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Not So Swimmably

“Help!” “Help!”, I tried to shout each time I surfaced, trying to get the attention of the lifeguard, or anyone else who could save me. Each time I tried; I got a mouthful of chlorine-tasting water before being pulled under again.

I was visiting with my older cousin Myrna and her family for a few days. At nine years old, I was so excited when they talked about taking me to the swimming pool. I’d never been to one

before. After arriving at the pool, the girls introduced me to the shallow end of the pool, encouraging me to jump in. Whoa! When I jumped in, the water was cold and *moving*. Someone splashed water

in my eyes, which I didn’t appreciate

I wanted to be with the other girls, but where were they? As I looked around, I began to see them at the far end of the pool. Everyone seemed to be having such a good time, laughing, splashing,

diving. I wanted to be with them, but how was I going to get from where I was to where they were?

I saw other kids floating on their stomachs. They made it look so easy. How hard could it be? Mimicking the kids I saw, I gamely put my face in the water. But I forgot one very important thing:

I didn’t hold my breath. The water rushed into my mouth and down my throat like a torrent, cutting off my ability to breathe. Each time I tried to catch my breath; I kept swallowing water. I soon

realized I was in *big* trouble. Even though I tried to raise my arm and yell, it just seemed all I was getting was more water.

The next thing I remember was being pulled from the deep end of the pool. Several people stood around me as I was laid on the side of the pool.

“I think she’s breathing,” I thought I heard someone say as I began to regain consciousness.

After this, despite many attempts at swimming lessons, I never learned to swim. And, to this day, I have a definite aversion to putting my face in water.