

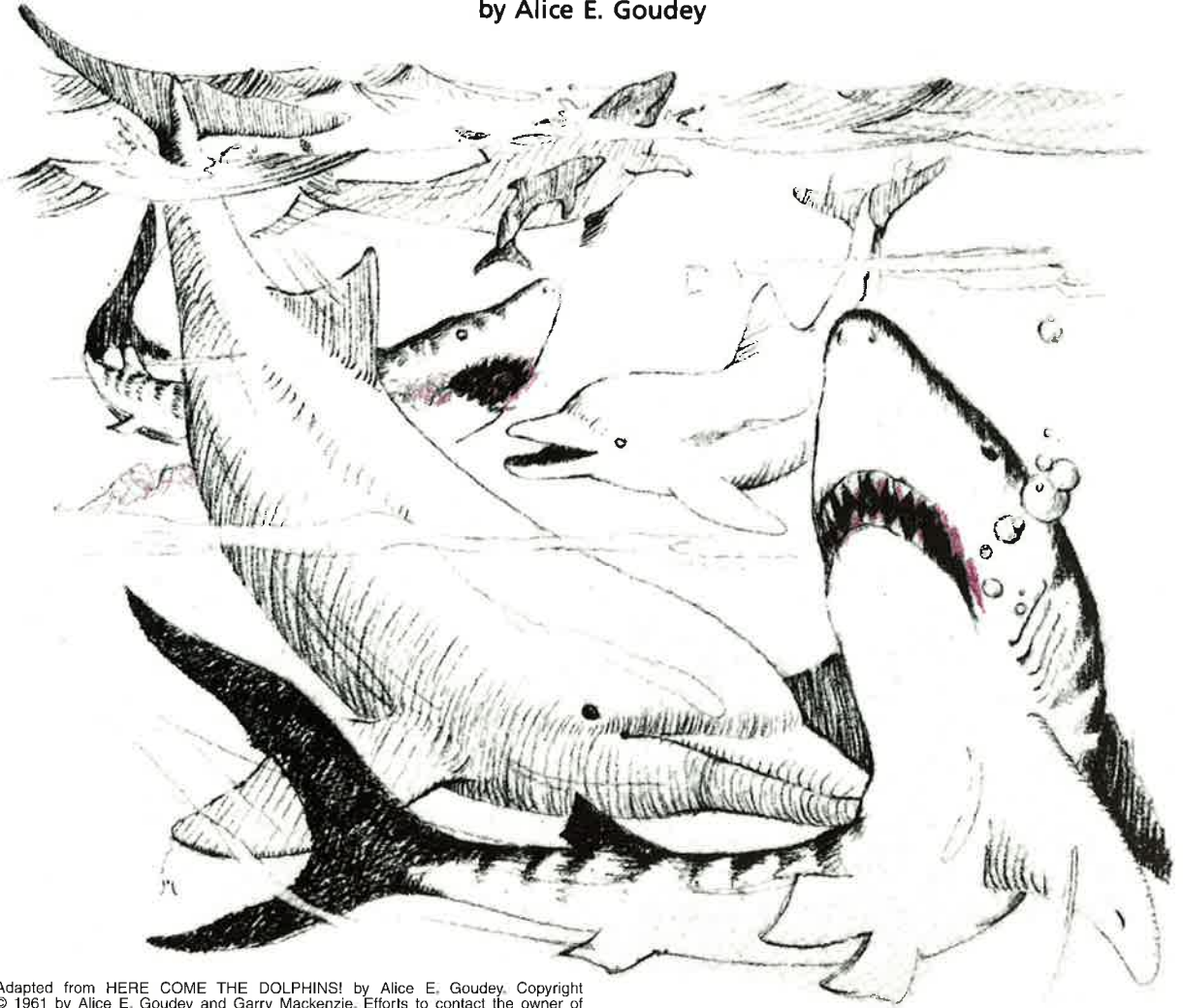
1 Small waves ripple quietly across the blue-green water of the ocean. Suddenly a dolphin leaps from the quiet surface. Then another one leaps into the air. Soon, all about, dolphins are leaping high in the air. Even Old Scarsides, who is enormous for a dolphin, leaps out, showing the scars of many battles on his rubbery skin.

