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AN ORCA'S TAIL8
by Charles Howerton

Jenny Fuller was fixing lunch in the kitchen when the phone rang. Bob, her husband, picked up the receiver, and noting the caller ID said, "Hi, Philomena, Jenny's in the kitchen, she'll be with you in a moment."

"Hi, Bob. Just tell her that Orcas are headed your way. I'm sure she'll want to know so she can watch them. No time to waste, I'm going out back right now to watch 'em myself before they go around the point." Philomena Carlson replied.

"Okay, Philomena, I'll tell her. Hey, why don't you come on over and watch with Jenny from here?" Bob said.

"Thanks, I'll do just that. I'll be there in five minutes."

"Take care, bye."

"Who was it, Bob?" Jenny asked.

"It was Philomena, Hon. She said Orcas are heading our way and you should go out back to watch them. I invited her over to watch from here. You go ahead, lunch can wait."

"Thanks," Jenny said as she picked up her video camera case and rushed out the back door.

They had built an observation platform that extended out over the bluff at north edge of their property. From it, Jenny had a perfect view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the point to the west near Philomena's house and east almost all the way to Discovery Bay.

When Philomena arrived she went straight to the observation platform to join Jenny who was getting her video camera mounted and ready. "Hi, Jenny. How can I help?" Philomena asked.

"Hi Phil. Would you please hand me the telephoto lens, the medium sized one, it has a broader field of view." Jenny said.

"This one?"

"Yeah, that's the one," Jenny said as she took the lens and attached it to the camera body. She checked to be sure that everything was connected properly and turned on the camera and the video recorder. "Okay, let's watch," she said pulling up one of the two bar stools on the platform while Philomena brought the other one over. They perched themselves at the railing on either side of the camera and watched the Orcas.

A few minutes later, Bob came out. "Hey ladies, I thought you might like to have some lunch." He said as placed a tray loaded with sodas and sandwiches on the table. "Seen anything yet?"

"Oh, yeah. They're right over there," Jenny said pointing toward

the pod of Orcas.

Bob glanced quickly where Jenny was pointing. “Fantastic!” he said, “That’s as close as they’ve ever been, isn’t it? Enjoy yourselves, I have a baseball game that needs watching. Let me know if you need anything else.”

Jenny and Philomena shared a pair of binoculars as they watched the Orca’s rising and diving. After a bit, they could hear a boat approaching from the west. Jenny looked for it out in the Strait, when she could not find it she leaned out over the railing and saw it just below close to the shore. She watched as it got closer expecting it to turn out into the Strait to avoid the Orcas.

“Here, Phil, you take the binoculars and keep an eye on the boat.” Jenny said handing the binoculars to Philomena. “I’ll keep the camera on the Orcas.”

“Whoever’s in that boat is either trying to scare the Orcas or hit them.” Philomena said. “What can we do?”

“Not much from here except to record what happens.” Jenny said, then added, as the boat seemed to aim right for the center of the pod, “I think they’re really trying to hit the Orcas.”

They watched quietly for a moment, then Philomena exclaimed, “Oh, thank God, the Orcas are diving to get out of the way.” Then she screamed, “No, oh no! A young one just came up for air and the boat drove right over it and hit it so hard the boat bounced.”

“I got it on video, but I couldn’t see the name of the boat, could you?”

“Nope, all I saw was the first letter of the name, an ‘S’, I think. It was a blue and white boat with two people in it. The driver was wearing a blue cap and the other one had on a yellow cap.”

Both women were in tears when Bob ran out from the house to see what the fuss was about. He immediately took his wife into his arms to calm her and then added Philomena to the hug as well. “What happened?” He asked.

“Those SOBs,” Philomena said through her sobs pointing to the rapidly disappearing boat, “ran over a young Orca deliberately.”

“Are you sure it was deliberate?” Bob asked.

“Absolutely,” Jenny said. “They aimed right at the pod. The larger Orcas all dove to avoid the boat. But a smaller one had just come up for a breath when they aimed right at it and hit it. They did it deliberately, Bob. We watched it.”

“Did you get it on your video tape?”

“I sure did. I had the camera pointed right at the pod when we heard the boat coming and I kept the Orcas in view until after the boat hit the Orca and went roaring off.”

“I saw the driver do an arm pump as they drove away.” Philomena added.

“Did you see the Orcas after the boat passed? What did they do?” Bob asked.

“The larger ones surrounded the smaller one and they swam very slowly to the North, out into the Strait over towards the San Juan Islands.” Jenny replied.

“Okay, we’ll need to call and tell somebody. The Coast Guard maybe or NOAA or the game wardens, but it’s a Saturday, so we’ll have to wait until Monday. Meanwhile, why don’t you both go into the house, have a drink, and write down what you saw. I think it would be better if you don’t collaborate in the writing. Two independent descriptions will be better than one. Eye witness accounts are not considered to be very reliable. However, eye witness accounts supported by a video tape will be golden.” Bob said. “I’ll pick up the camera and recorder and bring them in.”

“Okay.” Both ladies answered, still sniffing but more calmly.

“Thanks, Bob.” Jenny said.

“Yes, thanks a lot,” Philomena seconded.

We were sitting in the semi-recliners in the back of our boat basking in the sun and trolling as slowly as possible fishing for the last salmon of our four fish limit. There were already three five pound silvers in the cooler so it had been a successful day but we still had some time before we had to start for home. The boat was steering itself and at this speed we were not likely to run into anything except maybe a piece of drift wood. So we were actually dozing as we fished. Suddenly we felt a solid bump which came as a complete surprise. I knew we hadn’t hit anything because the bump was not on the bow, it was on the left side of the boat right behind where I was sitting. I was sure it wasn’t another boat because I check frequently to

make sure there are no other boats nearby. So, it had to be that something had either washed into the side of the boat and hit us or the bump was deliberate.

Jill, my wife, looked around and shouted, “Good grief, Jack we are surrounded by Orcas.”

I turned to look and saw the dorsal fin of an Orca, a killer whale. We often see Orca’s when we are fishing and have had them steal our fish right off our lines, but never had one come closer than 15 to 20 yards. Orca generally steer clear of boats that are moving except to steal fish. They also usually avoid boats that are at anchor and aren’t likely to be bumping into a boat under any circumstances. I immediately assumed if we hadn’t hit anything then something had hit us. Perhaps the carcass of a dead Orca had drifted into the boat. But, this Orca was alive, giving out with a series of high pitched squeals, clicks and whistles, then it bumped our boat again.

Jill took one look and immediately began to reel in her line saying, “Jack do you think we have snagged an Orca with our trolling lures?”

“I hope not,” I replied as I also began to reel in my line. The last thing we needed in an older twenty foot plywood cabin cruiser was to be rammed by six tons or more of pissed off Orca playing Moby Dick. Then I thought, even if it had been hooked why would it be banging on the side of our boat? It could have just taken off dragging out the line until it either ran out or broke or the hook pulled free. All of this ran through my mind in an instant. I looked at Jill, shrugged and stood up. I signaled her to stay put then went over to see at what was happening.

Jill reacted with, “Good grief, Jack, be careful!”

I looked over the side and into the eye of an animal almost as long as our boat and a lot bigger, an animal that is reputed to be dangerous, but I did not get the feeling of being threatened. It seemed to me that it was trying to get our attention. It squealed, whistled and clicked again and then raised its head above the water sky-scoping as Orcas often do when they want to see what is on the surface around them. Without stopping to think I reached out and touched the side of the Orca’s head.

“Jack, no!” Jill shouted as I touched the animal.

[WE HURT!] Came blasting into my head so strongly that it stunned me for a moment.

As a reflex, I replied, **[Not so loud.]** Without realizing it, I replied both vocally and mentally. Jill heard me and I heard her startled gasp, then felt her hand on my shoulder.

Immediately, the reply, **[We hurt]**, came at a more moderate intensity level. I 'heard' it just as clearly as I might hear someone speaking to me. At the same time, the mental image of a smaller Orca swimming beside a large Orca came into my mind. I could see that the smaller Orca was in distress.

Jill heard and saw it through me, "Oh my God!" she exclaimed.

[Where?] I asked at an equally moderate level, again both aloud and mentally which is what I would do from then on.

[Come], was the reply, a request, or an order. I had continued touching the Orca during the exchange and I felt the connection break as it began to swim away.

Jill had finished reeling in the trolling lines and killed the trolling motor.

"Did you get that?" I asked.

"Some of it." She replied.

"What did you get?"

"I got an image of a young Orca and a feeling of intense pain." Jill has always been more empathetic than me.

"Jeez, that was amazing, I 'heard' that as clearly as when we do telepathy." I said.

"What are we going to do?"

"Follow along and see what is going on, I guess."

"Okay Captain." She said throwing me a mock salute. "Fire it up and let's go."

While we were stowing our fishing gear and preparing to follow, the Orca came back and bumped the boat again while squealing and clicking. By this time I realized that the Orca was a female because she had a shorter and more erect dorsal fin as opposed to the taller and often drooping fin of a male Orca.

I reached out and touched her again and heard, **[Come!]** This time there was a definite sense of urgency in the message, almost a plea.

[We are coming.] I thought back at her and started the engine. As

she swam away, we followed.

We were near the San Juan Islands in the Strait of Juan de Fuca on the American side of the line between Washington State and Vancouver Island, British Columbia. There are several pods and family groups of Orcas in the San Juan's that are closely tracked and monitored by various official as well as volunteer groups. Killer whale watching cruises are a summer tourist industry. There are often twenty or more boats in the area tracking the whales so tourists can see them and take pictures. Strict rules govern how close the boats are allowed to go near the Orcas. It was late afternoon when we were bumped. The whale watching boats had all gone back to their home ports and there were no other boats in sight, we were alone with the Orcas.

