



JAPANESE AMA DIVERS, WOMEN OF THE SEA

SHORT SUMMARY

Delving deep into the shark-infested waters of the Japanese Sea, AMA DIVERS, WOMEN OF THE SEA takes us within the remote community of the traditional Ama divers of Hegura Island. To this day, these women continue to free dive, more than seventy feet deep, to harvest abalones, turban shells and whatever gems the sea may offer. But for several generations now, the young women of the island have been turning away from the sea and migrating to the cities. At only 21, Aoi is on the brink of giving up. Yet, against all odds, Sara, 17, is clinging on to her dream of becoming a professional Ama diver. Will she embody the new generation the whole island is so desperately waiting for?





LONG SUMMARY

On every fishing outing with her grandmother, Aoi wonders if she will have the strength to carry on. The weather is ideal for shell fishing in the shark-infested waters of the Japanese Sea of Hegura Island. Yet Aoi, 21, still a novice, is nervous to dive in front of her more experienced grandmother. Machiko, 82, is a traditional Ama free diver, meaning "woman of the sea." She is one of the last custodians of a 2 000 years old expertise, one of harvesting abalone and the other precious shells that once had a place of honour at the emperors' table.

The Ama tradition is passed down from mother to daughter but for several generations now the ice-cold waters, the scarcity of seashells and the mortal danger that represent both sharks and other fishing boats have discouraged the younger generation who is migrating to Japan's large cities. Is Aoi her grandmother's true successor or will she end up abandoning, like the three other young women in her village, who returned to land only last year? Aoi knows that on her shoulders rest the hopes of the entire Ama community.

Sara, 17, lives on the mainland opposite Hegura island. She is a typical Japanese young woman, living in a world of touch screens and social media. Yet a few months, to the astonishment of her friends, Sara revealed that she wanted to become an Ama. Will she embody the new Ama generation the whole island is so desperately waiting for?





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