2 But one dolphin, Greyback, does not join the others in their play. She remains quietly by herself a short distance away. Now two others swim to Greyback and begin moving slowly around her. Sometimes they touch her with their noses as if uneasy about her safety.

3 It is almost noon when the dolphins leave the open water and begin swimming in the

# A Baby Is Born

by Alice E. Goudey



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- direction of the bay. Not far distant, two long, shadowy figures circle slowly. Old Scarsides makes a clapping sound with his powerful jaws when he sees them. Two hungry tiger sharks! But he will leave them alone as long as they do not bother any of the dolphins.
- 4 It is almost sundown when gulls flying above look down into the clear water of the bay and observe a little dolphin by Greyback's side. Her first baby has been born!
  - 5 Greyback's baby looks like a big fish, but he does not belong to the fish family. Like all dolphins he belongs to the family of mammals. He cannot get oxygen from air dissolved in water as the fishes do. He must get his oxygen from the air above the water.
  - 6 Now the gulls see him swim quickly to the surface of the water. Greyback swims just below him, ready to push him up if he needs her assistance. If he does not get air quickly, he cannot survive. The gulls see his small, rounded head come above the water. At last he is breathing! He draws the fresh air into his lungs through a hole on the top of his head. It is called a blowhole.
  - 7 When the baby dolphin has filled his lungs with air, he closes his little blowhole and goes beneath the water again to rest quietly at his mother's side. If he did not close his blowhole, water would run into his lungs and he would drown. But he does not rest long. In about thirty seconds he rises to the surface again. Woo-oof! Woo-oof! He blows the old air out of his lungs with a rushing sound and again draws in fresh, clean air.
  - 8 Like all dolphins, he could remain under the water for about six minutes but he, and all the dolphin family, usually come up for air two or three times each minute.
  - 9 Greyback and her companions stay close beside the baby. As night comes on, the two shadowy forms of the tiger sharks circle closer and closer. A baby dolphin would make a good meal for them.
  - 10 The sharks make quick turns, swimming this way and that way, as if hunting for something. They cannot see well, but their sense of smell leads them to Greyback and her baby. As the sharks' turns become quicker and quicker, Greyback and her companions encircle the baby dolphin. Then, as the sharks dart at them, Old Scarsides whistles shrilly.
  - 11 Dolphins shoot through the water like torpedoes. They are upon the sharks in an instant, ramming them with their hard, bony snouts and slamming them with their tails. One of the sharks sinks his notched saw-teeth in the side of a dolphin. The taste and smell of blood in the water make the sharks fight more wildly than ever. At last Old Scarsides strikes one of the sharks a crushing blow behind one of its gills. The shark sinks to the bottom of the bay. When this happens, the other shark whirls quickly and heads out to the open water.
  - 12 Greyback's baby is safe. But it takes some time for the dolphins to quiet down. They are uneasy and swim about restlessly, whistling and snapping their jaws.
  - 13 It is not very often that sharks and dolphins fight. The sharks are quick, and their saw-teeth are dangerous, but they do not have hard bony skeletons to protect their bodies. Their skeletons are of cartilage, which is more delicate than the hard bones of the dolphins. The blows of the dolphins' snouts can send sharks to the ocean bottom.
  - 14 Now that the battle is over, the dolphins are tired and, like all other animals, need sleep. They take little naps, never sleeping for long at a time. Even while sleeping, with their eyes partially or completely closed, they swim dreamily just below the surface of the water. With slow movements of their flat tails they go up and down, up and down as they rise to the surface to breathe.
  - 15 The moon throws light across the water, and all is quiet as the dolphins rest.

