

A Brave Shark-Attack-Survivor Surfer——Bethany Hamilton

Bethany Meilani Hamilton is an American professional surfer and writer. Born February 8, 1990, Bethany has two brothers, Noah and Timothy. At the age of three, she started to learn how to surf. She began to surf competitively at the age of eight and even won her first sponsorship at the age of ten. But something happened at the age of thirteen.

On October 31, 2003, thirteen-year-old Bethany went for a morning surf along Tunnels Beach, Kauai, with her best friend Alana, Alana's father and brother. While she was lying on the surfboard and talking with Alana, suddenly a 14-foot-long tiger shark attacked her and swiftly bit off her left arm. Bethany was sent to Wilcox Memorial Hospital immediately. By the time she arrived there, she had lost over 60% of her blood and was in hypovolemic shock. Surprisingly, she survived the shark attack.

Despite the trauma of the incident, Hamilton was determined to return to surfing. One month after the attack, Bethany returned to the surfboard. Hamilton learnt to kick more to make up for the lose of her hand. Four months after the attack, she entered her first major competition on 10 January, 2004.

She also became a guest on numerous TV shows after the shark attack. She became an inspirational role model from a shark attack victim through the media. She has appeared on many TV shows such as the famous Ellen DeGeneres Show, 20/20 and The Tonight Show, as well as in the magazines People, Times and American Girl. She received many awards too. In 2004, she won the ESPY Award and the Courage Teen Choices Award.

Other than being a professional surfer, she also tells her story by writing books. From 2004 to 2018, Bethany published eight books and one book with her mum. A surf document, Bethany Hamilton: Unstoppable, was made about her. Other than these, Hamilton is involved in many charitable efforts, including her own foundation, Friends of Bethany, too.

'Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you.'

——— Bethany Hamilton

Yeah, she experienced the threat to her life, losing her left arm. But she never fears, never gives up and is brave when facing difficulties. We should learn Bethany Hamilton, a truly brave soul who was back on the surfboard only a month after the attack.

