

STORY of Haenyeo

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Another day
Another trip
Together into the sea

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Characters



Im-soon



Kyeong-ae



Mi-ok

Mi-ok, Kyeong-ae, and Im-soon are close friends. They know almost everything about each other. They first met at the Haenyeo House in Hamo Village, Jeju. Since then, they've been submerging together, even now in their seventies.

As they walk toward the Haenyeo House, Mi-ok says, "All those days resting due to the typhoons have left me stiff!"

Im-soon responds, "At this point in life, it'd be strange not to feel stiff!"

"Well, that's true. We've gotten much older anyway..." Mi-ok says.

"Still, let's do our best."



The three friends, now in their diving suits, start packing their tools. They take their *Bitchang* and *Kkakkuri*, and then ride on the boat. As the boat glides to the diving spot, they get ready by rubbing mugwort on their goggles, used to prevent fogging.

Suddenly, Kyeong-ae breaks the silence. “Is everyone ready with their goggles? Now let’s start heading in.”

**Bitchang* & *kkakkuri*
Traditional harvesting tool used by Haenyeo

Im-soon looks up from her goggles. “I just hope we all stay safe. Did you hear about Soon-ja? I heard a piece of glass got stuck in her foot. This is all because of pollution.”



Back when they were young...

The sea is clear like ever before.

I can't wait to see what I catch today.

Maybe I'll finally beat Im-soon this time!



Nowadays...



Hooo-ee~

Hooo-ee~



Once they get out of the water, the Haenyeo friends gather together to share what they've caught.

Im-soon asks, "How much did you catch today?"

Kyeong-ae says quietly, "No... This is all I've got."

Mi-ok says, "When we were young, the sea was full of resources. These days, even the conchs show only once in a blue moon."

Im-soon looks at today's catch. "Indeed... I see more trash than seafood. If this continues, we won't have anything left to catch."

Kyeong-ae joins in, "Ah, getting older makes it harder to hold my breath for long. How did everything change so drastically? Our island, the sea, us..."



Although there was no big catch today, the three tired Haenyeo friends board the boat. Mi-ok seems gloomy today. Suddenly, she breaks the silence with an unexpected announcement.