The Orcas swam towards one of the smaller, uninhabited islands. We followed at what I estimated was the legal 200 yard distance as mandated by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and a couple of federal agencies as well.

I received occasional fragments of an image or a word when the Orca squealed and clicked, but nothing like what I 'saw and heard' when I touched her. Rapport had been established and I knew it would get better as we adapted to each other. I was also aware that not everything she sent was meant for me because sometimes I received nothing when she made her sounds.

She lead us around to the western side of the island and into a small cove with a sandy beach. There we found a small pod of about 10 animals including what I assumed to be the younger one whose image I had been shown. The younger Orca was evident from its shorter and smaller dorsal fin.

I cut the engine and Jill went forward to drop the anchor. I was careful to maintain the allowable distance from the pod as I had no desire to be ticketed by the WDFW or the Coast Guard. The boat drifted for few seconds on its forward momentum until the anchor took hold. As soon as we stopped, we were surrounded by what looked like the entire pod except for the young one and all of them were making Orca sounds furiously. Several of the Orcas came up and touched the boat gently or as gently as an excited six ton whale's touch could be.

Jill reached out to touch one and I heard her gasp and stagger back.

“Too strong?” I asked.

“Yeah, and it’s really pissed!”

“At us?”

“I don’t know.”

“Ask it, but first tell it to not send so loudly.”

“Okay,” she said as she reached out to touch the animal again. **[Not so strongly]**. I heard Jill telepathically tell the big Orca.

[Why hurt we?] The Orca replied with less force.

[Who hurt you?] Jill asked.

[Boat hurt we!]

[How?]

The Orca projected an image of a blue and white speed boat tearing across the water and hitting the younger Orca just as it rose to breathe. We both got the image clearly, no words were needed.

[When?] Jill asked.

The reply was a jumble of confusing images that meant nothing to either of us right away. When we sorted it out, what we saw was the image of a boat hitting the youngster from the point of view of many members of the pod. Some of the images were actually highly distorted views of the incident which we realized were actually echolocation as the Orca saw it. Unfortunately, none of the images gave us any indication of when the boat had hit the young Orca. The images of the boat itself did not give us enough information to identify which boat it was or who was driving.

“Ask it to have the young one come over here by the boat.”

Jill reached over and touching the nearest Orca sent the request.

The reply was very strong but modulated so as to not overpower us. **[We fear.]**

[Then why did you come to us?] Jill asked. Actually, that is not exactly what she asked but a transliteration. The human brain is a marvelous organ that fills in gaps automatically in sight, sound, and apparently telepathy. We found as we were learning to read each other years ago that saying the message aloud at the same time as you think it to send it telepathically helps initially to establish rapport.

[We heard you.] Next came a series of clicks and squeals and an image of a female that we assumed was the one who came for us followed by, **[Wanted help.]** I was now receiving clearly again even

though I was not touching the Orca. My brain was rapidly adapting to the Orca's language and was starting to fill in appropriate syntax to improve understanding, including I supposed additional information the Orca was sending. The image of the orca who came after us was strongly feminine and suggestive of motherhood, so my brain substituted 'Mother' and the cleaned up and adapted message came out as, **[We heard you. Mother wanted your help.]**

[You heard us?] Jill asked in amazement.

[Yes, when you talked to each other, we could hear you. We thought you might be like us, but you are humans.]

I answered that, **[We are humans. But, we are like you in some ways.]** I had to repeat that twice while the Orca's brain tried to reduce the message to Orca syntax, but we didn't know enough of their language to say it perfectly but they got the essential message.

[Not like us! Hurt us!] Jill was right. This one was pissed.

[We did not hurt you. We came when Mother asked us.] Jill sent.

About this time, "Mother" came back over to the boat. **[Can you help us?]** She asked in what seemed like a more friendly tone.

[Maybe,] I replied. **[I must touch the young one.]**

[Young one fears boat.]

[I will get in the water.] I sent back. Then I went down into the cabin to get one of the wet suits I keep on the boat in case I need to go into the water to fix something. The water temperature in the Strait is typically 51 degrees Fahrenheit. Thermal shock can set in within minutes without a wet suit.

As an after thought I asked, **[You will not hurt me?]**

[We will not hurt you.] Was the immediate reply.

I did the wet suit backwards plop over the side into the frigid water. My body acclimated quickly and I was ready to swim. To my surprise, the water was not as cold as I expected it to be. Then I realized that we were on the western side of the island in shallow water and it was late afternoon on a sunny summer day. The water was still fairly cool, but kids at beaches in the area regularly swim in water that is between 60 and 70 degrees and my guess was the water was in the mid-sixties.

[Come.] Mother directed.

I started swimming after her, but was quick outdistanced. **[Wait,]** I

sent.

[Hurry!]

[I cannot go any faster.] I replied.

Mother emitted a series of clicks and whistles and moments later I felt a surge at my feet and I was being pushed from behind. I slid up the nose and along the back of the Orca that was pushing me. When I reached the dorsal fin, I held on and in less than a minute I was near the injured Orca. The ride was an amazing surprise.

I slid off the back of the Orca I thought of as 'Pusher' and swam over to the young Orca. I intentionally swam around to the head to make sure it could see me. I reached out my hands and touched the animal to try to communicate with it. What came back was, **[Hurt. Fear]** more emotional than verbal. The message was jumbled because the young one was really terrified, and feelings of fear and dread were clearly there.

[I will not hurt you.] I sent.

Again came, **[Pain. Fear.]** as the young Orca quivered.

Mother came up to the young one and with a very long and complex series of squeals and clicks, which made no sense to me, calmed the young Orca to the point where it was just quivering slowly in ripples from head to tail.

I swam back along the side of the animal to the place where I could see there were several cuts; most likely from the keel or propeller of the boat that hit it. I have seen similar cuts on seals, dolphins, porpoises and other sea animals over the years mostly in the form of scars. I was puzzled at the level of pain this animal was broadcasting as a skin cut though blubber was not usually very severe. Then, I noticed a deeper gouge and some missing skin across the back between the tail and the dorsal fin. I reached to touch it and the animal flinched. When a three-ton animal flinches, the energy is intense. I was pushed away by a sideswipe of the tail and at the same time felt the intense pain the animal was feeling as it pushed me.

Mother immediately gave another lengthy message to the young one to calm him down. Then she touched me with her head apparently to keep it private and sent, **[Can you help?]**

[Yes, I think so.] I replied.

Both Jill and I have had training in several energy healing

techniques including Reiki and Quantum Touch. We are both registered Reiki Masters and have used Reiki to treat each other, our friends, family, neighbors and pets for years.

This was not the first time we'd really communicated with animals. We were often able to 'hear' our dog and cats, but they did not communicate in words, concepts or images. We mostly just got feelings of one sort or another like love or hunger, and we would try to send messages such as "go lie down" or "do you want to go out" with mixed results.

I Knew that Orcas are apparently extremely organized and intelligent. So I figured it couldn't hurt to try Reiki on the young Orca. But, in order to do that, I needed to touch the animal or be very close to it and it clearly wasn't happy at being touched.

[Mother, I can help. I must touch him.] I said as I touched the young Orca. I sent this to Mother so he could hear it as well. How I knew the baby was a "him" was something I must have picked up from Mother without being aware of it.

"What are you doing?" Jill shouted across the water, it was too far for us communicate telepathically.

"I'm going to give him Reiki." As I said this, I looked toward her and saw that she was already starting to putting on her wet suit.

"I thought so, wait for me."

"Okay."

While Jill, and I were talking, Mother was communicating with the young Orca who was replying quietly.

[He is ready.] Mother said to me. It was a little jumbled because it was covered with concern.

Jill jumped into the water and started towards us. Mother immediately directed one of the other Orcas to tow her over to us.

"Wow, that was quite a ride," Jill said as she arrived. "It was sending something like, '**[It will not hurt.]**' It was actually trying to send calming thoughts to me, can you believe that?"

"After the past half hour, I can believe anything." I replied.

"I'll get on the other side," Jill said. "Tell Mother to tell him that I will be there, please."

"You can tell her. She is very receptive now."

Before I could do anything, Mother sent, **[He will be calm. Please**

help him.]

Jill had been sending without being consciously aware of it. That's how I found out Jill was telepathic to start with, then I let her know that I could 'hear' her. After that she could 'hear' me as well.

[Okay, Mother, tell him to just relax. We will not hurt him. We will just touch him and send him healing.] Heaven only knows what she actually received of that as I tried to reassure her of our good intentions. At the same time, I was very nervous about what might happen once we began. Energy healing is not always immediately soothing. Sometimes there is some discomfort as the body absorbs the energy and directs it to where it is needed for healing but that usually goes away fairly quickly.

Mother once again 'spoke' to the young one. I overheard parts of what she sent and the young one's identity felt like 'Sonny' to me.

The instant I touched Sonny in the area where'd he seemed to be the most sensitive I felt him quiver all over. When Jill touched him, the quivering stopped and I felt him relax. I think, if he could have, he would have sighed. Jill has a great touch.

We both began to channel healing energy into the area where he seemed to hurt the most. It quickly became obvious that Sonny had a very badly sprained back in addition to the gouge where the boat had hit him. Most of his cuts were trivial in comparison to the deepest cut which was certainly not trivial by any means. But, neither was it life threatening. As for the area of the gouge, as anyone who has experienced a sprained back will tell you, there are few things more painful than a sprained back. In this case, the sprain was between his dorsal fin and his tail. Every movement of his flukes was agony for him.

