

Ariadni P.

### A Good-Hearted Shark

I know a shark,  
who doesn't miss a chance  
to start a ruckus!  
What kind of profession is that,  
Fish to be scary!  
No one gets near him, because  
He looks scary.  
But he's not like the other  
Bad guys and the grownups!  
What he wants, alone  
Is a friend in the deep end.

### Friendly Seas

Once upon a time in a blue sea far-far away lived a purple, kindhearted young shark-his name was Kary (from the Greek Karcharyas). He lived like most sharks among friends and family of the same species – he was harmless, and a vegetarian, hated meat and never enjoyed hunting and frightening other fish. While his friends were menacing professional surfers at nearby beaches, Kary enjoyed reading and following ships, dreaming of long journeys to open seas. Kary never met his dad – he was hunted down by a huge fishing boat near Japan. His mom escaped and returned home to tell her only child the sad story. She was a protective mom but always sad. Unlike the other sharks who never played with other fish, Kary had all sorts of friends: Lobsters, eels, starfish and octopi. Being so unique among his species, he felt sometimes excluded. One day, Kary was invited to another shark's birthday party. The sun was shining, the water was clam – a perfect day for an underwater pic-nic. So much food was laid out – fish, oysters, shellfish...but no veggies. Kary felt terrible – "I cannot eat this; lobster and shellfish are my friends." Nobody thought of preparing veggies for him. Suddenly, behind his back

there was the great big bully, the one who annoyed him since they were little. “Hey Kary when are you gonna be a true shark? You cannot hunt, you only eat green slime and you talk to those losers – your father would be ashamed of you.”

Nobody said anything, just giggles. Nobody came forward to stand up for Kary – even his mom remained silent. He felt so alone. And then, just then, decided he was not going to be part of this group anymore. Without a word, no even his mom, angry Kary left the shallow waters for a journey to the unknown. The sea became wider, darker, deeper and turned into an ocean. Kary had difficulty navigating through the murky waters. Suddenly, he saw a dim light coming from the shadows and took a deep dive. And then, whoa: thousands of pink fluorescent jellyfish lighted a lost, pirate ship, the abyss glowing from a bed of gold coins, pearls and silverware.

A voice spooked Kary. “What are you doing here? Are you lost? You are the first creature I have seen in ages” ... and there was he, a Great White Shark, approaching Kary from under the wreck. “Don’t be afraid I am not gonna harm you – anyway, I am blind.”

“Blind? A blind shark?” asked Kary.

“Don’t you know that in these dark, frozen waters the only light is the one coming from the jellyfish? All the creatures of the abyss are blind. We rely on our other senses to survive. You’re lost, right?”

Kary explained and the Great White Shark was silent for a while. And then he said, “Maybe is better to have stupid friends than no friends at all. Loneliness is tough, I know...”

“I do not think so, Kary disagreed – I prefer to be alone than being bullied, a bully is not a friend.”

“You don’t know much about loneliness, do you? I am having a silent life in the dark, year after year – every one of my family and friends, the few I had down here, are gone and I never got to travel beyond this abyss. Everything I know comes from the book I read when I was little and could still see, but I never get to share them with anyone – oh, how I wish I could take a journey to warmer waters, to feel the sun on my fin.”

“I want to travel too, come with me then. I will be your eyes – as long as you can lead us out of here.”

“There are so many dangers out there and I would be a burden to you anyway.”

“Don’t say that, come on. I will see for you and you will guide us with your wisdom. How about it?”

And on they set sail for warmer seas. They passed through India where they played with the blind pink dolphins of the Ganges in the muddy thick waters of the river, they joked with the seahorses in the Atlantic and learned that the boys are giving birth to their babies. They saw some mean fishers in the Sea of Japan, who hunt poor dolphins and kill without mercy the proud whales for their skin and meat. They danced around colorful fish in the Pacific and made so many friends around the rare spined fish of the South China Sea. They even went as far as the Arctic waters of Norway to meet the Narwhals, the unicorns of the sea, but the weather was really cold for the purple shark.

“What now?” asked Kary after their latest adventure.

“Don’t you miss home, little friend?” asked the Great White Shark.

“I do – I miss my mom, she must be worried, I left without saying goodbye. I cannot wait for you to meet her. She’s an amazing cook.”

“It’s been a long time since I had my mom. But I better return to my abyss!”

“No way, you taught me the things that matter in life, that everybody is different, special. You are a true friend and you are coming with me. “

“And you Kary, are my only friend. OK, how about a trip before heading home? I heard Greece is a refuge for seals and turtles, I need some sun for my old bones! And remember, sometimes the journey is more important than the destination!”

“To Greece then.”