**“I’m getting older day by day.
I think I’d better retire after this year.”**



**“What? What are you talking about?
What will we do if you quit?”**



**“Is there no one to replace us and be a
Haenyeo anymore?”**

**“Yeah! If we’re gone,
who will protect the sea?”**



**“Wait,
what about your granddaughter Mi-ok?”**

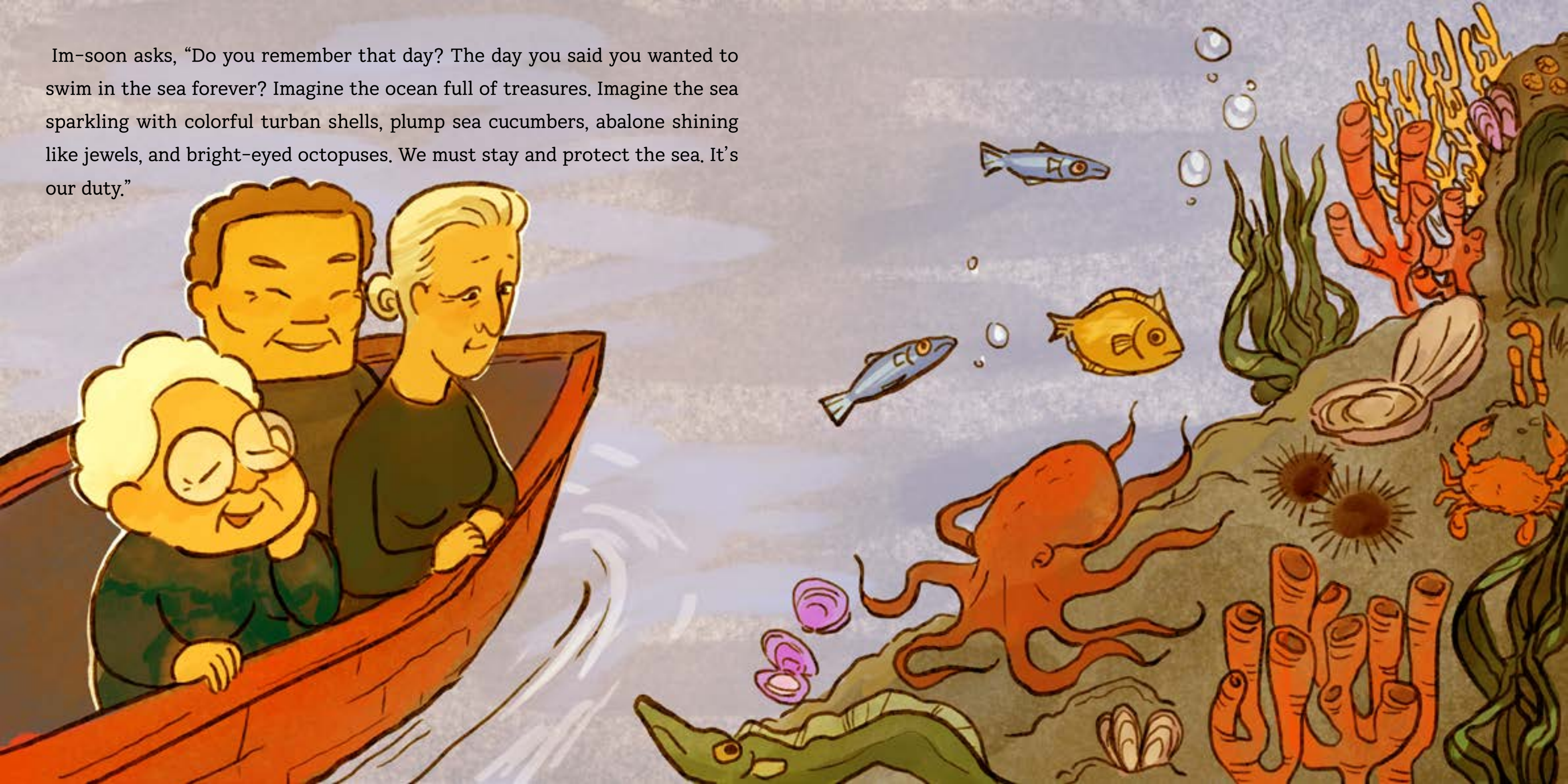


**“In Seoul, of course. These days, the
younger generations all head to Seoul to find
jobs. There’s no one left here to become a
Haenyeo anymore.”**

