

The Little Whale's Song



Jane MEADOW

The Little Whale's Song

Jane MEADOW



Wally the little whale swam through the big, big ocean. His skin was soft slate-blue, and his belly was pale and speckled. He had big, gentle dark-brown eyes that looked at everything. A small strand of golden kelp rested behind one fin like a lucky keepsake. The ocean was full of sounds, and Wally wanted to hear them all.



Wally's mother was a huge blue whale with warm hazel eyes and a spiral shell pendant around her neck. His sister Pip was small and quick, with a pink coral bead tied to her tail. They swam together in the wide blue water. "Stay close, Wally," Mama called in her soft, melodic voice. But Wally was curious and often drifted away.



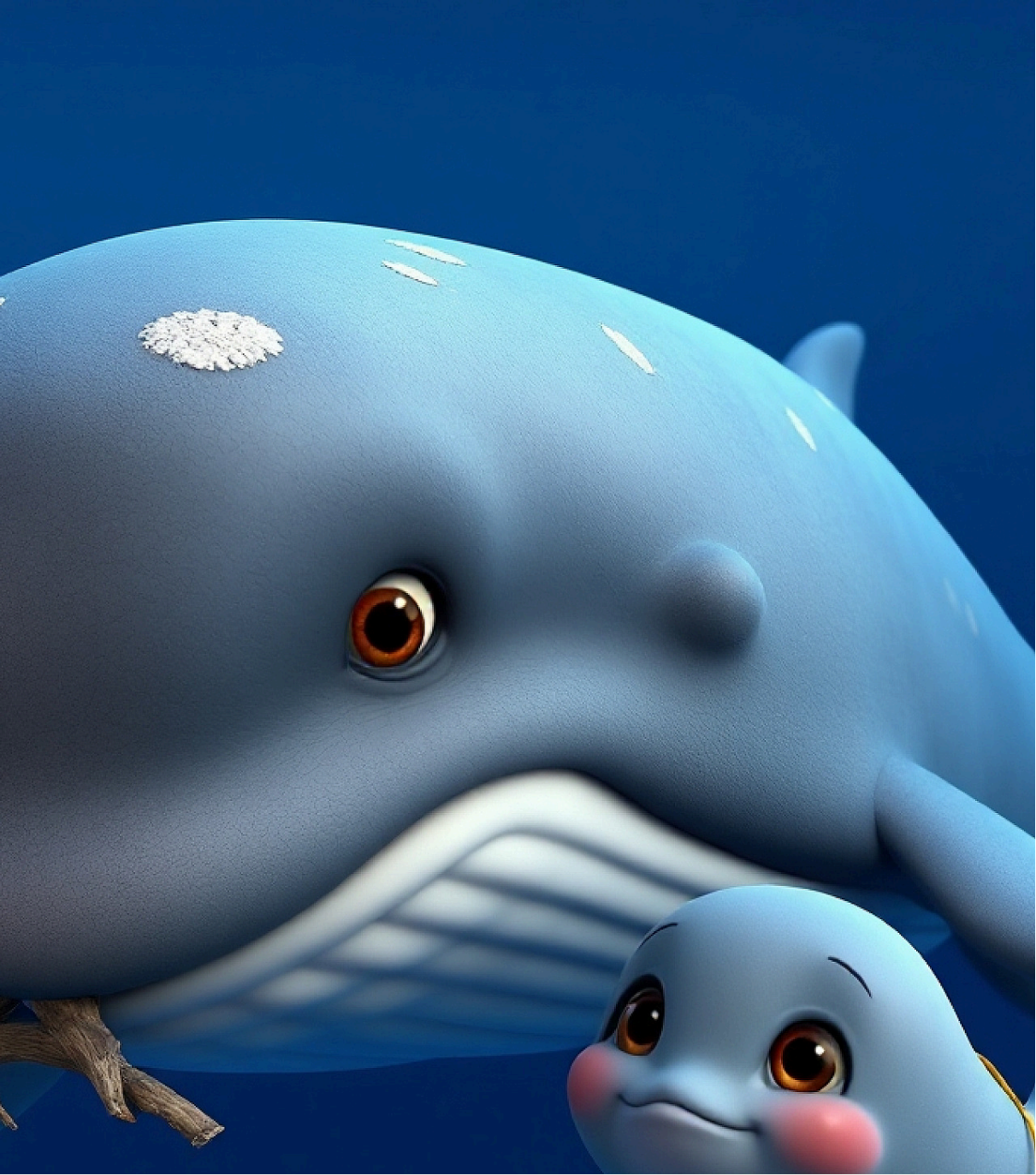
One day, Wally heard a deep, rumbling song far away. It was a whale song, slow and low. He swam toward it, wiggling his small rounded flukes. The song faded into the blue. Then another song came, high and whistly, from the other side. Wally turned around and around. Every song seemed to come from everywhere at once.



