



Captivity

Jennifer Shneiderman

I'm scooping up Bahamian sand dollars in warm shallow water, my snorkel bobbing and dipping. Two marine biology classmates run towards me, each holding the end of a bucket. The girls have caught a gray-green baby octopus. It lays motionless, submerged in seawater, clinging to a corner of the plastic basin. The creature remains still and seems sad and frightened. An instructor tells us if we don't let it go, it will die. We plunge the container into the ocean and wait until the creature frees itself, arms undulating. I release the sand dollars back to the ocean and watch as they slowly sink toward home.