



MONKEY MIA DOLPHIN RESORT



It was winter time in Western Australia.

The winters are not always so very cold in this part of the world.

But still many families often go to warmer parts of the country during their holidays.

And Monkey Mia is one of those places.

It is a small town on the coast of Western Australia about 850 kilometres North from the capital, Perth.

Monkey Mia is famous for its kilometres of crystal blue waters and white-shell beaches.

But the main attraction surely is the school of Bottlenose dolphins. Each day they come close to shore and delight the many visitors.

It is no wonder that many people from all over the world come to Monkey Mia to study the Bottlenose dolphins. Neither is it surprising that many people spend their holidays in Monkey Mia.

Steven and Gary are also on their way to this wonderful place with their parents.

They left early on Monday morning and were planning to be back again on Saturday. This would then enable them to go to church on Sunday.

They had left early because they wanted to arrive before the evening.

For there are too many kangaroos crossing the road at night time. And they did not want to kill any of them.

And besides they didn't really want to damage their new vehicle either.

Their father, Michael, had recently bought a new four wheel drive vehicle and thought it would be a good idea to try it out in Monkey Mia. Their mother, whose name was Theresa, was sitting in the front seat next to Michael.

"I have always wanted to visit Monkey Mia", Michael said to his wife.

"Especially seeing the dolphins will be very exciting, I should imagine".

"Yes, I can hardly wait", remarked Steven from the back of the vehicle".

"Did you know that the brain of a Bottlenose dolphin is bigger than that of a human?", Michael said to the boys in the back of the vehicle.

"The Bottlenose dolphin is found worldwide in tropical and temperate waters. Some live offshore and others live near the coast, I read once", added Michael.

They arrived at their holiday resort just before the evening meal.

They unpacked all their luggage and took it to their rooms.

The twelve year old Steven tried to carry the heaviest cases but his father needed to carry them up the stairs.

Ten year old Gary also helped very willingly while Mum prepared the evening meal.

At the diner table Michael thanked the Lord for His protection on the ten hours long journey.

"That is not something to be taken for granted", Michael reminded the rest of the family.

After the meal Steven helped Mum with the dishes and Gary went onto the balcony to have a look over the ocean. The view there was absolutely wonderful.

Suddenly he exclaimed to the others:

"Come and have a look. There is something going on at the beach. There is a whole group of people looking at something".

The others quickly joined him on the balcony.

"The dolphins have come into shore for feeding", Michael observed.

"Let us all go down and join them", Mum said.

They all quickly ran downstairs and joined the crowd on the beach.

And there they saw the most wonderful sight.

About half a dozen Bottlenose dolphins were frolicking in the water.

One man with a basket full of fish was feeding the dolphins. He was obviously a man who knew what he was doing.

The dolphins seemed to know him quite well.



For when some of the onlookers tried to feed them the dolphins were a bit hesitant and shy.

Gary asked the man if he could give it a try and much to his surprise he was allowed to. And the dolphins didn't even mind at all.



The man who had been feeding the dolphins belonged to the Department of Conservation. He knew quite a lot about the dolphins and gave the people who had gathered around him much information.

"Did you know", he said, "that the dolphin youngsters have a close bond with their mother?"

They stay with their mother for quite a long time. You see that little one over there, for instance? And do you see how close it stays to its mother?

The mother needs to teach the young one hunting skills. It also needs to teach the young one survival skills as well as social skills".

After the man from the Department of Conservation had emptied his basket he left and all the people went back to their tents or caravans.

Michael, Theresa and Steven also slowly walked back to their rooms.

Gary stayed behind a little longer and the rest of the family had not noticed.

And even if they did they would have thought he would soon join them.

Gary was so fascinated by the dolphins. He just could not leave yet even though the dolphins had disappeared into the distance.

He was wondering what they were doing now and if the baby dolphin was alright.

As he was thinking about this he wandered away from the rest of the people and walked towards the rocks at the water's edge. He loved this beach. It was so clean and attractive. The water also seemed so calm and inviting.

Tomorrow, he thought, they should all go for a swim.

He wandered further and further and enjoyed the peace and quiet so much.

As usual he was in a world of his own.

He had not noticed that the sun was going down and that it was slowly getting darker.

Therefore he had walked further than he had realized.

It was time for a rest.

So he sat down on one of the rocks and just enjoyed the beauty of this place.

Then he got up and walked a bit further, further away from where all the activities are.

Here the rocks were quite slippery because of all the Algae growing on them.

It was getting so dark now that he could hardly see where he was putting his feet.

"It is time to go back to his parents", he thought.

But may be he could go a little further. He was enjoying himself so much.

I better not fall in the water, he thought.

Even though he was a good swimmer and had many certificates to prove it, he did not feel like getting wet right now.

Not yet.

Tomorrow we can go for a swim.

Next moment he slipped on the rocks and fell into the water. As he fell his head landed on a rock just below the surface.

All his swimming certificates did not help him now for he was knocked out.

Unconscious!

Everything was dark before his eyes as he sank to the bottom. It was not so very deep.

But it was deep enough to drown in. His lungs were already filling up with water.

Now he would just drown for there was nobody around who had seen him fall into the water.

So there was nobody who could help him now.

But the Lord was watching over him.

One of the dolphins Gary had been feeding earlier was still around.

This friendly animal had noticed what happened.

He had seen it all and was surprised that Gary was not moving.

He noticed that Gary was just lying very still.