Mother made some comment to Sonny and he replied quietly. Then he slowly began to move his flukes up and down as wave after wave of the healing energy flowed into his body. We could feel him relax from the tension that so often accompanies back injuries as he began to lose the feeling of pain.

We had been working on Sonny for over an hour when we heard a large boat come to the mouth of the cove and throttle down. Then we heard, "This is the U. S. Coast Guard. You are in violation of whale

contact regulations. Come away from the whales and get out of the water immediately.” Officialdom spoke through a bull horn.

Within seconds, the Coast Guard cutter was surrounded by Orcas and several placed themselves between the cutter and us. I have no idea whether or not the whales understood the order, but they made it plain that we were not to be bothered.

I shouted to the cutter, “We’re almost finished; we will be there in a few minutes.”

The bullhorn clicked on as if the speaker was going to say something else and then clicked off again. For twenty more minutes only the calling of the sea gulls interrupted the silence. I could see the cutter now and realized they were getting ready to lower a boat.

“We’re nearly finished. We’ll come to you.” I shouted.

“Roger, that!” came the reply through the bullhorn at a much lower volume.

When one gives Reiki one can sense when the session is over by the feeling in the hands. In my case, they would gradually stop tingling as the client’s ability to absorb the energy diminishes. Jill sensed it differently as a sort of ‘knowing’ that she was done. When we doubled up we almost always felt finished at the same time.

[Better?] I asked Sonny.

[Better!] Was the emphatic reply followed by very strong feelings of contentment or gratitude.

[Mother, we are finished for now and we must leave.] I sent.

Mother, too, sent feelings of gratitude and a second or two later we were swamped by the same kind of feelings from the entire pod.

[Mother, we will come back tomorrow to see how he is.]

[We will wait.]

We started to swim back to our boat and had not gone more than a few yards before each of us was accompanied by an Orca giving us a ride.

“Come here.” The bullhorn squawked, followed by a quieter, “Please”

I sent an image of going to the cutter to my pusher and it turned toward the cutter. Jill and her pusher did the same. When we arrived at the cutter, ladders were lowered over the side so we could climb aboard. On deck, we faced a surprised and puzzled Coast Guard crew who didn’t know whether to be angry, astounded or confused.

“Welcome aboard,” a four-striper said pleasantly as he extended his hand. “I’m Captain Elliot Miller, Commander of the Coast Guard station in Port Angeles.”

“Pleased to meet you, Captain, I’m Jack Kline and this is my wife Dolores but please call her Jill everyone else does.” I replied returning the handshake. Captain Miller was taller than my 5 foot 10 inches and obviously fit. He had ice blue eyes and salt and pepper hair, more salt than pepper, under his USCG baseball cap.

“I’m not usually aboard the cutter,” Captain Miller explained. “We were on our way back from a training seminar in Tacoma. Lieutenant Juanita Hernandez,” he said indicating a small attractive woman standing beside him, “is the actual Skipper of the cutter.”

Lieutenant Hernandez offered her hand, “Pleased to meet you, Mr. And Mrs. Kline.” She said with a pleasant smile. Her darker coloring and short, jet black pony tail which was pulled back through the hole in the back of her baseball cap bespoke Hispanic ancestry.

“And, we are delighted to meet you both.” Jill said as she returned Lt. Hernandez’ handshake. “You don’t sound southwestern,” she continued.

“I get that a lot.” Lt. Hernandez replied with a laugh, “I’m actually from Cleveland, but my grandparents were raised in New Mexico.

While this was going on, I turned back to Captain Miller who obviously had some questions bothering him.

“Just what were you doing over there with the whales?” he asked, and before I could answer, “Don’t you know it is against the law to get that close to them.”

“We know, Captain. They came to us for help. One of the pod, a juvenile, was hit by a boat and is seriously injured. They needed help.”

The Captain just stood looking first at us and then toward the Orcas while trying to think of what to say in reply. His mouth moved as if to speak, but he said nothing. He looked from us to the Orcas to Hernandez and back several times as he formulated his next question.

“They came to you for help?”

“That’s right, sir. We were fishing about a mile from here out in the Strait when the big female,” I pointed to Mother over in the cove “came to us and asked us to help them.”

“How?”

“Well, sir, you are never going to believe it.”

“Why don’t you tell us over coffee, follow me.” He said as he lead us down into the cutter.

So, we told him and Lieutenant Hernandez what had happened while some of the crew listened from the outside. “The pod mother, at least that is who we think she is, came out into the Strait and bumped our boat to get our attention. I could feel something like when Jill sends to me, so I touched the Orca and began receiving messages from her.”

“They seem to welcome your presence considering how they are helping you get around. There is nothing to indicate they feel threatened by you, in fact quite the opposite, and I doubt that you have done any real harm except to the No-Contact Law.” Captain Miller said.

“You actually spoke to the Orcas?” Lt. Hernandez asked.

“Yes, ma’am, we did.” Jill said.

“How?”

“Telepathically.”

“Telepathically? Like psychics?” Captain Miller cut in.

“Yes, and no, and I know that is no answer to your question. So let me explain. I suppose you might say that Jill and I are amateur psychics, but the reality is we really have none of the perceptive abilities that psychics are said to have. We are simply mutually telepathic. To our delight, we found this out on our honeymoon and have had great fun with it over the years. We can’t read minds, not even each other’s minds. What we do is like talking except we do it silently, we think things to each other. After teaching college for a couple of years we decided to try show business as so-called mentalists but we didn’t have the gift for gab that show business psychics and mentalists have to have in order to convince the public that they are not faking it and believe me they are, faking it, that is. In our case, the people thought we were faking it somehow when in fact we were the only honest mentalists in the show. So after a while when it didn’t work out we went back to teaching. With respect to communicating with the Orcas, we were as surprised as you are.”

“I doubt that.” Captain Miller said.

I finished with, “And, Captain, I promised we would be here tomorrow to see how things are going.”

“Okay, okay. We’ll report you as animal rights and health

researchers working closely with the Orcas. And, as required by law, I've already notified the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and our headquarters that you are here. I'll follow up with a report that you are actually working closely with the Orcas to help an injured juvenile. You can bet someone is bound to show up to investigate." Then he added after some thought, "I think we'd better stand by to field the complaints and warn them off."

"Thank you, sir, that's a good idea. Now, can you have your crew ferry us back to our boat?"

Before we were ferried back to our boat in the Coast Guard motor whaleboat, Captain Miller suggested that we stay anchored where we were until the next day so we could be near the whales. The Coasties also offered us some provisions which Jill accepted gratefully as we had only prepared for a day of fishing not an extended voyage. As the whaleboat pulled away from the cutter, Captain Miller stood on the foredeck watching us and shaking his head in disbelief. Then, he threw us a salute before going back inside the cutter.

About an hour later, a WDFW Zodiac boat came roaring up. As promised, Captain Miller stopped them before they got too close. He then presumably suggested or perhaps allowed them to approach our boat at trolling speed in order not to alarm the whales. He must have told them some of what we had been doing because the Zodiac approached very slowly and coasted the last 20 yards or so with the motors off. There were two WDFW wardens in the Zodiac. The older one, a man, tossed us a line that Jill caught and used to pull them in and made fast to a cleat.

As I helped the warden come aboard our boat, he gave me a funny look and introduced himself. "Hi, I'm Tom Broderick, Supervisory Game Warden. What is going on?" Before I could answer he added, "The Coast Guard Captain told us briefly what you were doing and explained that the wild Orcas were working with you or you were working with them. Is that right?"

Tom was the color of mahogany with short grey curly hair. He was shorter than me, probably in his mid 50s, and getting slightly paunchy. His handshake was strong, but friendly.

"Hi, Tom, I am Jack Kline and this is my wife Jill."

"Jack and Jill huh, eh convenient, how did you do it?" He asked

Jill with a smile.

“Actually neither one of us did it.” Jill replied. “My given name is Dolores, but friends christened me Jill shortly after Jack and I began dating, and it stuck.”

“Terrific, that’s the best kind of nickname, Jill.”

We heard a cough from the Zodiac which cause Tom to turn his head. “Where are my manners? This is my assistant, Shirley White.”

“Hi, Shirley.” Jill said as she offered Shirley her hand, and helped her aboard. Shirley was very attractive in an understated way, perhaps in her early 30s, probably a little younger than Jill. She had beautiful red hair cut short and curly and the golden complexion that true red heads so often have and she looked great in her uniform.

Tom said, then, “What is the deal with the Orcas?”

“What Captain Miller told you is true, we have been working with the Orcas since earlier today.” I answered, then added, “We have four seats in the boat for when we take friends fishing with us, but as you can see, it gets very crowded with four people all standing in the cockpit. So, let’s sit down. Why don’t you and Shirley take the two aft swivel seats and we will flip the backs of the front seats to face you?”

“Would you like a cold drink?” I asked.

“Thank you no,” Tom replied. “Now, please fill us in on what’s going on.”

I told them exactly the same thing we had told Captain Miller. They looked doubtful and started to ask questions about the situation.

“Mister Broderick,” Jill interrupted before he could really get started.

“Call me Tom,” Broderick interrupted.

“Okay, Tom, I think it might be easier if we showed you.” I ‘heard’ Jill call to the Orcas, [**Mother, come**], as she said it aloud.

Immediately, Mother swam out to the boat and bumped the side gently while sending a [?].

Jill reached out and stroked Mother’s brow. “Tom and Shirley, this is Mother. She is the pod leader and the mother of the injured juvenile.”

Broderick jumped to his feet, but before he could say or do anything, Shirley asked, “She lets you touch her? Is it safe?”

