

The challenge

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Theme: *Choosing between right and wrong; not hurting other people*

Appropriate age group: All ages



It all started when Shark became Turtle's friend. Before that there was not much trouble. Turtle spent most of his time swimming lazily in the sea and when he was hungry he caught a fish. But once Shark became his friend things changed. Turtle had lots of adventures ...

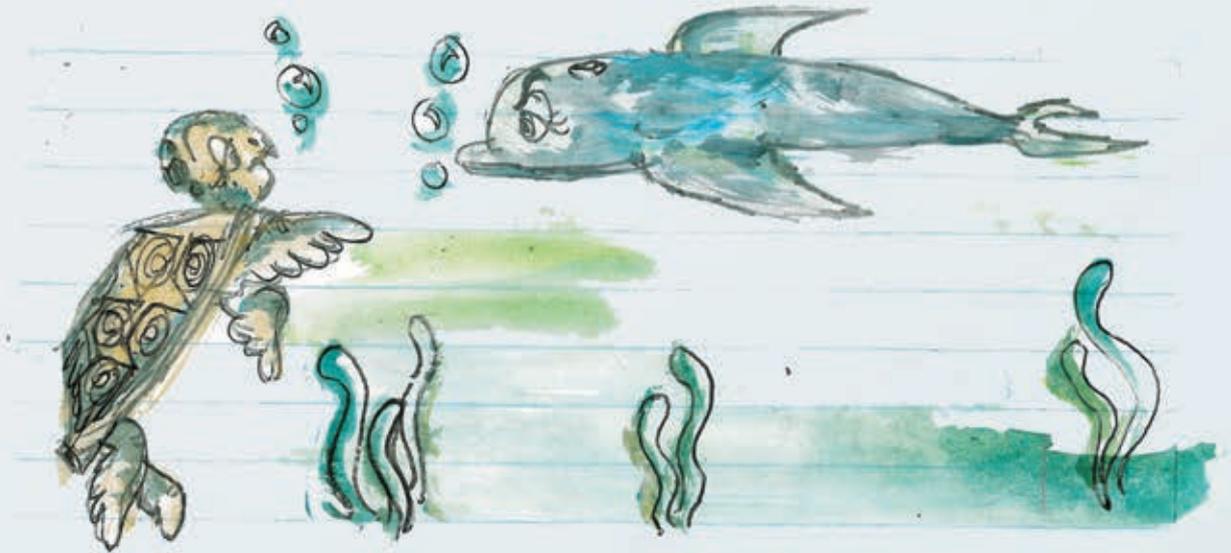
Shark and Turtle had fun playing tricks. They teased Seaweed by tying knots in her long leaves. They closed the entrance to Eel's hideout. They hid Clown Fish's eggs. They tickled Anemone. They blew bubbles at passing Squid.



Shark and Turtle thought their tricks were harmless but the other sea creatures were getting upset. Things got worse when Shark taught Turtle some cruel tricks – biting, scratching and touching the other creatures in ways they didn't like. When the other creatures begged them to stop, Shark and Turtle just laughed and laughed.

Even when Turtle was alone he used to do cruel tricks. He broke one of Starfish's tentacles, he bashed into Jellyfish, he snapped at Shrimps, he popped Bluebottles and he trod on Soles. When Seahorse asked "Why are you so nasty to us?", he said: "Don't you know? This is what turtles do for fun. If you dare tell on me you'll be sorry! I'll get you!" When someone complained to his Mother, Turtle told lies: "It wasn't me. It was Octopus and Squid who caused all the trouble."





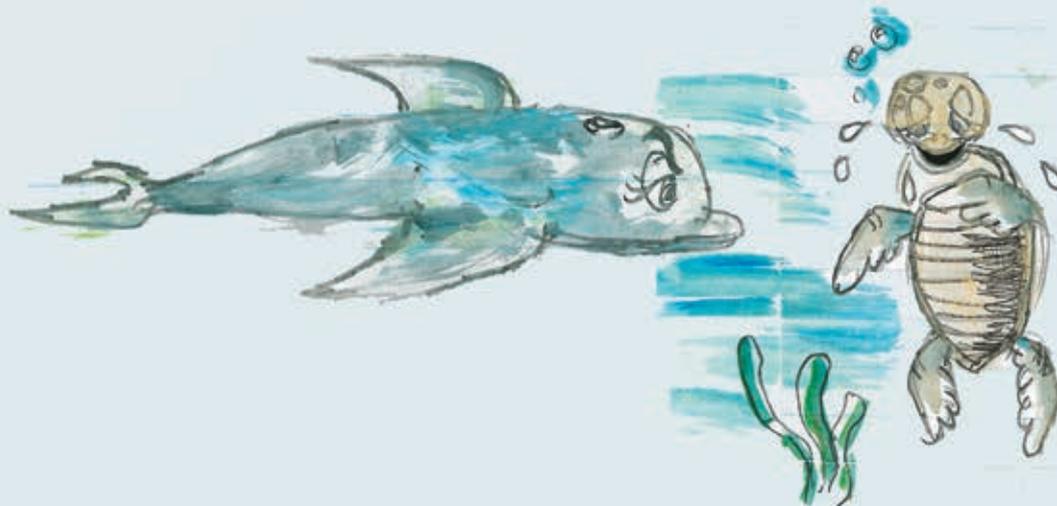
Turtle lost his good friends, one by one, because he kept on doing horrible things – he just couldn't stop. Shark was his one and only friend.

One day Shark and Turtle were being mean to Baby Seal when Dolphin arrived with a flash of silver. She swam straight at Shark and head-butted him. Then she took Baby Seal in her fins and calmed him down. Shark swam away at top speed and Turtle was left behind. Dolphin said: "Young Turtle, don't move until we sort this out!" and Turtle did as he was told. He didn't feel like laughing any more.

Dolphin asked Baby Seal: "What happened to upset you?" He stopped crying to tell her: "I feel scared and stupid when Shark and Turtle tease me. Nobody wants to be friends with them any more because they keep on hurting us." Dolphin gave Baby Seal a hug and sent him back to his Mom.

Then she turned to Turtle and said: "So, young one, you think you're smart and funny. I know Shark taught you to play these games and maybe you think it's fun but hurting other sea creatures is wrong. You're bigger and stronger than they are but that doesn't give you the right to be mean and cruel."

Turtle was thinking: "When's she going to stop blabbing? Who cares if the others get upset?" Dolphin saw he wasn't listening. She said in a strict voice: "Turtle, I challenge you to show me you're really and truly powerful and strong. Don't hurt any sea creatures for a whole week." And with that Dolphin swam away to surf the waves.



"Well", thought Turtle, "I can easily do that – it's no challenge at all." But everywhere he went he saw opportunities to do mean things. A few times he almost, almost, did something mean. When mean ideas came into his mind, he told himself: "I CAN be powerful in a good way. I CAN. I CAN." Then he'd swim away and try to find better things to do. He was shocked to realise how many mean things he used to do every day.

It was hard when Shark came to visit and wanted him to play their old games. Shark said: "You're so boring these days – where's your spirit of adventure?" There were times when Turtle wanted to do something really mean to prove himself to Shark but he thought of the challenge and swam away.

After a week Dolphin came back and Turtle told her: "The challenge was really hard for me but I did it." Dolphin smiled her dolphin smile and said: "I'm proud of you. That's real power and strength: being kind to those around you and caring about others as much as you care about yourself". Then with a flick of her powerful tail Dolphin was gone. At the same moment, Turtle heard Shark calling him but he just smiled and swam the other way ...



? Possible discussion point:
What challenge would you like to set for yourself?