

Samara strolled along the beach leaving heavy paw prints in her wake as she stomped into the sand. Dressed for a swim, in a suit that clung halfway down her thighs and rounded out her shoulders, she'd come to this secluded beach with multiple purposes, though the foremost task was simple; relaxation.

She knew the location was secluded but not isolated, enough people walking by on an infrequent basis that anything happening wasn't ensured to be private.

It was her prankish nature that had set her exploring the area. That infrequency could potentially give her enough time to waylay some hapless schmuck in a hilarious predicament and get away without being seen, while also making it likely that someone would find them and help them out before things got too far.

Samara and her brother both loved knowing how their games played out and it was always better when a third party came to the rescue. She felt it undermined her threat if she had to go back and lend a hand herself.

Always on the hunt to find a new spot for their ambush games, it had brought her here. The beach had a perfect spot, a little cove, just out of sight of the main pathways, with the sandy part just barely above the tide level. Already she was thinking of how she could bury someone up to the neck, make them think the sea would claim them, even measure carefully so they'd have to tilt their head up and feel the salt water lapping at their cheeks.

She wondered how she could factor that into their freedom. Maybe a loosely tied cloth gag that when filled with water would be heavy enough to detach and let their cries for help be heard.

Still, setting her devious thoughts to one side, she focused on the now. After all, it was a nice day for a swim. She stood, stretching her arms to warm up before she set off at a bounding pace down the beach and into the water beyond. "Gyaaah!" She gasped, it was cold!

The heat of the sun meant nothing to the water but still the hyena powered through it, kicking her legs, bracing herself as the chill reached her belly and beyond. She kicked out into the waters once she was deep enough that she could no longer stand arms splashing around in her ungainly stroke. She distracted herself from the chill by dwelling on the area, popping her head above the placid waters to look for anything of note. What would be utterly perfect would be to find a cave, some spot she could use as a lair for her tricks, though she would need to swim a bit further out for that.

She knew her strength, leaving her confident she wouldn't stray far enough for any currents to mess with her.

Several metres further and she turned, kicking to hold herself in place as she surveyed the coast. There was a bend with an overhanging cliff some way along the coastline, if there was going to be a lair-worthy cave, that was the spot.

With a target in sight she started to kick down towards it. Samara was well warmed up now, the water quite pleasant to swim in after adjusting to it. She wondered if there were any fish around, or better still, fish babes. She hadn't met many aquatic anthros, though it would be fun to test some fun scenarios on one in its home turf. Particularly if it could breathe underwater.

As she thought of fish a shadow flashed under the surface. "Ooo, hello there." She said, hoping it wasn't her imagination. On the next bob, she stuck her face under the water, looking around, a sinewy shape slithered off. An eel? Her lips cracked a smirk, maybe a squid or an octopus?

She wasn't about to bully wildlife but if she could identify the critter she could probably think of a few ways to bully her 'friends' and rivals.

The hyena took a big breath and then plunged into the water, head swishing around, looking for the shadow again. More motion, it was definitely eel-like but larger than expected. She dove down after it, one last sweep of her arms to propel her forward before her legs did the rest of the work.

Her hand closed on the tail end, open palm still not big enough to even cover the top of it, then she went squeezing, hoping it would coil around her in response so she could tug and get a good look at it. Instead, it was like squeezing a water snake toy, the centre of it slipped away, out of her grip. The tail lashed, stirring the water in what felt like a soft, phantom touch on her fur.

The thing didn't grab or come at her, instead it retreated. Samara kicked after it chasing it from behind a rock toward the shore. It slipped about swimming fast, giving her her first good look at it. The hyena had never seen a hagfish, as such the fact it was abnormally huge didn't strike her as unusual. The look of the thing however was quite something and the fact that despite being big enough to wrap around her multiple times, it was choosing flight over fighting.

With it chased a good distance inland, the hyena kicked upwards to break above the water line and fill her lungs. Her eyes widened as when she reached the surface the water seemed to rise with her!

The soft touch she'd felt earlier had been the creature's slime, sprayed out when feeling threatened and light enough when submerged that she hadn't paid it any mind. Now it weighed down, like a slick, see through drape. Her hands floundered for a second, pulling enough aside for her jaws to crack and take a fresh breath. "Pffhaa, what the hell are you?" She asked the shadow, a shiver tracing her spine as the massive hagfish turned around, feeling backed into a corner, it surged in her direction.

Despite her situation Samara still tried to make a grab for it, hands reaching for its ugly head. The fish recoiled and flailed in a panic, thrashing out of her path and ending up looping around her. Its body brushed the hyena, setting her spinning in the water. The feeling from

before returned but stronger, the earlier sliming had been the equivalent of a warning shot. Now the creature felt threatened; it was throwing as much as it could and churning the waters to spread it. Even just the lapping waves above were stirring the slime, throwing a thick gout over Samara's head.

Frothy whiteness, like sea foam, was caught up around her where she tried to break the surface and even under the waves it had grown thick enough to be felt with each movement, to stretch and squeeze, holding onto her body. She kicked with her legs, breaking the surface once more, with enough momentum that even her tail should have risen into the air but the cloying slime had grown thicker, it spread and then compressed once more, pulling her down!

Her fingers splayed, trying to stretch it out, only for the slime to fill the cracks between her digits more soundly. She could still just about tread water, though it was taking considerably more effort. "Nhh, I'll be back for you." She garbled through the trace of slime around her head and shoulders, kicking away from the sea, more thrashing and undulating than the practised swim she had gone out with.