“It’s quite safe,” Jill replied. “She won’t hurt you, but move slowly until she gets to know you.”

Tom sat down again looking both very confused and very doubtful.

He cautioned, “Watch out, Shirley, they can be dangerous. One of them killed someone a few years ago.”

“I read about that, Tom,” Shirley replied. “She was a trainer for captive Orcas. As I recall, there is no reported incident of a wild Orca attacking a human.”

Shirley stood, slowly held out her hand and in a calm and relaxed tone asked Jill, “Will she let me touch her?”

Tom started to say something, but I put my hand on his arm and shook my head at him. He stopped and looked at me out of the corner of his eye and shrugged. I smiled at him and whispered, “Wait!”

Jill asked Mother, [**New Friend?**], while looking at Shirley and sending soothing feelings. I translated for Tom’s benefit and gave him a running narrative of everything that was happening.

Mother reared out of the water sky-scoping, looked over the side of the boat at Shirley and Tom and replied with a single low click while, again, sending a [**?**].

“Mother wants to know why a new friend.” I said.

Jill took Shirley’s hand and guided it slowly towards Mother. Mother continued to project the question, but held still as Jill placed Shirley’s hand on Mother’s brow. Mother paused for a moment and then moved slowly from side to side clicking quietly as Shirley gently touched her.

Mother bumped Shirley’s hand in return, then sent [**Yes!**]

“Mother accepts Shirley.” I told Tom.

“She accepts you, Shirley,” Jill said smiling.

“I felt it,” Shirley replied. “I felt it. It was like a wave of trust or love or something like what happens sometimes when you meet some strangers.”

“I’ll be a...” Tom began, and then sat shaking his head in disbelief. “Can I...?”

“Not yet, Tom” Jill replied to his implied question. “She senses some hostility or distrust in you. Give her and yourself some time. She needs help and she needs to trust us. By which I mean, all of us who will be working on this. Trust her and she will trust you.”

“Okay,” Tom conceded. “Somehow, I feel it will be worth the wait. How bad do you think the injury is?”

“I saw a couple cuts and a nick across the top of the tail. The bigger cut which is furthest from the flukes might go down to the

muscle, but the smaller cuts are superficial, just a bit more than skin deep. The biggest problem is, his back is sprained and some skin was gouged out leaving a hole.” I replied.

“Fixable?” Tom asked, then frowned when he realized what he had asked.

“Maybe the right veterinarian with the right equipment could stitch up the cuts. There’s no way to immobilize him while it’s being done so it could very well be dangerous. We can try to call him. I’m sure Mother and the other females will help once we communicate what’s to be done. At the moment, the wounds are not bleeding freely, just seeping a little. I think the salt water has probably helped, that along with their natural healing abilities.”

“Hmm,” Tom thought for a minute obviously considering what he wanted to say, then said, “I know a veterinarian who has worked with seals and dolphins. He’s down at The Oregon Institute of Marine Studies in Portland. Let me see if I can contact him and find out what he thinks we should do.”

“That would be great, Tom,” Jill said.

Tom hopped back into the Zodiac and called WDFW Headquarters on the radio to report in and give them an assessment of the situation. He explained the problem in generalities and asked if he could call the veterinarian. After a five minute heated discussion mostly about who was going to pay for it he was reluctantly given permission to contact the vet. Instead of the radio, Tom used his cell phone to call the Institute in Portland. Ten more minutes of repeated vague descriptions and evasive explanations resulted in a connection to the veterinarian. After describing the problem without revealing everything that had happened, he turned to me and spoke loudly because he was still in the Zodiac more than a few feet away. “Jack, he says he might be able to help but it will take him 6 hours or so to get here and by then it will be dark. What do you think? Can we put it off until tomorrow?”

As Tom was having his conversation with headquarters and the veterinarian the cutter had drifted closer to us and was just twenty feet or so away as Tom was talking to the vet. Before we could answer, Captain Miller interrupted. “I heard that, hang on folks, I may have a solution for that. Give me a minute.”

“Hang on Adrian, the Coast Guard Captain is checking something.” Tom said.

Captain Miller did some quick radio work on the Coast Guard frequency, paused listening for a few minutes, spoke again briefly and asked. “Tom, how soon can the veterinarian be ready to leave and go over to the University Hospital helipad?”

Tom passed on the question to the veterinarian, listened for a moment, then told Captain Miller, “Sir, he asks if twenty minutes will be okay, and can he bring a graduate assistant with him?”

Captain Miller again spent a couple of minutes talking on the radio he said, “Tell him a Coast Guard rescue chopper will pick them up in twenty minutes, that is them, plural. Okay?”

Tom repeated the message to the veterinarian, listened a moment then told us, “He says they’ll be waiting, Captain.”

“Great!” Captain Miller said. “It should take them less than two hours to pick up the vet and his helper and bring them up here. Now, what do we do?”

The cutter was still drifting closer to us with the tide. “First, I suggest that you keep the cutter back away from our boat so the Orcas don’t get nervous.” I replied.

He nodded in agreement and spoke quietly to Lt. Hernandez who spoke to the woman at the controls. The cutter backed away about 50 yards and anchored.

Then I said to Jill and the wardens. “Now, I guess the best thing we can do is get back in the water and try to explain the whole thing to Mother and Sonny. Let’s zip up and get to it, Jill.”

“How cold is the water?” Shirley asked.

“Not too bad,” I replied. “It is probably in the mid sixties.”

“Can I come too?” Shirley asked, “I have a wet suit and I took a Reiki class several years ago. In fact I was trying to send energy to Mother when I touched her.”

“That explains why she accepted you so quickly. I’m not too sure she can tell us apart.” Jill said.

“She can tell you apart,” I interjected. “I could tell when Shirley was introduced. Mother knew Shirley was someone different and she trusted you.”

Jill considered Shirley’s request, then said, “Come, if you want to, but if you spook him you’ll have to back away. There is no way to force them to accept you. Mother seems to think you’re okay and I think she’s the boss. But Sonny is or was very upset and stressed. Stress and fear are the main problem.”

Getting into a wet suit is never a fast process, but Shirley shucked her uniform down to her panties and bra and wriggled into her sweat suit in less than five minutes. The fact that there were several men watching in amazement didn't seem to bother her until she looked around as she zipped up and blushed bright red, then bowed while the men, including me, applauded.

Jill sat up on the gunnel and invited Shirley to sit beside her. Jill explained again about the ride with the Orcas. "Ready?" Jill asked.

Shirley nodded assent and together they rolled backwards off the boat and into the water.

"The water's not too bad at all," Shirley exclaimed. "I'm surprised."

I stood up to follow them, but Jill held up her hand and said, "Why don't you hang here with Tom, Jack, and just let us go alone for starters."

"Good idea," I replied and sat back down with Tom.

Mother was still nearby and once the two women were in the water, she called out to the pod for help. In seconds, two large male Orcas swam over to give Jill and Shirley a ride. Tom started to get up and say something, but I held him down and said, "Relax, Tom, it'll be okay, trust me."

"I..."

"Trust me," I repeated.

Tom looked doubtful, but nodded assent.

Jill explained what was going to happen to Shirley. "Swim away from the boat and just tread water. In a minute or so those two Orcas will swim around behind us and give us a ride over to the injured Orca. Just grasp the dorsal fin as it swims behind and up under you to push."

"Okay, I'll follow your lead," Shirley replied.

In less than a minute they were ferried over to Sonny on the backs of the Orcas. Jill told me later that Mother soothed Sonny and told him that Shirley was okay. Shirley swam slowly up to Sonny and while Jill comforted him, Shirley looked at the wounds. Then, she very carefully reached out to touch Sonny. He flinched at the touch by an unfamiliar hand but not as violently as he did when I first touched him. Within a few moments, Shirley was accepted as she gently ran

her hands over the affected area.

Jill and Mother discussed what was going to happen when the veterinarian arrived and reassured her that both she and Shirley would be there to help.

When she was finished, the Orcas brought Jill and Shirley back to our boat. Tom and I helped them back aboard.

Shirley was positively beaming when she was seated again. “That was incredible, Tom, you have no idea. I was scared when he flinched, but as soon as I stroked him gently, Mother talked to him and he relaxed.” Then she said to me, “As you guessed his cuts don’t look too serious, but they could use some treatment to prevent serious infection and promote healing. Given time they would probably heal anyway but might be a problem to him. The gouge and the sprain, on the other hand, are probably very painful and I have no idea what can be done about that.”

Tom just sat there at a loss for words as Shirley reported. He leaned back in the chair and with a shrug, nodded and smiled in accepting disbelief then said, “Shirley, I am incredibly proud of you. If I hadn’t seen it I would never believe it and I don’t think anyone else will either.”

We sat and talked about what to do for the next hour while we munched on some of the snacks the Coast Guard had provided. While we waited, a smaller Coast Guard launch arrived from the Port Angeles Coast Guard Station and moored with the cutter. Shortly thereafter, we heard the familiar whup-whup-whup of an approaching helicopter and looked up to see the unmistakable white, international orange, and black of a Coast Guard Rescue Helicopter. It landed on the afterdeck helipad of the cutter and disembarked the two Oregon Institute scientists and their gear. They spoke briefly with Captain Miller who lead them down the ladder into the launch which ferried them over to us.

“May I suggest that we use the launch as our base of operations in the cove. Jack, your boat is too small to accommodate all of us and the Zodiac is built for no more than three or four.” Captain Miller suggested when they arrived. So we all moved to the launch.

Tom Broderick performed the introductions, Jack and Jill Kline, This is my brother-in-law, Dr. Adrian Goodhurst, and his assistant.

