

# The Boy and the Little Dolphin



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Leo loved the ocean more than anything in the whole wide world. Every summer morning, he pulled on his bright yellow t-shirt, tied his red sneakers, and grabbed his small blue backpack. Inside the backpack, he always carried a notebook and a pencil for drawing the sea. Today, the waves looked sparkly and blue, and Leo felt a happy flutter in his chest. Something wonderful was waiting for him out there.



Leo waded into the cool water and let the waves splash his knees. He had warm light-brown skin and short curly dark-brown hair that bounced when he jumped. His big friendly brown eyes searched the water, and a few freckles dotted his nose. Suddenly, a smooth shape glided past his feet. It was blue-grey and shiny, with a pale belly and glossy round black eyes. A little dolphin!



The little dolphin popped her head out of the water and gave a friendly curved smile. She was small and playful, about the same length as Leo. "Hello there!" Leo laughed, his bright open smile spreading wide. The dolphin tilted her head and let out a happy whistle. Then she clicked, quick and bright, like tiny tapping stones. Leo listened closely. The ocean was full of sounds he had never noticed before.



"You're talking to me!" Leo said, his large brown eyes wide with wonder. The dolphin whistled again and splashed her small flipper. Leo pulled out his notebook and wrote: whistle means hello. Then she clicked three times fast, and he wrote: clicks mean come play. The little dolphin seemed to giggle, her friendly curved smile shining in the sun. She was speaking a secret language, and Leo wanted to learn every word.



All morning, Leo and the dolphin played in the waves. When she wanted him to follow, she clicked. When she was happy, she whistled high and sweet. When she wanted him to wait, she made a low, gentle squeak. Leo copied her sounds as best he could, and she splashed her flippers with joy. They chased the foam and spun in the sparkling water. Leo's yellow t-shirt got soaked, and he didn't care one bit.



At lunchtime, Leo sat on the warm sand and opened his notebook. He drew every sound he had heard. A little squiggle for a whistle. A dot for a click. A wave for a squeak. His curly dark-brown hair dripped salty water onto the page. The dolphin swam close and watched him draw. Leo realized something big: dolphins use sounds to share feelings and stay together, just like people do with words.



The next day, Leo ran to the beach with his blue backpack bouncing. He found his dolphin friend waiting in the waves. Today, she taught him a new sound, a long rising whistle that seemed to call out to someone far away. Soon, another dolphin answered from across the bay. "You're calling your family!" Leo said. The little dolphin nodded with her whole body, then whistled happily. Leo smiled so big his cheeks hurt.



Leo visited the dolphin every sunny day that week. He learned that she clicked to find her way and whistled to say hello to friends. When a big wave rolled in, she squeaked a warning, and Leo jumped high. Her blue-grey skin gleamed like wet stone, and her pale belly flashed as she leaped. They became true friends, trusting each other in the wide, wonderful ocean. Leo felt lucky every single morning.



One evening, Leo told his family everything. "The dolphins talk with clicks and whistles and squeaks!" he said, waving his arms. His mother smiled and said, "Maybe you should share that with your class." Leo's big brown eyes grew wide. A school presentation? His heart thumped with excitement and a little worry. Could he explain something so magical? He squeezed his notebook tight and decided to try.



Leo worked all weekend on his presentation. He drew big posters of a dolphin's smile, a whistle, and a click. He practiced the sounds into a cup to see how they echoed. He wrote: Dolphins talk to share feelings and stay together. With his pencil, he drew his little friend leaping through the waves. His curly dark-brown hair kept falling in his eyes as he worked, but Leo didn't stop until every page was perfect.



On Monday, Leo stood in front of his class. His teacher, wearing her green cardigan and thin glasses, gave him a warm, encouraging nod. Leo swallowed hard, then clicked like a dolphin. Everyone giggled. He whistled, and they whistled back! Leo explained how dolphins use sounds to find friends, warn each other, and say hello. His classmates leaned forward, their eyes shining with wonder. Nobody whispered. Nobody wiggled. They just listened.



"When we understand animals, we want to protect them," Leo said, his bright open smile glowing. He told the class how his dolphin friend needed clean water to click and whistle safely. "If the ocean is full of trash, her voice gets lost," he said softly. A hush fell over the room. Then hands shot up everywhere. "How can we help?" asked one girl. Leo's heart felt like it might float right out of his chest.



The teacher smiled and adjusted her thin glasses. "Leo has shown us something wonderful," she said. "Understanding animals helps us care for them." She wrote a big word on the board: PROTECT. The class decided to start a clean-up day at the beach. They would pick up trash so dolphins could talk and play in safe water. Leo felt proud and happy, his freckled nose scrunched with joy. His dolphin friend would be so pleased.



On Saturday, Leo's whole class met at the beach. Everyone wore gloves and carried bags. They picked up bottles, wrappers, and paper, laughing and working together. Leo's teacher brought lemonade and a big smile. By noon, the sand looked clean and golden. Leo stood at the water's edge and whistled the hello sound he had learned. Far out, a familiar blue-grey shape leaped high into the air. His dolphin friend had heard him!



The little dolphin swam close and clicked at Leo, fast and happy. Leo clicked back, then whistled a long hello. His classmates gasped with delight. "She's talking to him!" they whispered. The dolphin splashed her flipper as if to say thank you. Leo's bright yellow t-shirt flapped in the sea breeze. Everyone waved as she swam away, her pale belly shining under the waves. The whole beach felt brighter and cleaner than before.



That night, Leo sat on the beach with his notebook and watched the sunset. He wrote one last line: When we listen to animals, we learn to love them. And when we love them, we protect them. His curly dark-brown hair blew in the wind, and his big happy smile stayed on his face. The ocean whispered back with tiny clicks and whistles. Leo knew his dolphin friend was safe tonight, and that made his heart feel full.