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Reader's Digest

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GENIUS
SECTION**

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"Help! My son
has a spike in
his head!"

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OCEAN
SECRETS**

*of the world's
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**Ways to
BRING
PURPOSE
into your
life**

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BONUS READ

The Boy with the Spike in His Head

Ten-year-old Xavier fell from a tree house face-first on to a 30-centimetre meat skewer, which penetrated deeply into his skull. The doctors had only hours to save him.

BONNIE MUNDAY



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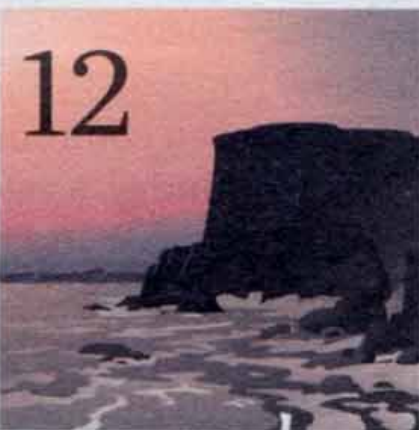
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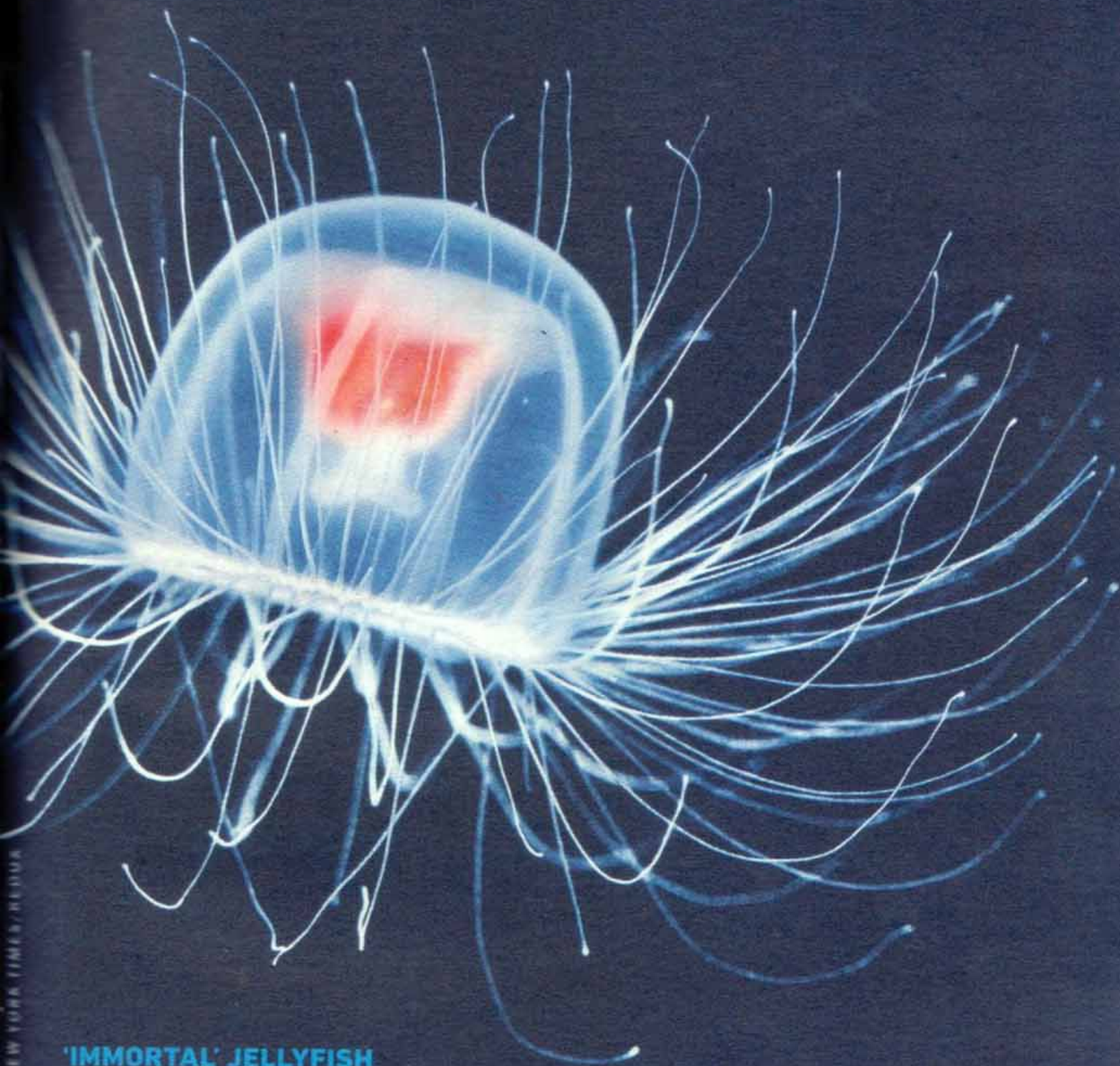
WHO KNEW?