A higher wave scooped behind her and she braced for it, turning her head to see it growing, thickening as it gathered up more slime. "Oh—"

It splashed over her and seemed to curl and roll, pulling her with it to the shore but also spinning and tangling her up. In flailing to right herself she ended up further conflicting her situation. On the upside, the pull of the water wasn't as strong as the push had been, setting her close to the sands, on the downsides, firstly her elbows and knees had bent and now couldn't fully straighten out. Second and more worryingly, she was now below the water's surface and lacked the control needed to kick upwards.

The slime seemed to coagulate on contact with itself, becoming a shrinking coating around Samara, taking all of her effort and the use of her other arm to push enough that a single hand could stretch out. She managed to find the bottom of the seabed, tugging herself gradually along, bracing against the pull, releasing when the water pushed.

A stream of bubbles escaped her mouth, becoming trapped in the slime for a while before slowly squeezing out. She had to make it to the shallows before she ran out of air! The foam-laced slime behind her moved in her direction, indicating another big wave, she bent her stretched elbow, to push up from the bottom, but as it bent the thick gooey coating swallowed her arm again, fouling the attempt!

"Mlllblbl!" She gasped, spun once again by the currents, effectively gooped into a tight pouch of slime, from her shoulders to her hip with her limbs and head bent inwards, the top of it pressing to the sea floor while her feet tried to kick out. Where were the jerks who should be walking past the beach!?

While seconds ago she'd been hoping no one saw the embarrassing fix she was in, now she desperately needed outside attention.

The flow of water pulled back but it left a weight on her legs. Slime and air but no more water! She was positioned shallow enough to poke above with the ebb of the waves.

However, strain as she might, she was beached, the slime had grown more elastic, straining such that the imprint of her paw pads and claws could be seen. A fresh wave sloshed over them and then to her horror she felt it pull, dragging back. She needed air, but if she was pulled in, how would she get it, even if she righted herself? She'd be too deep!

The ground shifted, even as she tried to dig into it, it was no use-

A sudden press of motion from behind threatened to push her in faster until she felt a definite touch fall on her paws. Hands grabbed them and tugged, rolling her to her side and back up the sun warmed sands.

Her rescuer's hold dropped for a moment before the hands plunged into the slime, grabbing for her thighs and hauling back and up, out of the water and to damp but solid land, thick with the glassy and white pocked look of the hagfish's slime.

The rescuer hauled below the hyena, throwing her onto her back. The hands descended again around Samara's head, sacrificing their own cleanliness to break away the coating at her nose and eyes.

The exhausted and relieved hyena stared up, blinking as the figure's head blocked out the sun, a lioness...

"Why did it have to be you?!" Both women said in unison, though with the miring slime, Samara's query was an incoherent burble. The cat was one of the very rivals she'd pictured burying in the sand for a laugh, yet here she was, ruining her own outfit and wading hip high in sticky goop to save her.

The lioness, Ofenna, was sorely tempted to just drop the hyena and leave, Samara was out of immediate danger, she could struggle free on her own. Yet even so she couldn't just do that in case she was wrong. Not to mention she hadn't seen anyone else who might step in to help.

Samara equally considered tripping Ofenna, getting her slimed up too so she couldn't run off without finding a way to free both of them. She controlled herself, the situation was perilous enough and the sour faced feline didn't seem to be going anywhere.

"This stuff better get thinner or weaker when exposed to air, or the two of us are gonna be here a while." Ofenna grunted as she pulled Samara out of the water, well beyond the line that high tide had drawn in the sand.

“Stmm gmmblmmh nn hgh mh nnnh mhmly!” The hyena replied. Her words again muffled to uselessness. The lioness started to scrape the slime off herself as best as she could, freeing up a hand. Reaching to her phone, she winced, hoping the gunk wouldn’t damage it.

“Let me call my brother, at the very least he might be able to send something helpful out.”

“Hgh Chhhmh!” Samara muffled.

“Get Cade? What, so that he can rescue you and then you both dip me in the slime? Yeah, right, like I’ll fall for that!” She said, after managing to suss out those words. “One of our brothers is enough on the scene.”

Samara let out some shocked protests. Sure the thought had crossed her mind but she would only have done it if Ofenna took too long.

The lioness dialled, had a quick chat and then knelt to clean her hands and slowly scoop more slime off Samara, starting with her mouth and then continuing to her arms.

“Now, tell me why you saw a sea of glue and thought to yourself. ‘Oh boy! Time for a plunge!’” The lioness said.

Samara turned her head to the waters. The entire bay was transformed, every inch thick with the stretchy, mucus-like liquid, to Ofenna it must have looked like she’d been mad. What was that weird fish, anyway?

“I saw the alert, Jensen, what’s wrong?”

“There was a containment rupture! It looks like someone purposely sabotaged some of the tanks, sir!”

“Sabotaged how? What of the specimens?”

“Some of them stayed, none of them have been damaged or hurt, at least not deliberately, but it looks like others were either flushed or swam right out to sea.”

The scientist rubbed the bridge of his nose as he walked past the broken tanks. Probably some damn activists concerned for animal welfare. How they’d found the place was beyond him. At any rate, they’d have to scan the area and hope they could reclaim each subject before there was an uproar...