

# The Snail & The Whale

This is the tale of a tiny snail and a great big grey-blue humpback whale.

This is a rock as black as soot and this is a snail with an itchy foot.

The sea snail slithered all over the rock and gazed at the sea and the ships in the dock. And as she gazed, she sniffed and sighed. "The sea is deep and the world is wide. How I long to sail," said the tiny snail.

These are the other snails in the flock who all stuck tight to the smooth black rock and said to the snail with the itchy foot, "Be quiet! Don't wriggle! Sit still! Stay put!" But the tiny sea snail sighed and sniffed, then cried, "I've got it! I'll hitch a lift."

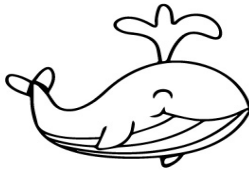
This is the trail of the tiny snail. A silvery trail that looped and curled and said, "Lift wanted around the world."



This is the whale who came one night when the tide was high and the stars were bright. A humpback whale, immensely long, who sang to the snail a wonderful song of shimmering ice and coral caves and shooting stars and enormous waves.

And this is the tail of the humpback whale. He held it out of the starlit sea and said to the snail, "Come sail with me."

This is the sea, so wild and free that carried the whale and the snail on his tail to towering icebergs and far-off lands with fiery mountains and golden sands.



These are the waves that arched and crashed, that foamed and frolicked and sprayed and splashed the tiny snail on the tail of the whale.

These are the caves beneath the waves where stripy fish with feathery fins and sharks with hideous toothy grins swam around the whale and the snail on his tail.

This is the sky, so vast and high. Sometimes sunny and blue and warm. Sometimes filled with a thunderstorm.

With zigzag lightening, flashing and frightening the tiny snail on the tail of the whale.

And she gazed at the sky, the sea, the land, the waves and the caves and the golden sand. She gazed and gazed, amazed by it all. And she said to the whale, "I feel so small."

But then came the day the whale lost his way.

These are the speedboats running a race, zigging and zooming all over the place. Upsetting the whale with their ear-splitting roar, making him swim too close to the shore.

This is the tide slipping away and this is the whale lying beached in the bay. "Quick, off the sand, back to sea," cried the snail. "I can't move on land. I'm too big," moaned the whale.

The snail felt helpless and terribly small. Then, "I've got it!" she cried. And started to crawl. "I must not fail," said the tiny snail.

This is the bell on the school in the bay ringing the children in from their play. This is the teacher holding her chalk, telling the class, "Sit straight, don't talk." This is the board, as black as soot.

And this is the snail with the itchy foot. "A snail! A snail!" the teacher turns pale. "Look!" say the children, "It's leaving a trail." This is the trail of the tiny snail. A silvery trail saying, "Save the whale."

These are the children running from school, fetching the firemen, digging a pool, squirting and spraying to keep the whale cool.

This is the tide coming into the bay, and these are the villagers shouting, "Hooray!" As the whale and the snail travel safely away.

Back to the dock and the flock on the rock, Who said, "How time's flown!" And, "Haven't you grown!"

And the whale and the snail told their wonderful tale of shimmering ice and coral caves, and shooting stars and enormous waves, and of how the snail, so small and frail, with her looping, curling, silvery trail, saved the life of the humpback whale.

Then the humpback whale held out his tail and on crawled snail after snail after snail. And they sang to the sea as they all set sail on the tail of the grey-blue humpback whale.