Adrian, you've met Shirley before at our house of course.

Dr. Goodhurst, a tall and slender individual with thinning hair said, "Hello all, please call me Adrian. This is my graduate assistant and as her t-shirt says, an aspiring marine veterinarian, Chloe Crocker."

Chloe stood and greeted us. She was dressed like a typical college student in jeans and a t-shirt emblazoned with 'I like sea critters'. She was taller than average and nearly as slender as Adrian. Her hair was blond with a pony tail, she had freckles on her nose and a whimsical smile. She blushed a little and said, "Hi, I'm so excited to be here."

Then Adrian provided the rest of the introductions, "You all know Captain Miller and this is Senior Chief Lemuel Green" he said indicating the launch coxswain who nodded in greeting. Then he continued, now can you tell me the details of what this is all about? All I know so far is that there is an injured juvenile Orca who needs help."

Once again we told our story to an amazed audience. Adrian looked inquiringly at Tom and asked with a raised eyebrow. "Tom?"

"I saw it with my own eyes, Adrian. I wouldn't have believed it either, but I saw it or I would never have called you." Tom replied.

"Okay, let's say I believe you. Now what do you suggest?"

"Shirley thinks we may need to do something to prevent a serious infection and maybe some stitches for the cuts." Tom replied.

Shirley filled in the details, "The cuts are still oozing some blood, not a lot, but some. The largest cut could probably use some stitches if he'll stand still for it. There is a gouge out of his back about the size of my hand" she said, holding up her hand, "and it's bleeding more than the cuts, and, in my opinion, his back is definitely sprained and it hurts him a lot, he can hardly move his tail. Jack and Jill gave him Reiki when they first arrived, and then Jill and I gave more while we were waiting for you to arrive. That seemed to calm him down considerably. He is or was pretty relaxed at the moment."

Adrian eyebrows went up at the mention of Reiki, but he said nothing. After a few moments thought, he said, "It's too late today to do much except maybe give him a broad spectrum antibiotic. Trying to do stitches in the dark on a large animal is not a good idea no matter how calm it may seem to be. How thick is the blubber in the area of the wounds?"

"A couple of inches, I would guess." Shirley replied. "What would you say Jill?"

“I think Shirley has given a good assessment of the situation.” Jill concurred.

“Would either of you feel comfortable giving him a shot?” Adrian asked the girls. “I ask because you have been working with him and from what you say he seems to know and trust you.”

“How much is it likely to hurt him?” Jill asked.

“Well, I have never given a shot to an Orca, but I have to dolphins when they were held motionless in a harness. They didn’t like it, but after the first one, they seemed to accept it.” Adrian replied.

“Senior Chief, would you please take us back over to the cutter so we can get to our equipment and supplies?” Adrian asked.

“Yes, sir,” Senior Chief Greene replied as he started the engine and drove us over to the cutter.

When we arrived at the cutter we all went aboard.

“Get my bag, please, Chloe.” Adrian said.

Chloe fetched what looked much like any other doctor’s valise and handed it to Adrian who quickly searched through it and found what was needed. He handed the bottle of antibiotic to Chloe who was preparing the hypodermics while Jill and Shirley watched.

“How big is the needle?” Jill asked as she saw Chloe filling the hypodermic.

Chloe held the hypodermic up so Jill could see it and said, “I would guess it is about the size of the lead in a wooden pencil, 14 gauge.”

“Good Lord, that is huge,” Jill exclaimed. “I’d better go over there on my own to do this.”

“No way,” Shirley said, “I’m going too. Maybe I can comfort him while you explain to Mother what is going to happen so she can explain it to Sonny first.”

Jill looked relieved at Shirley’s offer. “We’d better do it tonight so he has time to get over it before we try stitching him up.”

“Can I come too?” Chloe asked.

“No!” Jill and Shirley replied in chorus. Jill explained, “He knows us Chloe. Trying to introduce someone new at the same time we’re giving the shot is probably not a good idea. I haven’t figured out yet how to explain to Mother what we’ll be doing. Just finish getting the hypodermic ready and Shirley and I will give it a try.”

Chloe looked disappointed but prepared what looked like a huge hypodermic with the antibiotic. When she was finished, Adrian

suggested to her, “Give them a hypo with some Lidocaine to numb the site before giving him the antibiotic. That should help to make it as painless as possible.”

Jill looked expectantly at Chloe who replied, “A much smaller needle for the Lidocaine. Inject it first and then give it a few minutes to work before injecting the antibiotic.”

“Okay,” Shirley replied as she accepted the hypodermics from Chloe who had placed them in a plastic bag to keep them dry and sterile as long as possible.

A few minutes later as sunset approached, Jill and Shirley once again entered the water. Jill called [**Mother**] and began to swim toward the Orcas. Almost immediately, two of the Orcas swam over to tow them back into the cove where the pod was waiting.

As they were being towed, Adrian said, “If I hadn’t seen this, I would not have believed it. Does Jill really talk to the pod Mother?”

“Yes, and no,” I replied. “She ‘thinks’ the idea to Mother who is the best communicator in the pod at the moment. She only says it aloud for us to hear what is being said and to help her formulate the message correctly.”

“Are you saying she does it psychically?” Adrian asked.

“More like telepathically,” I replied.

“How? What’s the difference?”

“It’s nearly impossible to explain how we do it; we just do. Jill is more able to communicate with animals on some level than I am. She regularly goes over to the Humane Society and helps to calm the dogs and some of the cats, but cats are a whole different problem.” I rambled on, “She doesn’t communicate with the dogs the same way she does with the Orcas. But, understand, connecting with the Orcas was a complete surprise to both of us. If the Orcas hadn’t tried to communicate with us, we would never have known it was possible. We knew Orcas, porpoises, dolphins, and whales are very intelligent with large well developed brains, but like everybody else, we thought they just communicated with clicks, squeaks, tones, whale songs and the like. Now, I’m convinced that they are telepathic and able to communicate that way as well. I think many of the clicks and other noises might be just punctuation, or perhaps longer range communications. I’m pretty sure that the clicks can travel farther than the telepathy, but I wouldn’t bet on it.”

Adrian just sat staring at me as if I was spouting heresy. Then he began to nod slowly as he absorbed what I was telling him. As I've learned over my years as a teacher, learning something that runs counter to everything you thought you knew is never pleasant or easy. But, in this case, the evidence was right here to be seen.

The water in the cove was dead flat, there was no wind, not even a breeze, so I could overhear Jill speaking while she communicated telepathically and we could hear them both as they spoke aloud as well. I could also receive Mother's messages to Jill which I vocalized for the benefit of everyone. Jill did most of the talking while Shirley focussed on soothing Sonny. Jill showed Mother the hypodermics and tried to explain what they wanted to do would help make Sonny well again. Then, Mother surprised us all.

[Me, first,] was the gist of her request.

Jill and Shirley talked it over and came to the conclusion that since the site on Sonny could not be made sterile, it probably would not make much difference if they used the needles on Mother first. As they were talking, Chloe filled another syringe with Lidocaine put it in a bag and dove into the water, clothes and all and began swimming towards the pod. As she went over towards the pod she shouted, "To try it on Mother first, you will need to use up the Lidocaine to numb her. I'm bringing another Lidocaine syringe for Sonny."

Jill and Shirley immediately understood and explained what Chloe was doing to Mother. Almost on cue, the 'Orca Express' was dispatched to bring Chloe over to the pod. Chloe could not keep from shouting "Awesome" as she was ferried over to the pod on the back of an Orca.

Once Chloe was with them, Jill invited Chloe to do the injections since she had the most experience. That left Jill and Shirley free to soothe and comfort Sonny while the injections were given. Chloe injected one of the Lidocaine hypos into Mother's back in about the same place on her as they would be injected into Sonny. After she gave the Lidocaine a couple of minutes to work, she plunged the larger needle onto Mother without injecting the antibiotic. Mother had been prepared as much as possible, and she didn't even flinch, that we could see. Then through Jill, I overheard and repeated aloud what Mother told Sonny was going to happen and that he should stay still when they did it.

Jill later told us that despite the healing treatments we had given him earlier, Sonny was still in enough pain from his injuries that the needle sticks were virtually lost in the process. As far as Jill could tell, he didn't feel them, although he did flinch when the bigger needle was inserted, more because of the pressure in a tender area than because of the needle itself. When they were finished, the three women were brought back to the cutter.

When they arrived Chloe was the first one aboard. She immediately began to tell Adrian and the rest of us about what had happened. "You are never going to believe, Adrian. He hardly moved. When I was done, Mother gave me a gentle nudge which Jill said was a show of appreciation." Chloe fairly glowed as she told us about her experience as Jill and Shirley were helped back aboard.

When she ran out of thing to tell us, Adrian asked, "Aren't you cold, Chloe?"

"I am now with these wet clothes out here in the open," she replied. "But the water wasn't as cold as I've experienced elsewhere. Now, I am sorry that I didn't bring even a windbreaker or a coat, but how could I know?"

As she was telling her story, the crew of the cutter were listening. When she finished, Senior Chief Greene offered a solution. "We always have a few extra jumpsuits aboard the cutter because we often get wet doing our jobs. We have three women aboard and one of them might be able to find you a jumpsuit."

"Thank you sir, I would really appreciate that." Chloe replied.

Senior Chief Greene looked at her and started to say something when Captain Miller interjected, "Chloe, the proper way to address a Chief Petty Officer is not sir, it is Chief or in this case Senior Chief."

"I'm sorry Senior Chief," Chloe said with a sheepish smile.

"No harm done, miss. It's a common mistake among the uninitiated." Green said, a twinkle in his eye.