**“That’s why we have to keep going!
If we quit, Haenyeo might go extinct!”**



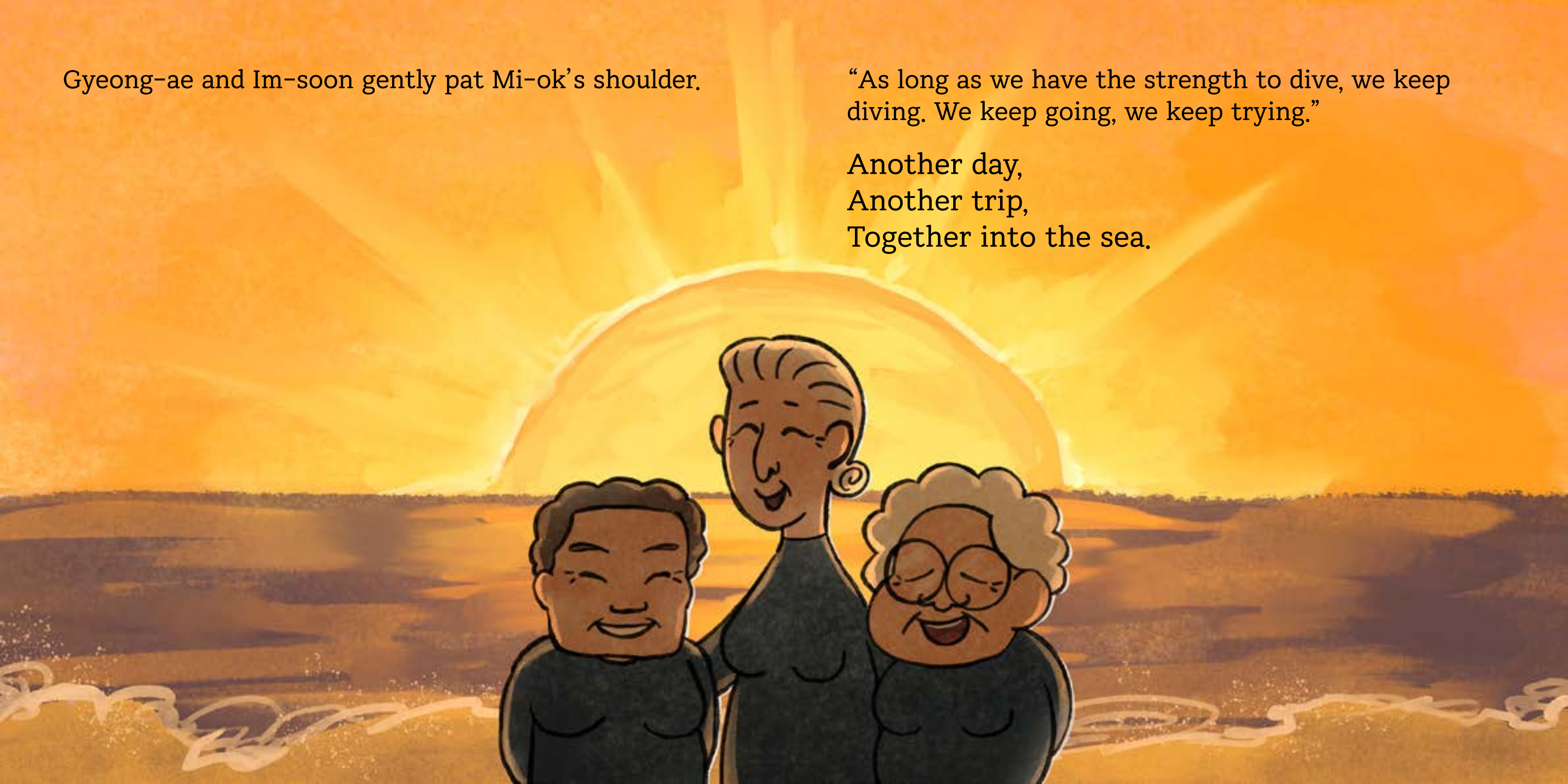
Im-soon asks, “Do you remember that day? The day you said you wanted to swim in the sea forever? Imagine the ocean full of treasures. Imagine the sea sparkling with colorful turban shells, plump sea cucumbers, abalone shining like jewels, and bright-eyed octopuses. We must stay and protect the sea. It’s our duty.”



Gyeong-ae and Im-soon gently pat Mi-ok's shoulder.

“As long as we have the strength to dive, we keep diving. We keep going, we keep trying.”

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The Story of Hanyeo

The Story of Haenyeo is a student-led club dedicated to sharing the stories of Haenyeos (female divers). The proceeds from our book sales will be donated to support the preservation of haenyeo culture and the conservation of Jeju's marine environment.



The Haenyeos represent a unique part of South Korea's History. Recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Haenyeos are an integral part of our culture. However, there are now fewer than 3000 Haenyeos remaining in Korea, most of whom are looking at retirement. The challenges, like ocean desertification and marine pollution, have only been making the situation worse, threatening both the individual and the sea's livelihood.



Our story was written to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the Haenyeo culture. We hope this book inspires more people to take an interest in the Haenyeos and their invaluable legacy.