



IZZY AND HER FRIENDS

An adventure through the coral reefs!



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In her dreams, **IZZY** played with corals, sea turtles, fish, manatees, and other small creatures.

From far away, she could hear the waves crashing against the coral reefs....

“HOW I WOULD LOVE TO SWIM TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!”


thought Izzy, as she awoke to the

FUUU, CHUC, PLUM! FUUU, CHUC, PLUM!

of the waves against the rocks. When she opened her eyes, her first thought was that the sea was her life and that she hoped it would never change.







A while later, on their way to school, Carlos noticed that Izzy was very quiet.

— HEY, IZZY! WHAT'S THE MATTER?

- I saw on television that the sea is sick and that the corals are in danger.
- How so? I was swimming with coral reefs just the other day and I saw a purple fish! said Seidy.

AFTER PAUSING TO THINK, IZZY REPLIED:

- My grandfather told me that when he was young, he would free dive and catch plenty of lobsters, shrimp, and grouper fish. But now, he says, the reef is bare and there are only a few fish left.

Seidy responded:

- Maybe it is true then! The other day the teacher said that the parliamentarians in the Legislative Assembly are working on a law to protect the sea.





Bored with the conversation,

DIEGO, THE YOUNGEST, STARTED TO WALK AWAY.

Clara ran towards him. Once she caught up, she faced him and used sign language to tell him to return to the group because they were talking about something important.



With her growing concern about the sea, Izzy convinced her friends to go to shore to find out what was going on. On the way there, they came across a sloth and asked if she knew what was happening.

— I've heard it has to do with fish that have big fiery spines, the sloth replied in a slow voice.

— What do they look like? asked Diego frightened, imagining a gigantic and hideous fish.

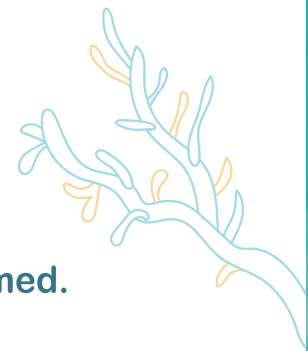
— **YOU SHOULD TALK TO THE WHALE.** She lives in the sea, surely she knows more! And so, the sloth said goodbye with her usual slow pace, and Izzy and her friends watched her disappear into the branches of a leafy tree.

— **HOW ABOUT WE GO TALK TO ONE OF THOSE FISH?** proposed Seidy.

— But how do we find one? asked Carlos.

— We can call one to the shore, suggested Diego.

— No, no! Let's get a boat and go talk to the whale instead! Izzy exclaimed.







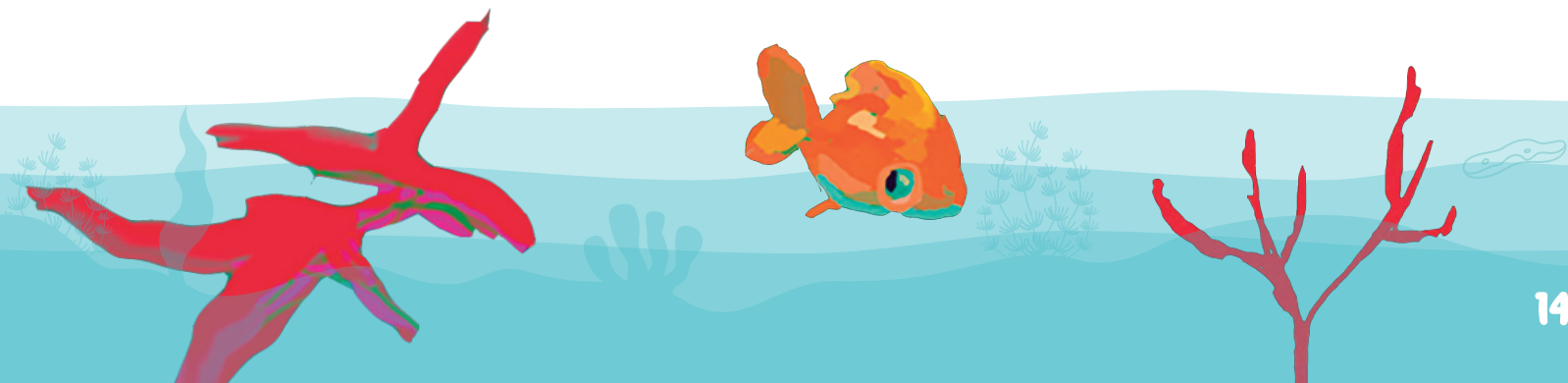
As they went in search of a boat, they came across an anteater resting in the shade by the side of the path.