"Senior Chief," Jill said, "would you mind running us back over to our boat so Shirley, Jack and I can get out of these wetsuits and back into dry clothes."

"Can do!" Greene replied.

Before we descended the ladder down into the launch, Captain Miller said, "Why don't you just pick up your clothes and bring them back here to the cutter. We have a locker room where you can change

out of the wetsuits and even shower if you want to. I spoke to Lieutenant Hernandez and she has invited you all to have dinner with us and sleep aboard the cutter tonight where, I am sure, you will be much more comfortable than on either your boat or the Zodiac.”

By the time we returned to the cutter with our clothes, the sun was setting.

Lieutenant Hernandez greeted us as we climbed aboard. “Ladies, if you will follow First Class Willson, she will show you to the locker room and help Chloe find a clean jumpsuit. Mr. Kline, after the ladies are finished you may use the locker room and shower as well. We only have one small locker room and shower so we have to take turns. You will be sleeping in crew bunks if that is okay.”

“No problem, ma’am,” Jill spoke for all the ladies, “but, if we sleep in crew bunks where will the crew sleep?”

“Jill, please call me Juanita. As for the bunks, we’re used to roughing it. There are not enough bunks for everybody, so only half the crew can sleep in a bunk at any one time anyway. On nights like this when it’s warm and there’s no wind, some of us sleep in sleeping bags on the deck.”

“Thank’s, Juanita,” Jill said with a nod as she Shirley and Chloe followed First Class Willson down into the locker room.

“Lieutenant, er Juanita,” I said, “I’ll shower later but I would like to get out of this wetsuit.”

“No problem, Mr. Kline, you can use my cabin to change and wash up using the sink.” Lieutenant Hernandez replied.

“It’s Jack, Juanita, Mr. Kline was my father, I’m just Jack.” I said.

“Yes sir, Jack. Please follow me.” She said as she lead me to her cabin which was about the size of a small walk-in closet. “The sink folds down under the mirror and the toilet is under the sink should you need it.”

After we had all redressed, we were invited into the crew’s mess for dinner. The room was stuffed to overflowing with Captain Miller, Lieutenant Hernandez, the two helicopter pilots, Tom and Shirley, Adrian and Chloe, and Jill and me. Chloe had returned dressed in a jumpsuit that was at least two sizes too big for her with rolled up sleeves and cuffs. But, she was grinning from ear to ear. Dinner was sandwiches, coffee, tea or milk and some cookies one of the crew had cobbled up during the day for the occasion.

We had just finished dinner when we were interrupted by Willson, “Skipper, we just got a text from Port Angeles telling you to look on your tablet, there is something you really need to see. They said it’s on your tablet too, Captain Miller.”

“Thanks, Willson,” Lieutenant Hernandez said as she and Captain Miller took their tablets and activated them.

Hernandez received the message first, opened it and exclaimed, “Oh my God! Hang on everybody, I’ll put this up on the big screen.”

We all turned to look at the large screen at the back of the room that doubled as a television and communal computer monitor. What showed was a video of a small blue and white fishing boat racing along at such a high speed that it was actually skipping from wavelet to wavelet. It was heading from left to right across the screen. A pod of Orcas was at the far right side of the screen. A few seconds later, the boat turned toward the Orcas who immediately dove to get out of the way. At just that moment, a smaller Orca surfaced for air and the boat turned directly toward it. A second later, the boat hit the small Orca behind the dorsal fin so hard the boat actually bounced into the air. Then the boat sped off and kept going.

Lieutenant Hernandez continued, “According to a longer email that followed the video, the video was taken by one of the volunteers who monitor the Orcas and record their activities. The volunteer was on a bluff on the south side of the Strait, almost due southwest of here. According to the person who took the call at the station, the woman who recorded it was sobbing, and cursing in the background as her husband explained what happened. The husband said that his wife’s friend used binoculars and was pretty sure that the name of the boat started with an ‘S’ but the trolling motor blocked the rest. They also noticed as can be seen that the driver was wearing a yellow hat and the passenger was wearing a blue hat and worst of all, the driver made a gesture indicating he was proud of what he had done. Did any of you noticed that or should I play the video again?”

The mess was dead quiet as we all processed what we had seen then several people including Tom and Shirley indicated that they had seen the hats and the gesture.

“Well, there’s our smoking gun,” Captain Miller said. “The only problem is, there must be a gazillion blue and white fishing boats plying the strait. It doesn’t look like the video is good enough for an

analyst to get the name of the boat or the faces of the people in it. Without a credible witness, what can we do?"

"If they went by here once they are sure to go by again, but as you said, blue and white boats are a dime a dozen around here, but we can at least eliminate those with outboard motors, that boat has an inboard engine." I said, then added, "I'd say it looked like an eighteen or twenty foot Arima which should serve to also narrow the search.

"Good eye, Jack." Captain Miller said. "But even if we stopped every blue and white Arima inboard fishing boat, without some corroborating evidence how could we prove which one did it? The possibility of the name beginning with an 'S' might be some help, but we would still be shooting in the dark with the possible exception of the hats."

"Well, let's get on with what we can do. Adrian, you're the doctor, what should we plan on doing in the morning?" I asked.

"I'd like to go over and take a look at the injuries before I decide. We should certainly plan to stitch up the propellor cuts if for no other reason than to minimize the chances of infection. As for the piece that was gouged out of his back, I'm not sure how to handle that. It might be possible to sterilize the wound site and pull it closed with stitches, but the way Shirley described it, I doubt it. If I had the missing piece I might be able to stitch it over the wound like a skin graft."

"Adrian, that gouge is pretty deep, maybe an inch or more." Jill offered.

"I have some surgical foam in my case. We use it to pack wounds or fill a hole sometimes where tissue is lost before we do a skin graft. The foam slowly dissolves and allows the body to replace it with new tissue. It isn't perfect, but it is a whole lot better than just stretching a piece of skin over the wound or even worse leaving the wound open. I'll have to see the wound to be sure. Then I have the problem of immobilizing him while am doing the surgery. Anesthesia is not a good idea because we cannot easily predict how long he would be unconscious. Plus, there is some risk that his natural breathing during his sleep cycle would be disrupted and he wouldn't be able to breathe normally and could possibly drown. We might be able to beach him, but that would probably put his tail under water and besides having him out of the water for any amount of time would probably not be too healthy either."

Jill said, "Adrian, with Mother nearby like she was today, we

would probably be okay doing the stitching without Lidocaine because the pain of the wounds will probably mask the stitching process. If he flinches, we can always inject the local anesthesia before proceeding.”

Shirley added, “He didn’t even flinch when Chloe gave him the shots.”

“Okay, that settles it then.” Adrian took charge. “But, I should be the one to do the stitching not because any of you couldn’t do a credible job, but because you’ll be needed to keep him calm while I do it.”

“Agreed,” Jill and Shirley said. Chloe was clearly disappointed but agreed.

Once those decisions were made, the discussion turned to more personal matters as we interacted with some of the crew and each other. While Tom and Shirley discussed with Captain Miller what they should do about the whole situation, Jill and I befriended Adrian and Chloe although it was pretty much of a non-event with Chloe who just sat there soaking up the conversation and eye flirting with the helicopter pilots and some of the men in the crew.

After a bit, Adrian took a different tack, “Reiki, huh? I’ve heard about it but don’t really know anything about it. It seems to me that most of the traditional medical profession sort of discounts the effects, I think mainly because they can’t regulate or control it. I wonder, could I learn how to do it?”

“Are you aware that Reiki was used extensively on the battle field in the middle east and that some hospitals have instituted a ‘Healing Hands’ program which is basically the same wine in a different bottle?” Jill said.

“No, I was not aware of either of those things. How would one go about learning it?”

“Easy,” Jill replied, “there are undoubtedly lots of practitioners in the Portland area and where there are practitioners there are training sessions. It takes about three sessions to become a novice, but believe you me you will know it even after one session, the rest is just practice.”

“Lieutenant Hernandez, excuse me, Juanita, we girls are pretty tired. Could we turn in now?” Shirley asked.

“Certainly Shirley, can you find your way or do you like a guide?”

“I think we only need a guide to tell us if any particular bunk is assigned to someone here. We don’t want to tread on anyone’s toes.”

“The bunks are all first come, first served. So just pick one that suits you.”

“Thanks, good night all. Coming Jill, Chloe?” Shirley asked

“May I say up for a while, I’m not tired yet?” Chloe asked.

“Suit yourself,” Jill replied as she followed Shirley down into the bunk room.

Tom, Captain Miller, Adrian and I sat up chatting for a while then turned in for the night. When we went down to the bunk room, Chloe and Willson were still engaged in a running chat session with the men. Lieutenant Hernandez turned her cabin over to Captain Miller and curled up in her command chair.

In the morning, after a breakfast of toast and pop tarts Jill and Shirley donned their wetsuits and went over to check things out and to explain to Mother what was going to happen. I relayed Mother’s reactions to the rest of the party. Jill reported that Sonny seemed relaxed after Mother explained things to him while Jill and Shirley were giving him Reiki to help keep him calm.

When they were sure Sonny was ready, Jill waved for Adrian and Chloe to come and join them. Adrian had borrowed Tom’s wetsuit, which was too big but, it was all that was available. Chloe came on deck wearing a t-shirt over her underwear. There were several Orcas waiting to ferry them over to Sonny when they entered the water. When they arrived in the cove, Jill introduced Adrian to Mother and he acted as if he did this sort of thing every day. He stroked her head and spoke to her as if she could understand him and Jill announced that Mother accepted him.

“I learned a long time ago that most animals will accept you if you approach them slowly, are calm and speak quietly to them. But I wouldn’t want to try that on a lion or tiger, thank you very much.” Adrian said.

