



★ **Swell: A Sailing Surfer's Voyage of Awakening**

Liz Clark

Daniella Manini, Illustrator

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A series of serendipitous events, a generous mentor, and lots of hard work made it possible for young Liz Clark to fulfill her childhood dream of sailing and surfing around the world. But sailing *Swell* out of San Diego and watching her loved ones blur into the hazy winter skyline, she questioned the wisdom of undertaking a journey that would test her on all levels, and maybe even break her.

On dark nights alone at sea, Clark was often saved from a descent into depression by the beauty and sacredness of the life around her—in the poor fishermen who shared their catches with her, or a group of dolphins trailing phosphorescence in their wake. Physical, mental, emotional, financial, and relationship difficulties would bring her near collapse, but then her spirits would be lifted by the sea's vast horizon, the amazing rush of surfing, the smile of a friend, or the belief that she could somehow make a difference. She who used to panic at the thought of spending a Saturday night alone came to find solitude delightful, satisfying deep hungers.

There were violent storms with wind, waves, and lightning that rocked her to her core; she cooked at a 65-degree angle while stuck on a sandbar; she survived a scary, abusive relationship; she struggled with boat repairs; she panicked at the end of her sponsorship agreement; and she had a near run-in with Colombian drug runners in Panama. Material poverty was everywhere, as was pollution amidst the beauty; she pondered the ability of humans to destroy that which sustains them.

In mastering the discipline needed for a journey where “one lazy decision can mean losing everything,” Clark came to love herself just as she was, and to know that, in choosing love, she would never feel lack.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January/February 2018)

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