

The Boy and the Little Dolphin



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Boy and the Little Dolphin

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



Every morning, the sun sparkled on the ocean like a thousand tiny diamonds. Eight-year-old Leo stood at the gate of the Blue Cove Marine Center, clutching his sketchbook and pencil. He wore his yellow raincoat over a blue striped t-shirt and red sneakers. His curly black hair bounced as he ran toward the water. "I can't wait to meet the dolphins!" he said.



A tall guide with round glasses and a warm smile greeted him. "Welcome! I'm Maya. I study dolphins here." She wore a teal polo shirt with a tiny dolphin logo and a lanyard with her ID badge. Leo's big brown eyes grew wide. "Do they really talk to each other?" he asked. "They sure do," Maya said. "Listen carefully, and you might hear them."



Maya led Leo to a floating dock where the water was clear and blue. Suddenly, a little grey dolphin leaped into the air, splashing water everywhere. It was about one meter long, with smooth grey skin, a lighter belly, and glossy dark eyes. "That's Pip!" Maya chuckled. Pip chirped and swam close, curious about the boy with the sketchbook.



Leo sat on the dock edge and pulled out his pencil. Pip popped his rounded snout out of the water and let out a happy whistle. "Hello, Pip!" Leo said softly. Pip clicked and chirped back, his cheerful smile wide. Leo laughed. "I think he likes me!" Maya nodded. "Pip is young and playful. He loves making new friends."



That afternoon, Leo returned with a big smile. He brought a long strand of seaweed and gently tied it around Pip's little dorsal fin. Pip wiggled and whistled, as if saying thank you. They played a game of splash and chase. Leo tossed a small ball, and Pip nudged it back with his nose. "You're so clever!" Leo giggled.



Each day, Leo visited Pip. He listened closely as Pip clicked and whistled. Some sounds were short and sharp, like "click-click-click!" Others were long and wavy, like "wheee-ooooo." Leo wrote every sound in his sketchbook. He drew a picture of Pip with a big speech bubble full of clicks and whistles. "I want to learn dolphin talk," he told Maya.



Maya showed Leo a chart of dolphin sounds. "Dolphins use clicks to find food and whistles to talk with friends," she explained. "When they're happy, they whistle a lot!" Leo practiced whistling back. At first, his whistles sounded like a squeaky toy. Pip tilted his head and clicked, as if to say, "Try again!" Leo laughed and tried once more.



One day, Pip seemed upset. He swam in circles and made sad little clicks. "What's wrong?" Leo asked. Maya pointed to a plastic bag floating in the water. "Sometimes trash hurts dolphins," she said softly. "They can get tangled or eat it by mistake." Leo's smile faded. "That's terrible!" he said. "We have to help."



Leo grabbed a net and, with Maya's help, fished the plastic bag out of the water. Pip whistled happily and leaped high, splashing them both. "You're welcome, Pip!" Leo laughed. Maya smiled. "You see? Understanding dolphins helps us protect them. When we know what they need, we can keep them safe." Leo nodded, his freckled nose wrinkling with determination.



That evening, Leo had an idea. He opened his sketchbook and began to draw. He drew Pip clicking to find a fish, whistling to call a friend, and leaping for joy. He wrote fun facts in big, clear letters: "Dolphins talk with clicks and whistles!" and "Keep the ocean clean!" He drew a little dolphin wearing a seaweed crown. "This will be my dolphin guide!"



The next morning, Leo showed his guide to Maya. She read every page and smiled warmly. "This is wonderful, Leo! You've explained dolphin communication perfectly." She praised his drawings and his careful listening. "Would you like to share this with the other visitors?" Leo's heart swelled with pride. "Yes, please!" he said, beaming.



Leo stood by the dolphin pool and held up his guide. A group of children gathered around. "Did you know dolphins whistle to say hello?" Leo asked. He clicked his tongue and whistled a wavy tune. The children giggled and tried to whistle too. Pip popped up and whistled back, as if to say, "That's right!" Everyone clapped and cheered.



Maya gave Leo a special badge that said "Junior Dolphin Guide." "You've learned so much," she said. "And you've taught others, too. That's what conservation is all about." Leo looked at Pip, who wore his seaweed strand proudly. "We're a team," Leo said. "And we'll keep the ocean clean and safe for all dolphins." Pip chirped in agreement.



From that day on, Leo visited Pip every week. They played, whistled, and clicked together. Leo kept adding new pages to his guide, filled with drawings and fun facts. Sometimes other children joined him, and he taught them how to listen to dolphins. "Every click and whistle tells a story," Leo said. "We just have to listen."



One sunny afternoon, Pip leaped high and whistled a happy tune. Leo whistled back, and they splashed together in the sparkling water. Maya watched from the dock, her round glasses glinting. "You two are quite a pair," she said. Leo grinned, his freckles crinkling. "Pip is my best friend," he said. "And I'll always protect him."



As the sun set over the ocean, Leo sat on the dock and wrote in his sketchbook. "When we learn about animals, we learn to care for them," he wrote. "And when we care, we protect them. Friendship and learning make the world a better place—for dolphins and for everyone." He drew a picture of himself and Pip, smiling together under a bright blue sky.