While Adrian checked the injuries, Jill and Shirley continued to calm Sonny and to describe to Mother what was happening. The ladies continued to soothe Sonny to keep him calm while Adrian and Chloe injected the anesthetic and gave it few minutes to work before proceeding with the stitching. Sonny wiggled some but kept as still as could be expected during the process. When they were finished, the

Orcas escorted them back to the cutter.

Once we were all back together, Adrian asked, “We’ve done all we can do. Can we stay for a while, Captain? We’d like to see how it goes.”

Captain Miller conferred briefly with the helicopter pilots and reported, “The chopper doesn’t have to return right away, so sure, you can stay as long as you like. Besides, Chloe appears to have the pilots enthralled.”

“Yeah, she tends to do that.” Adrian said smiling and shaking his head. “You wouldn’t know it to look at her. Don’t misunderstand, she is cute and all, but whatever else it is, she has IT!”

We all smiled and nodded in agreement.

Adrian and Chloe stayed with us through the morning to observe Sonny. By noon Sonny was swimming slowly around the cove and seemed to be much better. Adrian went back into the cove to examine Sonny and was satisfied that the stitches were holding, then returned to the cutter.

“I guess we can leave now, Captain Miller. Except for the gouge, everything seems to be alright with the Orcas.” Adrian said, then, “Tom, when are you and my sister going come down to Portland for a visit?”

“I need to stay here until the fishing season is over, after that we’ll give you a call and drop down your way.”

“See you then and by all means bring Shirley.” Adrian said as he and Chloe went aft to board the idling helicopter.

Tom and Shirley were preparing to leave in their Zodiac when a blue and white inboard fishing boat came tearing down the Strait at full throttle headed west. Immediately, three of the larger male Orcas sky-scoped looking at the boat and then took off after it.

Mother swam over to our boat and lifted her head above the water.

[Boat hurt Sonny!]

[That boat?] Jill asked aloud.

[Yes!] Mother exclaimed, then sent Jill an image of the boat streaming away after it hit Sonny. The image was clearer than before, the name on the stern was legible.

“Captain, please stop the helicopter,” Jill shouted, then added, “Tom, Mother says that was the boat that hit Sonny. She sent me an Orca’s eye image of it and I could just barely make out the name

‘Sally Sue’ on the stern.”

“Let’s go, Shirley.” Tom said starting the Zodiac’s motors, then to me, “Tell the Coasties we’ll bring them back.”

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“Oh, yeah, this thing can outrun everything but a hydroplane.”

“Captain, you heard?” I shouted to Captain Miller.

“I heard.” He said, then signaled the helicopter pilots to stay aboard and radioed the situation to the base at Port Angeles. He considered thought for a moment then said, “The cutter can’t possibly catch them or keep up with the Zodiac or the fishing boat, so we will just wait here until Tom and Shirley get back.”

“Captain,” Lieutenant Hernandez said, “why don’t we have the helicopter chase them too to make sure they do not get away.”

“Great idea, Lieutenant.” He replied then waved to the helicopter pilots and signaled them to join the chase. Then he said to me, “Jack, can you ask Mother to call back the three Orcas that took off after the boat? We definitely do not want any accusation of Orcas attacking humans and humans replying claiming self-defense.”

Jill dove back into the water and swam over to Mother. I never did completely understand what she said. They seemed to be communicating on another level now. But when she returned to the cutter, she reported. “Captain. She says that she already called them back when it was obvious they could not catch the boat. She also told them not to attack any boats either. That we had treated Sonny and were taking care of the problem.”

“Really, all that?” Captain Miller asked.

“Well, not exactly word for word, sir.” Jill replied, “But she understood what I was telling her and asking her to do and because of the way we treated Sonny she was predisposed to let us take care of the problem.”

Just then the radio squawked with a call from the helicopter. “We’ve caught up to them and are blocking them from escaping while the Game Wardens corner them by Protection Island.” A pause, “The Game Wardens have boarded their boat and have them under arrest. We’re heading back. Out.”

A little over an hour later, Tom drove the Zodiac back into the cove. Shirley followed in the ‘Sally Sue’. Two handcuffed men, one wearing a res hat and the other wearing a yellow hat, were sitting on

the front seat of the Zodiac. Red hat was protesting loudly and the other sat quietly shaking his head. When the protester looked up at the cutter and saw Captain Miller, he started for the ladder and climbed aboard the cutter followed by his partner. Then he immediately demanded that they be released.

“Captain,” he said getting nose to nose with Captain Miller, “I don’t know what sort of bogus accusations these guys have been feeding you, but we’re just a pair of innocent fishermen and we demand to be released immediately with a full apology.”

Captain Miller ignored the demand and addressed Tom. “Did you Mirandize them, Tom?”

“Yes, sir, I told them they were under arrest and repeated the complete Miranda statement verbatim.”

“Good! Then you realize that anything you say or do can be used as evidence in a court of law.” Captain Miller asserted in a command voice. “What are your names?”

“Sam Gunderson and Charlie Mortenstern,” the loudmouth announced.

“Who’s who?”

“I’m Sam and he’s Charlie.” Sam replied.

“Who owns the boat?”

“He does,” Charlie said pointing at Sam.

“If you are so innocent, why did you run away from the Game Wardens when they hailed you to stop?”

“I didn’t know whether they wanted us or some other boat.” Sam said, “there were other boats around and we were in a hurry to get to our fishing spot.”

“Tom?” Captain Miller asked the Game Warden.

“They were doing their best to get away once we hailed them and ordered them to stop. They cut across the shallows off Protection Island hoping we wouldn’t or couldn’t follow. I guess they didn’t know that a Zodiac only draws about six inches of water. They were obviously heading for shore and presumably a get away until the helicopter blocked that. Eventually we ran them down and cornered them against the island. We got it all on video so they can protest all they want but it won’t help. Also, Captain, there were no other boats within hailing distance.”

Captain Miller looked up at the two helicopter pilots who had just joined the group. “There were no other boats in sight, Captain.” The

pilot said.

“Did they say anything, Tom?”

“Yes, sir, they demanded, actually, that one,” Tom said pointing at Sam. “He demanded, the we tell them why we arrested them and what were they accused of.”

“Yeah, Captain, what is it we done?” Sam interjected, still belligerent.

Before Captain Miller could answer could answer, Tom added indicating Sam, “He said that whatever we were accusing them of, they were innocent. Then he said he wanted a lawyer.”

“He’s going to need one,” Captain Miller said. Then he confronted Sam directly. “Aside from resisting arrest and unlawful flight and I’m sure an assortment of violations on your boat, you are accused of running over an Orca with your boat two days ago.”

“That’s bull, Captain, there is no way that anyone can prove we ran over an Orca and you can’t search our boat, we know the law.”

“That is what we are here to find out, Mr. Gunderson.”

“Captain, this is what you asked for.” Lieutenant Hernandez said handing Captain Miller an official looking document.

“Thank you Lieutenant,” he replied then turned back to the two men, “this is an official search warrant for your boat and equipment. Lieutenant Hernandez, can you have their boat hoisted aboard the cutter?”

“Yes, sir. Senior Chief, would you please hoist their boat aboard?”

“Yes, ma’am, Skipper, right away. You two come with me.” Senior Chief Greene said gathering two of the cutter’s crew with a nod of his head.

“Lieutenant, may I speak to you for a minute, please?” Captain Miller asked Lieutenant Hernandez.

She nodded assent, and lead the way to the command deck. They spoke briefly then Captain Miller said, “Mr. Mortenstern, would you please go with Lieutenant Hernandez, she has some questions she would like to ask you.”

“Yes, sir,” Charlie answered hanging his head and following Lieutenant Hernandez down the steps into the wardroom on the lower deck.

“Charlie, keep your mouth shut, do you hear me? Tell them nothing! Nothing!” Sam shouted.

When they left, the rest of us stood quietly watching Senior Chief Greene and his team hoist the Sally Sue aboard the cutter and leave her hanging from a davit on the port side.

“Ready, Captain.” The Senior Chief said.

“Thank you, now would you search the boat for any violations of Coast Guard Regulations.” Captain Miller ordered.

“Yes, sir, it would be a pleasure.” Senior Chief Greene replied, then gestured to the two men who had hoisted the ‘Sally Sue’ aboard.

“That’s illegal search and seizure, you have no right to do that.” Sam asserted.

“Did you read the search warrant when I gave it to you, Mr. Gunderson? It clearly states the boat is to be searched inside and out from stem to stern.”

“That’s bogus, you gave to get a court order to do that.” Sam mumbled.

“No, sir, Mr. Gunderson, the Coast Guard has the right to stop and search any boat in the water for violations of Coast Guard Regulations.”

Fifteen minutes later, Senior Chief Greene returned with a clipboard. “Captain, this here,” he said as he handed the clipboard to Captain Miller, “is a partial list of the violations. After I filled this page, I quit. The whole damned boat is in violation of the Regulations.”

“Why am I not surprised?” Captain Miller asked facetiously.

“Captain, do you mind if I take a look at the bottom of the boat, I want to see the keel?” Adrian asked.

“Please do, Dr. Goodhurst.” Captain Miller replied.

The same three men went with Adrian to thoroughly search the bottom of the boat. A few minutes later, one of the men was heard to say. “Got it, Chief.”

Green looked at what the man had found and said, “Show it to Dr. Goodhurst, Lewis.”

Lewis handed the item he had found to Adrian who looked it over carefully and then showed it to Captain Miller. “This is definitely a piece of Orca skin, Captain. Lewis found it wedged under one of the screws on the bottom of the boat.”

