

# DAY 4: GREENEST

*Insta: \_climatecrew*

Email: angela.zhu2469@gmail.com

School: Jericho High School

Username: climatecrew2020



# Our Story: The Hundred Eyes of the Ocean

The wind blows through the curtains of the house by the sea. With it brings the salty breeze and a sweet smell of the sandy bay. Xiao Hai stands on the edge of her balcony, facing the sea that lies just beyond her house. The light breeze sends gentle waves coursing through the ocean, shaking the boats and ships that settled in the harbor. From a distance, this is the perfect day, with all the right conditions to go for a swim or a stroll along the sandy shore. She closes her eyes and lets the scent of the sea and the touch of the winds drift her into a reverie.

Xiao Hai reminisces of her time spent on the beach during her childhood. The waters were beautiful and clear, and she could see the seafloor, covered in coral of all different colors. She recalls stories that her Nai Nai used to tell her as she frolicked near the shores, the rippling waves lapping at and tickling her feet. Her wise grandmother would share memories when she herself was a little girl, living by the very same sea. Xiao Hai was never sure whether the stories her grandmother told her were true, or whether she spun up the tales to teach her grandchildren lessons. Still, she would be engrossed by her storytelling. There was one story that she had the clearest memories of. Her grandmother's eyes would glaze over and go misty as she summoned back the events, and she would speak with a somber tone.

*The factories came one day, cloaked in dark shadows of grease and oil. Two men went around to each house that evening with an offer. Work for their factory, or suffer in poverty. The townspeople scoffed at this, at these two men in fancy white suits lambasting their precious fishing village that had survived and prospered for centuries already. They slammed their doors to these men, denied their offers, and returned a warning of their own. Threaten us again, they said, and you will be sorry. Little did they know, the factories made good on their message. They bought up the harbors, bribed the town leaders to make it illegal to fish by the sea. The townspeople had no choice but to work for the factories instead, trapped by a vicious and unjust monopoly. Even after working for the factory, however, the town did not get any richer, instead plunging into poverty, with only the factory owners gaining ever more money.*

*The factory rapidly produced cans of fish that they then marketed as organic and sold for an extravagant price. They fished so much that soon, there were no fish left to slaughter. Because they produced so many cans, they found it easier and more cost-efficient to dump the chemical wastes into the ocean, further polluting the sea and killing those who came into contact with the water.*

*The townspeople had no choice but to drink the polluted water. Her Nai Nai would watch as more and more people in her town gradually became sicker as the grime filled their systems and the sound of coughing rang in the air. Some, she never saw again. But they could no longer return to their old ways of life; the pollution had consumed and destroyed everything.*

*Nai Nai awoke one right, her sleep disturbed by a stomach filled with contaminants. She quietly plodded towards her window that overlooked the ocean, hoping the calm sound of the sea, though heavily polluted, will ease her discomfort. As she looked out into the distance, the factory her family worked in shined under the moonlight. Her fists instinctively clenched out of hatred.*

*This time though, she saw a strange shadow lining the edge of the factory. Nai Nai thought her eyes were deceiving her but the shadows kept growing until it covered the entire side of the building that faced the sea. One turned to survey the bay, bearing slimy, jagged, green teeth at the large corporate ships that spread its oil deep into the sea. The shadow shook its head once, like a giant worm made of dark, ocean water rearing towards the sky. Then, it lept high towards the skies and dived deep into the ocean, the resulting wave crashing over the boats in the harbor.*

*Nai Nai noticed that the small fishing vessels used by the townspeople were left virtually untouched while the ships used by the factory's corporation were completely destroyed. The shadow resurfaced to rejoin its companions, who were now trekking silently towards the factories and were illuminated only by the eerie glow of the moonlight, casting halos over their foamy heads. Suddenly, Nai Nai felt the ground rumble under her feet as the entire factory slowly crumbled. The bricks and mortar that once stood menacingly and overshadowed all the homes in her town were reduced to nothing but stone and dust, until that too was blown away into specs of nothing by the fierce wind.*

