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Age: 24

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Damsel in Distress

Her astounding beauty mesmerizes all,

Her fertility and resilience do enthrall.

She is a provider to populations,

A staple piece of the economies of nations.

She is a damsel in the minds and hearts of many,

She has given way to new homes for persons of Asian, African and European Ancestry.

She cradles this modern civilization,

Despite the genocide and mass decline of her indigenous children.

As a mother she does not discriminate,

She keeps her dependents fed and acts as a transit gate.

This indiscriminate damsel however is now in distress,

Her ability to provide for all her dependents is no longer at its best.

Sadly, investigation into the matter,

Discloses that her woes are due to her own children's exercise of careless behaviour.

Nonetheless, she continues to be a pivotal provider,

To the modern civilizations that abuse her.

On a daily basis she is subject to non-consensual penetration,

Subject to thrusts of untreated land-based sources of pollution.

Admirably, she's tried her best to conceal the result,

But now she is pregnant with algal blooms, bleached coral reefs and record large sargassum seaweed floating all about.

This damsel's dilemma does not end there,

The organisms which call her their habitat live in a state of constant despair.

There is a new incarnation of Caribbean pirates lurking about,

With an insatiable appetite, they rob juvenile fisheries of the joy of life before they become adults.

Those which are lucky enough to escape the pirate's grasp,

Battle with death's snare in the form of overfishing, ghost fishing and bycatch.

But in the Mediterranean her sister semi-enclosed sea,

Is subject to a vastly different reality.

Innovative waste recycling and treatment efforts, enforced fishing regulations and timely reporting are common place,

While the Caribbean damsel remains victim to a multiplicity of unenforced legislation and conventions which otherwise would be her saving grace.

The damsel in distress is the Caribbean Sea,

Internationally reputed for her ebb and flow of crystal-clear beauty.

Yet quietly she battles with pollution and unsustainable practices,

While simultaneously fulfilling the motherly duty of feeding masses.

But, on the horizon there is a glare of hope,

The efforts of the Caribbean Environment Programme, the BCRC and Oceana are worthy to note.

Throughout the region single-use plastic bag bans are becoming a trend,

And in Belize, a moratorium on offshore drilling exists to protect the Barrier Reef with no conceivable end.

Equally significant are the lionfish derbies in The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados,

And the prohibited areas making it a criminal offence to fish or collect conch and lobsters in the Turks and Caicos.

So, Dear damsel in distress, your rescue is near,

For your demise is a grief your dependants cannot bear.

A successful rescue however hinges on an acceleration of respective efforts and collective action,

Otherwise the result will be one of great dissatisfaction.

If we fail to sustainably use the Caribbean Sea,

This region will be a place we will wish never to be.