Captain Miller examined the scrap of skin, nodded in agreement and showed it to Sam. “I thought as much.” He exclaimed. “This, Mr.

Gunderson, is a piece of Orca skin with some of the flesh still attached. It was caught on one of the screws that hold the keel strip to the bottom of your boat”

“I could have picked that up anywhere, you might even have planted it.” Gunderson said looking at his feet, he refused to look at either the Captain or the piece of skin.

At that point, Lieutenant Hernandez returned and whispered in Captain Miller’s ear.

“Anyway, you can’t prove I hit an Orca. I want a lawyer.” Gunderson said.

“Actually, I can prove you hit the Orca, sir. Your friend Charlie told Lieutenant Hernandez the whole story, just how it happened, and signed an affidavit to that effect. I might also add, there were other witnesses to the event who won’t be needed now that we have Mr. Gunderson’s testimony.”

“What are you going to do to me?” Sam asked somewhat subdued.

“We’re going to impound your boat and all your equipment and take you with us to Port Angeles where you will be arraigned before a federal judge for violations of Coast Guard Regulations and for deliberately interfering with or harming an Orca which is a far more serious Federal offense. Orca are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act which is enforced by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Coast Guard at the Federal level and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at the State level. I suspect that in addition to losing your boat, and paying a massive fine you will be spending time in a Federal Penitentiary for breaking the laws designed to protect Orcas from just this sort of thing. Senior Chief Greene, would you please select a crew for the ‘Sally Sue’ and take Mr. Gunderson and Mr. Mortenstern to Port Angeles and hold them there in the brig until we return.”

“With pleasure, sir. Lewis, please lower the ‘Sally Sue’ into the water and take the helm while we take these two to the brig in P. A.”

“Aye, aye, Chief,” Lewis replied.

After Senior Chief Greene and Lewis departed for Port Angeles with the prisoners, Captain Miller turned to Adrian. “Well, Dr. Goodhurst, what do you think? Can you do anything with this piece of skin? It’s pretty beat up and ragged.” Captain Miller asked.

“Yes, sir, I think I can. As you suggest it is not in the best possible condition, but it is thick and has several layers, and there is even some blubber remaining on the inside. Let me think about it for a minute or two.” Adrian turned the piece of Orca skin over and over and tried to stretch it, then reported. “I think I can adapt this piece of skin along with some surgical foam and mesh to cover the hole. I’ll use the foam mixed with some of the blubber to fill the hole.”

“How can you do that considering its condition? Isn’t it dead?”

“Actually, the temperature of the water helped to partially preserve some of the viability of the specimen. Plastic surgeons have been experimenting with stretching a skin graft by making shallow parallel cuts just through the epidermis and other layers close to the surface. Then the graft is stretched perpendicular to the cuts thus expanding and making the graft cover a somewhat larger area. It doesn’t work for all grafts especially the ones where the surrounding skin is relatively thin. In this case I think we may be safe. If I can stretch the graft and stitch it into place and it holds, new skin, actually scar tissue, will grow into the gaps while it is healing. It might take a while but it should work as long as the piece stays connected to the area.”

“Really?”

“Yes, sir. I am no plastic surgeon and I have never tried anything like this before, but the technique is very straight forward and even if it isn’t completely successful, the patch should facilitate the healing process and the Orca shouldn’t be any worse off for trying it.”

Captain Miller turned to me and asked, “Jack, do you think Jill can explain things to the Orcas?”

“Yes, sir, I have been relaying what Adrian has said. She already explained most of it in generalities. I actually have no idea what exactly she told them because she is in rapport at levels that are new to me. She’s confident they understand or more appropriately, that they trust us. How long do you think the preparation should take, Adrian?”

“Probably an hour or so,” He replied.

“How can we help, Adrian?” Captain Miller asked.

“I’ll need to use a sterile cutting board in the galley to do the trimming and preparation, if that would be okay, Captain.”

Captain Miller turned to the Skipper of the cutter, “Lieutenant?”

“Right this way, Doctor, I heard some pots rattling, so I think some of the crew have already started boiling water. Do you have scalpels,

sir, or will you need us to hone and sterilize some of our galley knives?”

“I do have some scalpels, but I suspect they will dull fairly quickly because the skin is very tough. The boiling water will do to sterilize things. Not that they need to be particularly sterile considering the circumstances, but, let’s not take any chances.” Adrian said as he followed Juanita Hernandez. Then he asked, “Do you have any alcohol that I can use to sterilize the cutting board?”

“Rubbing alcohol, will that do?”

“That would be perfect, thanks Juanita.”

While Adrian worked, Jill and Shirley continued to work with Sonny to keep him calm and relaxed and the rest of us ate lunch. When he was finished with the preparation of the graft, Adrian and Chloe prepared hypodermics with the anesthetic, and several suture kits with the strongest suture material they had. When it was ready, everything was placed in the strongest plastic bags available. Then Adrian asked, “Juanita, do you have a small life raft we can use to carry our stuff over to Sonny?”

“One thing the Coast guard is not short of, Adrian, is life rafts. Hang on a second, the locker is on the other side of the cutter.” Juanita cut through the command deck to the port side and returned a minute later with a small bundle. “Dropped this in the water just before you go down the ladder. It is self-inflating and there are several lines in the package for rigging a tow.”

“Thanks, Juanita, okay folks lets get going before it gets much later.” Adrian said as he once again pulled on Tom’s wetsuit then went down the side of the cutter to the water. Chloe followed wearing her t-shirt.

Once again, several Orcas swam over to tow the group into the cove. As advertised, the life raft inflated automatically and the noise caused a momentary concern among the Orcas. But, Jill explained things and they calmed down.

As soon as they were on their way, Jill and Shirley went to work to calm Sonny for what was to come. Mother assured them that he was ready.

When Adrian and Chloe arrived, Chloe began injecting the anesthetic into the area surrounding the wound, and Sonny never even flinched. Then Adrian, assisted by Chloe stitched the patch into place.

The process took over an hour during which time Sonny remained calm and relaxed and held as still as possible. While Adrian was working, I kept everyone informed of the progress as Jill relayed it to me. When they were finished, the Orcas returned all of them to the cutter.

“How did it go?” Captain Miller asked as they were removing their wetsuits.

“Better than I expected,” Adrian replied. “The patch covered about 85 percent of the wound area and I don’t think it could have been stretched any further without risking it tearing away. If he doesn’t do anything to compromise the wound area, it should heal in a month or so. There will be scarring of course, but we find scars of one sort or another on almost every whale or porpoise in the wild. In fact one of the Orcas that towed us back to the cutter had a chunk taken out of his dorsal fin which seemed to have healed fine. Most are from shark bites or swimming too close to coral, or any of a dozen other causes but they all heal given time.”

“I’m amazed Adrian. Simply amazed. Are we finished now?” Captain Miller asked. “I don’t mean to rush you, but there has been a non-emergency call for the helicopter to return to its base.”

“Yes, sir, we have done all that we can do. Now it is up to mother nature to finish the job.”

While they were talking, Chloe changed back into the Coast Guard jump suit and prepared their equipment to leave. “I’ll return the jumpsuit after I get home, Juanita.” She said.

“Actually, Chloe, you may keep the jumpsuit as a memento of your visit with the Coast Guard.” Lieutenant Hernandez said.

“Thank you, ma’am.” Chloe said, a big smile on her face.

“Thank you all,” Captain Miller said including everyone. “You all realize. Of course, that nothing that happened here is to be reported to the media. As far as I am concerned, it is classified. That is why I sent Gunderson and Mortenstern to Port Angeles when I did so they could not see what was going on. I for one, do not want to be accused of losing my mind and we certainly do not want a media frenzy considering the effects it might have on the Orcas. If someone told me about the last two days, I would never believe him anyway, but some hotshot reporter could ruin it for all of us and especially for the Orcas. You can count on me, the crew of the cutter and the helicopter as well,

and I am sure Tom and Shirley will remain silent about what actually happened. As far as I am concerned the Orca strike was reported by an anonymous source and we simply followed up the lead and found evidence corroborating the report.

“You have my word, Captain.” I said.

“And ours, sir,” Tom and Shirley nodded agreement.

“As for you, Adrian and Chloe, I know the world of academe is different from ours and something is bound to get out eventually. We will rely on your discretion for the moment. If you feel that you need to somehow publish what has happened, please obfuscate the report as much as possible.”

“We will do that, sir and I am sure Chloe agrees as well. Chloe?” Adrian asked.

“Oh, definitely, Captain, you can count on me.” Chloe said in agreement.

“Good. Thanks to all of you for a fantastic experience.” Captain Miller said. “Jack, the cutter crew will return you and Jill to your boat.” He said to me.

Jill and I remained in the cove for more than an hour after the Coasties left before we said goodbye to the Orcas and left for home.

Two weeks later, we received a letter from Captain Miller containing a decal and pennant for our boat authorizing us to contact and observe Orcas in close proximity.

Several weeks passed by before we were once again trolling in the vicinity of what we now called ‘Orca’s Island’. When we felt a gentle bump. When we looked over the side, it was Sonny who sky-scoped so Jill could touch him, and he squealed in a way that could only be interpreted as friendship and gratitude. Jill spoke with him briefly and I heard him tell her his tail was okay now. Then he dove under the boat and breached to show us. When he breached, we could see the scar on his back, and it looked to be healing well. While the rest of the pod was swimming nearby, Mother sky-scoped and also sent us a very strong feeling of gratitude before swimming away.

Since then whenever we are in the vicinity of Orca’s Island and the pod is nearby, they swim by and actually greet us! It is always a thrill.