



## “Delilah the Dolphin’s Whale of a Friend ”

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Age: 6+

It’s night-time, and also the grey baby bunny’s bedtime. However, he just can’t seem to doze off, and keeps pushing the blanket away. The bunny’s mom becomes irritated before long. She threatens that Fox will come if he doesn’t fall asleep. Even so, the bunny stays naughty and refuses to duck under the covers. The more the mommy bunny scolds the boy, the more insolent he becomes. But then, he hears a mouse skittering in the corner ...





“Delilah the Dolphin’s Whale of a Friend” by Leelo Tungal

## **Reading sample**

Delilah the dolphin was on excellent terms with all the creatures of the sea, from the smallest water flea to the gigantic blue whale. Indeed, Delilah got on with people too, but she met them very seldom: from time to time she would work as a pilot for the large ships and guide the ocean-going vessels away from the rocks that were invisible even to their captains' telescopes.

Delilah had tons of friends, but her greatest favourite was a distant relation of hers, Valdo – the little calf of Matilda the blue whale.

Valdo was his mother's first calf and Mummy Matilda never tired of praising him.

"As far as I can see, it's simply not true that big children mean big worries!" she boasted when chatting to the dolphins. "My Valdo is of course bigger than most of the sea creatures' children, but he's never caused me a moment's worry – he's been nothing but a joy!"

Delilah nodded and joined in the praise, "Yes, who knows what he might become!"

Even while very small, Valdo went fishing with his mother and the school of dolphins and learned early on how to dive. He truly felt like a fish in water, even though whales are not in fact fish but fish-shaped mammals.

Naturally, Valdo was on the receiving end of his mother's praise several times a day, and his chubby cheeks would glow silver in response. After all, who doesn't like being praised!

One evening mother whale noticed that Valdo hadn't touched his food and hadn't drunk a drop of milk. At first she thought nothing of it, but when he didn't want any the next day or the day after that, she started to worry. It seemed that Valdo wasn't in the mood for praise – he just lay in the water, as if thinking, his little eyes downcast. His mother tried to cheer him up of course and make him feel better by tickling his tummy with the tip of her tail, but nothing she did could lift his spirits.

When she met Delilah the dolphin, Matilda decided to ask her for advice – she was a clever cousin, and very experienced.

"Do you think he might have been stung by an electric eel?" wondered Delilah. "Or might a silly shark have teased him? Or could it be that, you know, sometimes kids have secret wishes of their own that make them very thoughtful..."

The mother whale crinkled her mouth and said, "Valdo has everything a whale calf needs and he's never been touched by an electric eel or illness."

"But it wouldn't do any harm to have a chat and ask him if maybe there's something he needs," Delilah suggested gently.

"My family wants for nothing," snapped the mother whale, flicking her tail to make waves as she went on her way.

In the evening, once the mother had read her calf a bedtime story she spoke to him. "Valdo sweetheart, I can see you're down in the dumps and out of sorts – your face is as crumpled as a shrimp's. Just say if there's there something you need."

"There is!" replied Valdo quietly. "I want to see one of Santa's elves!"

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*Translated by Susan Wilson*