So as fast as he could he swam towards Gary.
First he nudged him carefully with his sensitive nose but Gary did not move.
Then he shoved him a bit harder but still no movement.
So he then carefully lifted him and pushed him to the surface.
But what now?
This animal had no arms to carry him out of the water onto the rocks.
There was only one thing to do and it had to be done quickly.
Again he swam under Gary and with a mighty push he shoved him onto the rocks.
At least he was safe now. But he was only safe from the water.
The dolphin couldn't do any more for Gary.
He was bleeding from a big gash on his head.
Fortunately he had fallen on his side so that most of the water he had swallowed now spilled out onto the rocks.
And there he lay on the rocks. He was out of the water but still not safe.
He just lay there on the rocks, very still. And he was losing very much blood from his wound.

In the meantime at the resort everyone was worried.
Michael, Theresa and Steven had raised the alarm when Gary had not returned before dark.
They knew Gary was a good swimmer but it was unusual for him to stay away for so long. He normally didn't do things like that.
They were extremely worried.
So with a prayer in their heart they joined the search party.
One group went one way and the other group went into the opposite direction.
All of them had powerful torches.
And as they walked they searched all over the place with their lights.
They looked behind every shrub, on the rocks and on the beach.
But sadly they did not find Gary.
They even came very close to where the dolphin had deposited Gary onto the rocks.
But he was hidden from view. So they walked straight past him.
They called his name several times, louder and louder.
But Gary was unconscious and could not hear them.
They had walked for a long time already and still had not found him.
Michael and Theresa were sad and worried.
They had been so very close to him but they did not know it.

Steven had fallen behind a little and as the group got further ahead it became very quiet near the rocks.
As the voices sounded further away it became very still.
"Where could Gary be?", he thought.
He was just as anxious as his parents.

Then he stood still for a moment because he thought he heard a noise.
Yes, he did hear something.
The sound came from the water's edge.
Could that be Gary splashing in the water?
As he came closer he noticed something in the water and with the help of his torch he noticed a dolphin in the water.
And this dolphin was splashing around.
He was thrashing the water and seemed to be quite agitated.
Steven couldn't understand what all this was about.
So he called out to his parents and to the rest of the search party.
First they did not hear him for they were too far away already, but he managed to get their attention with the help of his powerful torch light.
They all came running.

Michael reached him first.

“What’s the matter, Steven?”, he said.

“There is this dolphin in the water”, Steven said.

“And he seems to be quite distressed about something.

I don’t know what is the matter with him”, Steven said.

In the meantime the rest of the search party also arrived at that spot.

“I think that dolphin is trying to tell us something”, someone suggested.

So they all came closer and everyone looked very carefully with their torches.

Suddenly Steven called out:” Here he is. I found him!”

And yes, there was Gary on the rocks all wet, unconscious and bleeding from the injury to his head.

Someone in the search party had learned all about first aid and he seemed to know what to do. He first checked if Gary was breathing and fortunately he was.

Then he cleaned the wound which looked worse than it really was.

He checked if anything was broken and fortunately that was not the case.

So you can understand how thankful Steven and his parents were that Gary was still alive.

They hoped he would be alright now.

Steven, being a fast runner, was then sent to the other search party to tell them the good news

that Gary was found.

Earlier the first-aid person had already put Gary on his stomach and he had tried to push the water out of his lungs.

After a while Gary opened his eyes much to everyone’s amazement.

“What happened?”, he said.

“We are hoping you can tell us”, his father said.

“I really don’t know”, Gary answered. I just went for a walk.

And it was dark before I realised. I had walked too far and I remember going on to the rocks and then I must have slipped on the rocks”.

“Yes, I think you must have fallen into the water because you are very wet”, someone suggested.

“But how did he finish up onto the rock?”, someone else asked.

“Well, do you know what I think happened?”, Michael said.

“I think you slipped into the water on the slippery rocks, knocked your head on a rock and you lay in the water unconscious.

Then, I think, the dolphin noticed it and shoved you out of the water onto the rock.

And he stayed around to raise the alarm.

This Bottle-nose dolphin saved your life, Gary.

Without the help of this dolphin you would most certainly have drowned”.

“God has been good to you, and us”, Michael added.

Some people of the search party nodded in agreement.

During all the excitement nobody had taken any more notice of the dolphin.

It was the dolphin who had drawn their attention to the place where Gary was lying on the rocks.

“Where is he now?”

They all turned around and there he was. He was still hanging around to make sure everything was alright with Gary.

One of the young boys was sent to the resort to get a bucket of fish to reward the dolphin.

“Please run!”, someone called out after him.

In the meantime Michael and Theresa also went back to the reserve together with some of the others.

But most of them wanted to stay behind to give the fish to the dolphin.

Michael, Theresa and Gary also wanted to stay but they thought it was better to go back to the resort.

Some of the strong men carried Gary and when they arrived they found a doctor waiting for them.

He had already been called by the manager of the resort so that he could check out if Gary was alright. Perhaps he needed more medical attention.





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A short story by Leo Schoof, Kelmscott, Western Australia

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But after a thorough examination the doctor came to the conclusion that Gary was in fairly good shape. He had not lost his memory so he most likely did not have concussion.

They were all glad and thankful.

“Let me know if you need me”, the doctor said, “even in the middle of the night.

But I think your son will be fine”.

Michael, Theresa, Steven and Gary went to their room.

By now Gary was able to walk.

They were all so happy that Gary was back safely and together they thanked their heavenly Father for His care and protection.

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