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## A Voyage to Conservation

I will protect the ocean by becoming a marine biologist.

What draws me to the ocean? What makes the ocean so special? The ocean is a vast and remote place. It takes up 71% of the earth's surface, with 95% of which remains unexplored. It is a habitat for 240,000 known species and millions unknown. From Odysseus's voyage home across the "wine-dark sea", to Ariel's song of "full fathom five thy father lies", to Captain Ahab's pursuit of the white whale, the ocean shaped our land, our life, and our identity. As Wallace Stegner said in his *Wilderness Letter*, the ocean is "worth preserving ... for the spiritual renewal, the recognition of identity, the birth of awe".

Human activities endanger the ocean. In 2022 alone, 15,000 tons of oil was spilled and 269,000 tons of plastic was dumped into the ocean. Those pollutants create massive clumps that injure or even kill sea creatures that come in contact. Overfishing is another major threat, as it throws the food chain off balance. Climate change can endanger species like coral reefs due to extreme heat or extreme cold. "If the oceans die, we all die." warns the ocean activist Paul Watson.

But how can I help? By becoming a marine biologist. I will gather data about pollution and study how we can reduce and remove pollution from the ocean. I will monitor the quality of ocean lives. I will search for new ocean species and explore the unexplored. I will raise awareness about the importance of protecting the ocean to the public. I will manage wildlife preserves to conserve and recover endangered species.

The ocean desperately needs our protection. Becoming a marine biologist is my way to help and the voyage starts now.