*The shadows retreated after surveying the damage they had caused, evidently pleased with themselves. As they left, Nai Nai caught a glimpse of a shining, light blue eye darting around, until it too disappeared under the frothing, furious waves.*

*When morning came, nobody knew how the factory was destroyed, but Nai Nai knew. She ran around the town, telling everyone of how the factory was finally torn down and they would finally be free from the grasp of pollution. The factory owners dismissed her, and called her an insolent child. However, without the factory, the owners were forced out of business and had to leave the town for good. Finally, the townspeople could once again provide for themselves. Before they could do that though, the townspeople saw that the sea was still dark and murky and the shorelines were lined with garbage. They knew what they had to do: save their ocean.*

*The townspeople went to the shores everyday and, working together as a community, collected the garbage until the beaches were spotless. They started to grow new plants near the ocean in hopes of slowly starting to clear up the waters. With their efforts, the oceans and their futures were looking a little less gray. After some time, the fish migrated back and repopulated the ocean, so the townspeople could prosper off of fishing again.*

Now, Xiao Hai stands on her balcony, overlooking the ocean, and she smiles at the thought of her Nai Nai. She looks at the pile of gear in the corner of her room, all equipment used to clean up garbage near the shorelines. Xiao Hai knew that she needed to continue her grandmother's story and clean the oceans where she was raised.

*While Xiao Hai and her grandmother are fictional characters, and of course there was never a monster from the ocean that rose up to destroy the factories, this fictional story is closer to a reality in many fishing towns in China, and other industrializing nations in the world.*

*Specifically, there are small towns in China that have been deemed “cancer villages” due to the sicknesses related to consuming contaminated water polluted by factories. The communities there live off of fishing and have been drinking the water for decades. However, because of rapid industrialization, like the events Xiao Hai experienced, the waters became severely contaminated and people suffered from devastating symptoms. Although the Chinese government has recognized it as a problem, these stories are still happening today. Through our story, we are bringing awareness to a terrible story that is often overlooked and hope more people can learn about these cancer villages.*

Sources:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2013/03/chinas-toxic-water/100478/>

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/01/17/asia-pacific/citizens-battle-yangtze-china/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/04/china-villages-cancer-deaths>

## **How would you bring awareness to the people and leaders of the community in which this problem exists?**

In the age of technology, there are many ways to bring awareness and spread information about various issues in our community that we feel strongly about. Today, we utilize a mix of social media and artistic design to spread knowledge about the rapidly declining water health of many communities around the world. For example, we can post Instagram posts and reach a wide range of people via the internet! In fact, we plan to do that today.

## **How would you build a campaign with a clear call to action that would help this community fight back?**

We first researched further information about the water that is heavily polluted in China. We chose China because all of us are Chinese Americans and we wish to improve the conditions of cultural land. Then, we compiled information and used it to shape our story, which we hope will shed light on the issue at hand. In the future, we want to create a petition to spread additional awareness of "cancer villages" in China. After more people become informed about the issue, the movement will be able to put more pressures on global leaders to enact policies in China that regulate the amount of carcinogens that can be released into the waters.

# DYING OF THIRST

*The pollution in China's rivers has lead to "cancer villages" where the inhabitants, forced to drink unsanitary water, develop life-threatening sicknesses.*

*The local and federal governments allowing this **must** be held accountable.*





\_climatecrew

...

# DYING OF THIRST

*The pollution in China's rivers has lead to "cancer villages" where the inhabitants, forced to drink unsanitary water, develop life-threatening sicknesses.*

*The local and federal governments allowing this **must** be held accountable.*



turninggreenorg

numiorganictea



**\_climatecrew** What do you drink every day? Is the water we drink truly safe? Those are just some of the questions we hope to answer with today's PGC Day 4 Greenest project, during which we researched and wrote a story about water pollution around the world. Even in our community in Long Island, we see signs of pollution in the water supply and ocean, such as the murky seawater and

[https://www.instagram.com/p/CF8v3j\\_lsxl](https://www.instagram.com/p/CF8v3j_lsxl)