

Bethany Hamilton Is Not Afraid of

Shna

Not only does Bethany ride monster waves, she also strives to inspire others who have lost limbs.

INKS

A shark almost killed her in 2003. But Bethany is back in the water and happier than ever.



Noah Hamilton ©

NONFICTION ARTICLE



LOOK FOR WORD NERD'S 5 WORDS IN BOLD

It was a gorgeous Halloween morning on the north shore of Kauai, Hawaii. Out on the open sea, Bethany Hamilton was lying on her surfboard, waiting for a wave. She was only 13 years old, but already Bethany was one of Hawaii's most promising young surfers. Within moments, though, Bethany's life would change forever.

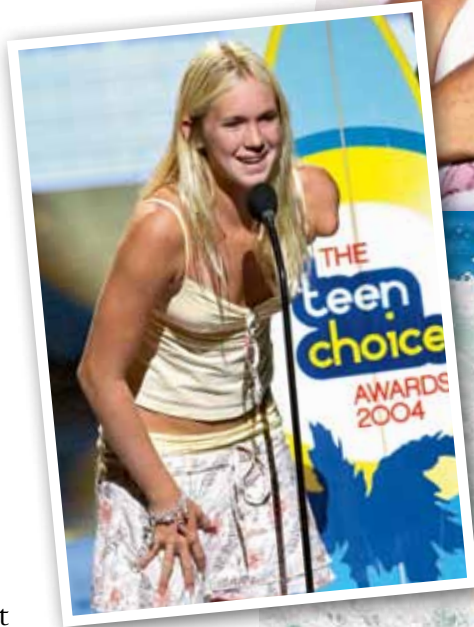
A 14-foot tiger shark, one of the deadliest **predators** in the ocean, was stalking her. Perhaps the metallic **glint** of her watch attracted the shark as her arm dangled in the water. Bethany did not see it approach. She did not see its rolled-back eyes or hideous jagged teeth as it sprang from the water. She didn't even feel pain when it clamped down on her arm. All she felt was pressure and a tugging sensation. It took only a few seconds for the shark to sever her arm in one gruesome bite.

Instantly, the water around her darkened with blood. A chunk of her board was missing. With a strange calmness, Bethany stared at the stump on her shoulder where her arm used to be.

Bethany called out to her best friend, Alana, who was surfing a few yards away. Alana's dad, Holt, and her brother, Byron, were there too.

"I just got attacked by a shark!" Bethany shouted.

With lightning speed, they pushed toward her through the waves. Holt reached her first. His heart pounded with fear—but he did not



From the top: Bethany recovers in the hospital; she wins a Teen Choice Award in 2004 for courage; today, Bethany is one of the best surfers in the world.

let his shock slow him down. Byron reached the shore and raced up the sand to call 911.

As she lay on the sand, a chilling thought settled in Bethany's mind: I could die.

Bystanders rushed to help, covering her with towels. Holt tied off the stump with a surf leash. Still, Bethany was bleeding badly. Time was running out.

By the time the ambulance arrived, Bethany

had lost almost half her blood.

She was **unconscious**, but still alive.

Just days after her injury, only one question was on her mind: “When can I get back in the water?”

She decided: by Thanksgiving Day.

Sure enough, a day before Thanksgiving, Bethany went to the beach for the first time since the attack. As she walked down the beach, worries swirled in her mind. Would she panic in the water? What if there were sharks? She pushed her fears back and marched into the waves. The instant the water washed over her, her worries vanished.

“I was not afraid,” she says. “My whole mind concentrated on catching a wave.”

But getting up on her surfboard was not easy. She couldn’t figure out how to position her one arm. Then she couldn’t get her legs right. Again and again she fell. Again and again she got up. She almost gave up, but then her father shouted to her, “Try one more time!”

She did—and stayed up on her board.

A little more than a year after the attack, Bethany **astounded** the world by coming in first at the NSSA National Championships, one of the toughest competitions for amateurs. That win launched her professional career, fulfilling her lifelong dream.

Today, Bethany is a professional competitive surfer—one of the best in the world. Her story, one of accepting her misfortune, overcoming fear, and bouncing back from disaster, inspires people everywhere.

“I never give up,” she says. ■

FABLE

The Farmer’s Donkey

One day a farmer’s donkey fell into a well. The animal cried for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided that the animal was old, and the well needed to be filled in anyway.

It just wasn’t worth the trouble to **retrieve** the donkey.

The farmer invited all his neighbors to help him fill in the well. They grabbed shovels and began to toss dirt into it. When the donkey realized what was happening, he cried horribly. Then, to everyone’s amazement, he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked into the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each scoop of dirt that hit his back, the donkey would shake it off and take a step up.

As the farmer’s neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, the donkey kept shaking it off and climbing up. Pretty soon, everyone was floored as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off! ■



The donkey would be inspired by Bethany!



WHAT’S THE CONNECTION?

What is the moral of “The Farmer’s Donkey”? What details from Bethany’s story support the same idea? (*Hint: Think about how Bethany and the donkey responded to difficulty.*) Answer in a well-organized paragraph.

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