

# The Friendly Dolphins

by Patricia Lauber



<sup>1</sup> A dolphin looks like a big fish with a smooth, streamlined body. It is a good swimmer. Most dolphins live in the ocean, but some live in rivers. There they play, feed, sleep, and have their babies. Yet dolphins are not fish.

<sup>2</sup> Fish can breathe underwater. However, dolphins have to come to the surface of the water to breathe. They

breathe in the same way people do. They use their lungs. Baby dolphins, like human babies, are nursed on milk by their mothers.

<sup>3</sup> So dolphins are like people in some ways. In addition, they're friendly toward people. Many stories from ancient times describe friendships between people and dolphins.



- 4 One story from ancient Greece tells about a boy named Dionysios, who was swimming one day when a dolphin came up to him. Dionysios was frightened, but soon he realized that the dolphin wanted to play. The boy lost his fear of the dolphin and played with it.
- 5 When Dionysios returned to the beach the next day, the dolphin was waiting for him. Each day after that, the dolphin and Dionysios played together. Often the dolphin carried Dionysios out to sea and brought him back safely.
- 6 Crowds of people came to see the boy and his dolphin friend, and the story was written down. That is how we know about Dionysios, although he lived nearly two thousand years ago.
- 7 Another story comes from North Africa. The boys of a town called Hippo spent all their free time in the sea. One day a boy swam far out from shore and a dolphin joined him. It dove under him and took him out to sea on its back, then carried him back to shore.
- 8 For several days the dolphin appeared when the boys went swimming, but each time the boys fled.
- 9 The men of Hippo came to watch the dolphin, but they were also afraid of it. After a while they felt ashamed of being frightened by a friendly animal. So they called to the dolphin, went near it, and petted it.
- 10 Then the boy who had first met the dolphin climbed on its back and was taken for another ride. After that the boy and dolphin often played together. Many people came to see them, and this story, too, was written down.
- 11 Some of the dolphin tales of long ago are made up. However other stories are probably true, for dolphins do the same things today.
- 12 Dolphins often accompany ships, playing and racing around them. They help fishers by driving fish into nets, and fishers share their catch with the friendly dolphins.
- 13 Dolphins have also saved drowning persons. Some years ago a woman swimmer in Florida was caught by a strong current and could not fight her way out of it. Suddenly something gave her a great push onto the beach. A man on the beach told her that a dolphin had pushed her ashore.
- 14 Until recent years, many persons did not believe those ancient tales of children and dolphins. Then, in 1955, a wild dolphin made friends with a child.
- 15 It happened near Opononi, New Zealand. A dolphin came into the harbor near the fishing boats. The fishers discovered that she liked to be scratched with an oar. They named her Opo, and soon she was playing among the swimmers.
- 16 Opo liked grownups, but she preferred to play with children. She swam among them, making clear that she wanted to be petted. Opo picked one girl as her special friend. If the girl swam off, Opo followed. Several times the dolphin gave her short rides. Opo would come to the girl to be petted. The girl could even put small children on Opo's back.
- 17 Once someone gave Opo a big beach ball. Opo tossed it into the air with her head, rushed to the place where it was going to fall, and tossed it into the air again. Sometimes she tossed the ball and batted it with her tail.
- 18 When people laughed or clapped, Opo would leap gaily out of the water. She was always careful not to leap near people. If someone was rough with Opo, she simply swam away, slapping her tail.
- 19 Many people came to see Opo that year—sometimes as many as 1500 at one time.
- 20 Then, in March 1956, Opo vanished. When some fishers found her, she was dead. She had become trapped in a rocky pool when the outgoing tide drained it of water. The friendly dolphin was buried at Opononi, and people all over New Zealand grieved for her.
- 21 Opo had proved that some dolphins do make friends with children. Many other dolphins have shown a liking for humans. Free and wild, dolphins have chosen to come near people. They have given every sign of liking human company. Almost no other creature of the sea does such a thing.

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## COMPREHENSION

**A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 The main idea in this story is that
  - a** tales about friendly dolphins have been written down.
  - b** dolphins and humans have interacted with each other.
  - c** people will come from all over to see a dolphin.
- 2 Dolphins are different from fish because
  - a** dolphins use their lungs to breathe.
  - b** dolphins live in oceans and rivers.
  - c** Neither **a** nor **b**
- 3 In both the story from ancient Greece and the story from North Africa,
  - a** a dolphin carried a boy out to sea and brought him back.
  - b** many people came to see a boy and his dolphin friend.
  - c** Both **a** and **b**

- 4 After Opo made friends with the children near Opononi, people learned that
  - a** the ancient stories were made up.
  - b** the ancient tales of dolphins could be true.
  - c** dolphins only liked children.
- 5 The writer of this story gives you the feeling that dolphins
  - a** are unusual creatures.
  - b** are shy.
  - c** should be put in zoos.

## LEARN ABOUT WORDS

**B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 top or outside of something (2)
- 2 long-ago; very old (3)
- 3 go along with (12)
- 4 section of water that is moving along a certain path (13)
- 5 liked better (16)
- 6 disappeared; was gone from sight (20)
- 7 mourned; felt very sad (20)

**C** **too** = also

**two** = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

**8 sum** (1)

People are amused by \_\_\_\_\_ of the things dolphins do.

**9 ore** (15)

The fisherman used an \_\_\_\_\_ to steer his boat.

**10 tale** (17)

There is more than one \_\_\_\_\_ of a boy and a dolphin.

## THINK ABOUT IT

### D Wendy took a *long* trip.

When you describe something, you use an adjective. *Long* is an adjective.

Al's trip was *longer* than hers.

When you compare two things, you usually add *-er* to an adjective. *Longer* compares two trips.

Jim's trip was *longest* of all.

When you compare three or more things, you usually add *-est* to an adjective. *Longest* compares three or more trips.

Read the sentences. Which word in parentheses ( ) fits each sentence? Write the word.

- 1 Dolphins like to ride the (rougher, roughest) waves of all.
- 2 A dolphin's back is (darker, darkest) than its belly.
- 3 A bottlenose dolphin is (shorter, shortest) than an orca.
- 4 The (wilder, wildest) ride Dionysios ever had was during a storm.
- 5 Of all Opo's tricks, tossing the beach ball was the (greater, greatest) one.

### E A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison using the word *like* or *as*.

Glenn is *as strong as an ox*.  
Glenn is *like an ox*.

A metaphor compares two things without using the word *like* or *as*.

Glenn is *an ox*.

All three sentences mean the same thing. They all mean Glenn is very strong.

Read each of the following figures of speech. If it is a simile, write *S*. If it is a metaphor, write *M*.

- 6 The dolphin's nose is like a bottle.
- 7 The hungry dolphin was a hog.
- 8 Dolphins are as playful as puppies.
- 9 The clever dolphins acted like clowns.
- 10 Dolphins in the ocean are as wild and free as the birds in the sky.

### F Some verbs do not add *-ed* to show that something happened in the past. These verbs are called irregular verbs because they do not follow a regular pattern when they tell about the past.

Today I *wear* my black sweater.  
Yesterday I *wore* a blue sweater.

Read each sentence. Which verb in parentheses ( ) makes sense in the sentence? Write the verb.

- 11 Sometimes a dolphin will ride a wave and then (dive, dove) underwater.
- 12 Long ago a dolphin (swims, swam) out to sea with Dionysios on its back.
- 13 The swimmers were frightened by the dolphin and (flee, fled).
- 14 Opo's special friend (hold, held) the dolphin's head and petted her.
- 15 Dolphins can leap out of the water and (ring, rang) a bell.