— **HEEEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING IN SUCH A HURRY?**

— We are going to look for the whale to ask about what's going on in the sea with some fish with fiery spines, said Izzy.

— Ahhhh! You're talking about the lionfish... it apparently eats corals, said the anteater without even raising his snout.

— **A LION THAT HAS TURNED INTO A FISH!**
shouted everyone in surprise.





Yvonne



When they reached the beach, Seidy insisted on speaking directly to the fish. They approached the shore and began to call out for them:

— **LIONFISH! COME OVER HERE! WE WANT TO TALK TO YOU!**

It wasn't long before a fish appeared, but it wasn't a lion at all. It looked like it was in flames, adorned with silk fins that danced underwater. A large crown floated above his head.

— What's going on? asked the fish, a bit annoyed. What are you calling me for?

Clara stepped in and asked him why he was eating the corals.

— **I DON'T EAT CORALS! THE FISH REPLIED ANGRILY.**

— Then why are they saying that lionfish eat everything and destroy the coral reefs? asked Carlos.

Alarmed, the fish began to cry. After calming down, he told the children:

— I don't know what happened or how I got here. One day I was at home in my fish tank and then suddenly the family that was taking care of me said they couldn't keep me anymore. That day, they left me in the sea and now I'm here. The same thing happened to my friends. But I want you to know that we don't eat corals. I don't know who told you that, but it's a lie!



The children felt embarrassed that they had been so rude to the lionfish and apologized, but they still didn't understand why the sea was sick.

IZZY SUGGESTED GOING ON THE BOAT IN SEARCH OF THE WHALE AND HER FRIENDS, CURIOUS, AGREED TO GET ON BOARD.



— I know where whales live! They talked about it the other day in school! said Diego. Then he explained where to go, drawing a map in the sand. As they untied the knot of the boat, their eyes sparkled. They were excited about the adventure they were about to embark on.

— I prefer to stay on the shore, said Carlos, who was afraid, as he did not know how to swim - Maybe I can talk to the parrots.

— Okay, said Izzy, Let's hurry! Let's go look for the whale before it gets dark.

They got on the boat carrying sticks, stones, and a rope in case they had to tie the oars.

— Don't worry! said Izzy. I know how to paddle well. I am very strong! They paddled over the first wave and drifted away from the shore without anyone noticing.





Once they were in the middle of the sea, they began to call out to the whale. They made noises with their sticks and skipped their stones in the water to make waves. A while later, the whale appeared belly up.

— **WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT? SHE ASKED.**



- We want to know, why are the reefs sad? asked Izzy.
- And what does it have to do with the poor lionfish and his friends? asked Diego.
- Hmm, very good question, answered the whale.

The thing is that they are big eaters because they were used to getting a lot of food in their tanks, and there are still some that haven't learned to share. In the sea, we all have different responsibilities that allow us to maintain a special balance. When the lionfish arrived in these waters, they started eating the small fish and lobsters that live in the reefs, which caused an imbalance.

— But I don't understand...

¿WHY ARE THE REEFS SICK THEN? asked Clara.

— Since there are fewer little fish to eat the algae, it has grown too much and blocks the sunlight that corals need to live. To keep the balance, reefs depend on the fish that live in them. The reefs give them a home and, in return, they help the reefs.

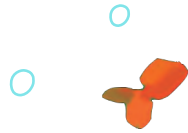
— Ahhh! I think I understand! Is it like a trade? asked Izzy.

— Exactly! exclaimed the whale. Since the lionfish are eating these fish, there aren't many left to help the reefs of La Coralia. As a result, the algae is growing too much and blocking out the sunlight that the corals need to live.

The whale noticed the doubtful look on Diego's face. She decided to call the sea turtle to help her explain.







