked and louche, they streamed under squirt10000iNSTAPAY!!!, Analsunlicker and D rsalPlay Fishkin TrueBlu it LUTS.

It was an easy life, mornings spent harvesting algae and maintaining the other tanks, checking the plastisphere cultures or fossicking for solid pieces from the gyre before checking subscriber ratings and queries. Then after a light lunch of some modified synth-fish and spirulina gruel they would fuck through the spectrum of configurations, positions, and carnal enthusiasm. It went out live to several million paying subs, mostly energy labourers and a few bored elites looking for a filthy finned thrill. Mania spent the most time streaming, her back in a near permanent bridge. The subs loved her. Watching her now on the platform Cowboy could

hardly believe she was the same rare creature they paid so much to look at. She was in her prime on someone else's feed, regal turquoise babyhairs slicked to her temples, eyeballs rolled back for a 12D close-up as the BEV drone pulled over her. What a fucking star. In person she seemed frail and her half-assed toying with the aquavac was unconvincing this morning, the sides of the algae tank as grimy as ever.

They did the majority of the broadcasts on the sundeck or in a splashpool at the base of the platform where Mania would pout and moan "Don't take me out of the water, I'll die" for the fishkin subs. The platforms they lived on were circular and several stories high. Individual privacy was redundant and shelter cosmetic, thanks to the micro-climate they had been gifted by a Red Planeter who fantasized about flouting regs to give Mania a better life in Elon Province 4.

There were additional activities that Mania didn't participate in. The polypool traded the seacrafts publicly but were staying afloat thanks to a rash of undeclared light and shade logistics – crude blockchain alterations, e-visas, 'feit docs between patchstates, questionably legal cold storage solutions, data trafficking and so on. She left these pursuits to the others in favour of long hours spent toning and grooming when she wasn't camming or talking to her devoted subs. No good or evil on your back, she'd tell them mid-duckface.

In the distance an unfamiliar bow sliced through the plastic confetti like a tungsten wire through cream. Cowboy felt the dread rise up inside him like a dark ancient fish. They rarely crossed other Seastealers. The vessels with organic cargo that did sail by tended to contain adrift server punk liberstealers like themselves, eco-burnout tourists and the odd descendant of the Silicon Reich on a luxury wasteland hover tour. But the quads in the air were easy to distinguish from cargo drones, the liberstealers tended to travel on smaller trimarans and the janky powerboats full of gawking tourists were hard to miss. This silhouette suggested none of these. There were factions on the water (the Kamikaze Rays, Gaia Fighter Squads) that would have been problematic, like, triggering to run into. They'd heard stories about absconding ferals building craft too but they never made it out far enough, usually dying sloppy deaths that bore them back to shore.

"What's wrong Cowboy?" Shellbourne asked, "That pout's going at knots. Was it the solo arvo sesh?"

"Bad shapes" he said, and pointed to the shimmering craft.