Wally listened to a song that clicked and popped like tiny drums. He listened to a song that moaned like the wind. Each one was beautiful, but none felt like home. His family's melody was somewhere, but he could not find it. His little blowhole made a soft mist when he sighed. "Where is my song?" he whispered.



Wally swam farther and farther. The ocean grew darker and deeper. He heard a song that sounded like squeaky doors. He heard one that hummed like a bee. But none of them made him feel warm inside. His family's melody was lost in the big, noisy sea. Wally's big brown eyes grew worried. He did not know which way to go.



Then Wally saw a huge shape in the water. It was Grandpa Olden, an old humpback whale. His skin was deep grey-blue with white barnacle patches and long scars. His amber eyes were crinkled and kind. A thin driftwood twig was tucked near his mouth like a walking stick. He moved slowly and gracefully through the water.



"Hello, little one," said Grandpa Olden. "You look lost." Wally told him about the many songs he had heard. "I cannot find my family's melody," Wally said. "There are too many sounds!" Grandpa Olden nodded. "The ocean is full of songs," he said. "But you must listen carefully and stay calm. Let the right song find you."



Wally tried to stay calm. He floated still and closed his eyes. But a loud whoosh made him jump. A school of fish zoomed past, singing their tiny fish song. Wally opened his eyes. "That was not it," he said. Grandpa Olden smiled. "Patience, little one. The song you seek is waiting for you to be quiet enough to hear it."



Wally took a deep breath. His blowhole made a little mist. He listened to the ocean's hum. He listened to the swish of his own fins. He listened to the faraway songs of other whales. They were all around him, but they were not his family. Wally felt a little sad. "What if I never find them?" he asked.



Grandpa Olden swam closer. "Your family's song is special," he said. "It is the one that feels like home. Do not listen only with your ears. Listen with your heart." Wally did not understand at first. But he trusted the old whale. He floated quietly and tried to feel the water around him. He tried to feel the songs, not just hear them.



Then something changed. A soft, warm sound floated through the water. It was low and gentle, like a hug. Wally felt it in his chest. It was a song that made him think of his mother's spiral shell pendant and Pip's pink coral bead. It was a song that felt like belonging. Wally's heart beat faster. "I know this song!" he cried.



Wally listened closely. Yes! There it was again—a melody that curled around him like a blanket. It was his family's song! Mama was calling, and Pip was singing along. Wally took a deep breath and sang back. His little voice rose through the water. "I am here! I am here!" he called in his own whale way.



Grandpa Olden smiled, his amber eyes twinkling. "You found it," he said. "You listened with your heart." Wally wiggled his fins with joy. "Thank you, Grandpa Olden!" he sang. Then he swam toward the warm, familiar sound. The ocean seemed brighter now. Every song around him felt friendly, because he knew where he belonged.



Mama and Pip came swimming fast. Mama's hazel eyes were shining. Pip spun in happy circles, her pink coral bead flashing. "Wally! We missed you!" they sang together. Wally nuzzled close to Mama's side. "I missed you too," he said. "I heard so many songs, but only yours felt like home." Pip giggled and splashed her tail.



The family swam together through the big ocean. Wally stayed close, but now he listened to everything. He heard the fish and the other whales, and he liked their songs. But his favorite song was the one his family sang together. "Listening with your heart helps you find your way," said Mama. Wally nodded. He knew it was true.



From that day on, Wally carried the golden kelp strand behind his fin like a treasure. He learned that the ocean is full of voices, and every one is beautiful. But belonging grows through connection. When you listen carefully and stay calm, you can hear the song that leads you home. And Wally always sang back, loud and clear.