*It has been nearly 150 years
since the publication of 20,000
Leagues Under the Sea,
and scientists are still searching
for the truth about many of the
creatures and features of the deep*

GREAT OCEAN SECRETS

BY Tina Donvito



'IMMORTAL' JELLYFISH

Could this tiny jellyfish hold the secret to curing cancer? Smaller than a pinkie nail, this creature has the Benjamin Button-like ability to revert to its polyp state, the earliest stage of its life, when threatened with starvation or injury, earning the nickname 'immortal jellyfish' for how it appears to outsmart death. Although the species, *Turritopsis dohrnii*, has been known about for a hundred years, researchers didn't discover this capacity until the 1990s. They are now wondering whether the jellyfish's ability to regress and regrow could help fight diseases such as cancer in humans.



GIANT OARFISH

These snakelike creatures are the longest bony fish on Earth – they can grow to up to 17 metres. But they live at depths of around 1000 metres, so not much is known about them. Two dead giant oarfish were found on Californian shores in 2013, prompting scientists to study samples from their remains to see whether storms, starvation or illness potentially caused their deaths.

THE 3505-METRE WATERFALL

Earth's largest waterfall is actually underwater, beneath the Denmark Strait, where cold water sinks below warmer water and flows over an estimated 3505-metre drop. Researchers are still trying to figure out how such a thing works. It's much more powerful than waterfalls on land, with a downwards flow of more than five million cubic metres per second, which creates what scientists describe as "massive turbulence".

CHALLENGER DEEP

This spot in the ocean near Guam is the deepest point on Earth, nearly 11 kilometres down. Located in the Mariana Trench, Challenger Deep has been visited by just four people: two oceanographers in 1960, filmmaker James Cameron in 2012 and explorer Victor Vescovo in April this year. It's only a few degrees above freezing in the trench, and the pressure is intense at 703 kilograms per square metre. But marine life has managed to thrive. In fact, some researchers believe that life on Earth may have originated there.

THE YONAGUNI MONUMENT

Are they human-made steps and ancient pyramids that sank in an earthquake, or natural rock formations created by currents? These underwater structures off the coast of Japan, often called Japan's Atlantis, have baffled experts since a diver found them in 1986.



THE PURPLE ORB

In 2016, researchers found a single purple blob about the size of a pool ball in an underwater canyon off the coast of California. Stumped as to what it could be, they nicknamed it 'Blobus purpilis'. Research is ongoing, but one hypothesis is that it is distantly related to snails.

**BLUE WHALES ARE THE LARGEST
ANIMALS TO EVER LIVE.
EVEN A NEWBORN CAN WEIGH
ROUGHLY 30 TONNES**



MILKY-SEA PHENOMENON

Since the 17th century, sailors have reported encountering swaths of sea with a strange 'milky' cast as far as the eye could see. But scientists were unable to explain it – or confirm it was real. Then, in 1995, a satellite captured an image of a milky sea off the coast of Somalia. It is thought that the glow was from luminous bacteria that attract fish in order to be eaten and survive in their guts. How the bacteria gather in numbers large enough for their bioluminescence to be seen from space is unknown.

BLUE WHALES

The largest animal in history, the blue whale has a tongue that can weigh as much as an entire elephant. Still, scientists don't know how long they live or much else about them. When researchers captured a rare video of blue whales off the coast of Sri Lanka in 2017, it sparked controversy among experts: Were they racing or mating?