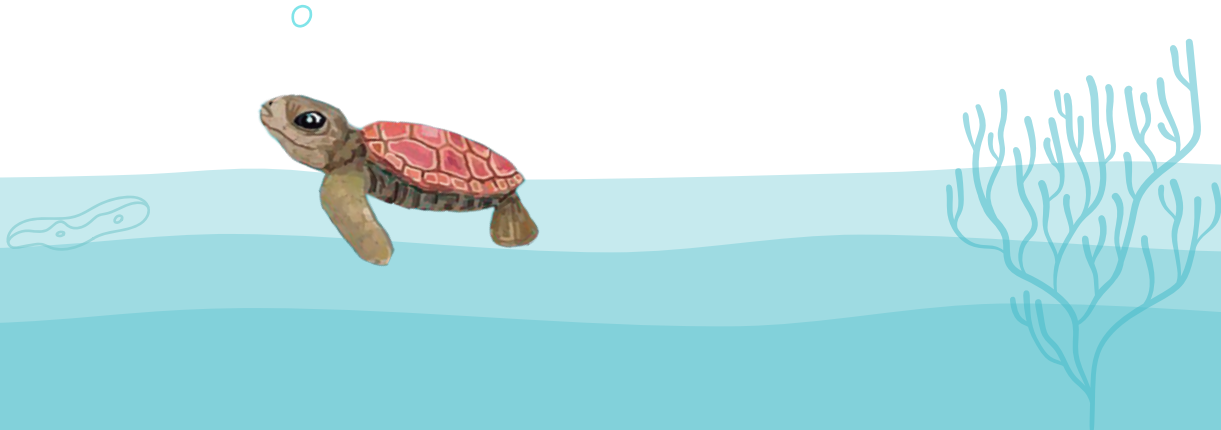
— **LET'S SEE**, said the sea turtle, everyone on this boat has a role: someone rows, someone keeps an eye on where you're going, and someone ensures the group's safety. ○

But if at some point someone can't do their job, your whole system starts to break down.

In the same way that you help each other, we also help each other.

— **OF COURSE!** exclaimed the whale. We are all needed to make everything work. After all, we are all connected.

— **THANK YOU!** You are very wise! I get it now! exclaimed Seidy. The turtle and the whale swam away, happy to have helped. ○



The sun was shining and Clara smiled as she felt the sea breeze on her face.

As they paddled, the children wondered what they could do to help.

— **I HAVE AN IDEA!**

We should put signs up on every street in La Coralia asking people not to release their pets just anywhere, Clara proposed.

— Yes! And also explain the concept of balance to the lionfish we met, who surely doesn't know what he's doing, said Diego.

IZZY THOUGHT about what her grandfather had told her. Excited, she proposed that when they returned, they should all talk to their families to tell them what they had learned. She also suggested that they introduce the whale and the turtle to the parliamentarians who were working on the protection and health of the sea.



Suddenly, the children looked around and realized they were lost. Diego began to cry, and Seidy joined him. Desperate, Diego asked:

- What do we do, Izzy? **ARE WE LOST?**
- I don't know! answered Izzy, frightened, as she continued to row.
- I think we should row that way, Clara pointed to her left.
- No! replied Izzy... I'll row to the right.

— **WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER IF WE JUST STAYED HERE?**
cried Seidy.

After a while, they felt hungry. The sun shone down on them and they were very thirsty. Clara warned that they should be careful with the water they were carrying, showing them a half-empty bottle.

- Izzy, are you tired? I can help you row, said Diego. But she was stubborn and answered:
 - No, I can keep rowing by myself!
 - I think we should stay here, Seidy insisted. I'm sure Carlos has realized that it's been a long time since we left and went to look for help.
- No! **IT'S BETTER TO KEEP MOVING!** Izzy exclaimed.



KALYA

— Izzy! Clara pleaded with her hands, I know you know a lot about the sea from your trips with your grandfather, but I think you should take our opinions into account. Remember what the whale and the turtle said:

WE ALL PLAY A ROLE IN HELPING.

Why don't we vote to find a solution?

Izzy listened attentively.

AFTER A WHILE, SHE EXCLAIMED:

— You're right! I got scared and thought I had to solve everything by myself because it was my idea to get on the boat. But I'm not alone. We're together and if we collaborate, we'll surely reach the shore. Let's vote!

Izzy proposed taking turns to row towards the right and Clara towards the left.

Diego heard a pod of dolphins and suggested asking them for help.

— **WHAT A WONDERFUL IDEA,** Diego! exclaimed Izzy, I vote for that one! What do you think?







The whole group agreed with Diego's idea. They all started calling out at the same time so that their voice would be louder, and the dolphins would hear them:

— **HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEY, WE'RE OVER
HERE! HELP!**

Their combined voices were so powerful that the dolphins heard them from a distance. They swam and swam until they surrounded the boat.

— Hey, kids! You're really lost, said one of the dolphins. We saw some coastguards nearby. They said a boy named Carlos called them. We can guide you to them!



THE CHILDREN SMILED AND HUGGED EACH OTHER.

Izzy thanked her friends for joining her to talk to the sea animals and help solve the mystery of the coral reefs.

- They were happy: soon they would see their families and could share all their ideas to save the sea.

It was getting dark in La Coralia. Izzy was rowing to follow the dolphins when they saw the coast guard boat in the distance.

Ever since then, the waves have been telling the story of Izzy, Carlos, Seidy, Diego, and Clara - curious and brave children - and their determination to save the sea.

¡FUUU, CHUC, PLUM!

¡FUUU, CHUC, PLUM!





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