## How Well Did You Read?

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1 There was a conflict in the story. Who was in conflict?
  - a The baby dolphin and its mother
  - b The dolphins and the sharks
  - c Greyback and Scarsides
- 2 What advantage does a dolphin have in a conflict?
  - a It can remain under the water for hours without air.
  - b It has a hard, bony skeleton and a hard snout.
  - c It can see long distances and has long, sharp teeth.
- 3 What event brought an end to the conflict in the story?
  - a The baby dolphin is born.
  - b Scarsides gives one shark a crushing blow.
  - c The dolphins go to sleep.
- 4 At the start of the story, why didn't Greyback join the other dolphins in play?
  - a She was afraid of Scarsides.
  - b She was unfriendly.
  - c She was going to have a baby.
- 5 What is one difference between a dolphin and a fish?
  - a A dolphin has to breathe air above water.
  - b A dolphin gets its oxygen from the water.
  - c A dolphin has fins and a tail.
- 6 Why is the blowhole important to the dolphin?
  - a It breathes through the blowhole.
  - b It eats with the blowhole.
  - c It hears through the blowhole.
- 7 The blowhole of the baby dolphin is closed. What does this tell you?
  - a The baby dolphin is breathing.
  - b The baby dolphin is under the water.
  - c The baby dolphin is above water.
- 8 Which of the following would be best as another title for the story?
  - a Victory at Sea
  - b An Ocean Fish
  - c Fish at Play

## Learn about Words

### Vocabulary

- A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 move with a wavy motion (1)
- 2 huge; very large (1)
- 3 uncomfortable; concerned (2)
- 4 comes up (7)
- 5 hard to see; dark (9)
- 6 gather around (10)
- 7 quickly turns (11)

- B A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used. The word *string* is an example.

We tied the box with *string*.  
Our team had a *string* of victories.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Write a or b.

- 8 **skin** (1)
  - a outer covering of body
  - b container for liquids
- 9 **play** (2)
  - a performance by actors on stage
  - b fun; games
- 10 **bay** (3)
  - a type of window
  - b part of the sea close to shore

## Word Study

### C Large cats have **big** paws.

Words that have the same or almost the same meaning are called synonyms. *Large* is a synonym of *big*. From the group of words below, choose a synonym for each word in **heavy type** in the sentences that follow. Write the synonym.

put      help      empty      frightened  
chose    plate      nearly      freezing

- 11 I'm **almost** nine years old!
- 12 Jodie is **terrified** of thunder.
- 13 Please **set** everything on the table carefully.
- 14 I will **assist** my father when he makes dinner.
- 15 All the pages in the book were **blank**.
- 16 I **selected** a hat to match my new coat.
- 17 The chicken and rice was served on a **large platter**.
- 18 It was **icy** and windy last night.

### D Pups are **little** dogs, not **big** ones.

Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. *Little* is an antonym of *big*. From the group of words below, choose an antonym for each word in **heavy type** in the sentences. Write the antonym.

stay      friend      find      empty  
receive    difficult    pushed    upset

- 19 The horses **pulled** the wagon up the hill.
- 20 Did you **lose** your umbrella?
- 21 Jake likes to **give** gifts.
- 22 Why did you **leave** there?
- 23 The milk bottle is **full**.
- 24 Betsy was very **calm** about the robbery.
- 25 Mike is my **enemy**.
- 26 Ice-skating is **easy**.

### E Read each sentence and the words that follow it. Write the word that completes each sentence best.

- 27 I don't want a skinny chicken; I want a \_\_\_ one. (plump, thin)
- 28 I don't like to see you cry; I like to see you \_\_\_. (laugh, weep)
- 29 We didn't take a brief trip; we took a \_\_\_ one. (short, long)
- 30 This isn't a hard problem; it's \_\_\_. (easy, difficult)
- 31 I don't enjoy this; I \_\_\_ it. (dislike, like)
- 32 My dog is young; it isn't \_\_\_. (new, old)
- 33 This stamp is odd; it isn't \_\_\_. (unusual, common)

## Use Your Imagination

This story describes a fight between dolphins and sharks. Suppose you were in a boat and witnessed the fight from only a short distance away. What would you do? What could you do to help the dolphins? Discuss your ideas with a friend or a classmate.